

# The Works of Robert Hawker

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# THE BOOK OF *PROVERBS*

## General Observations

It is remarkable that in the three sacred books, of which this is one of them, written by *Solomon*, he sends each forth under three different titles. Here he calls himself the son of David, king of Israel. The book of Ecclesiastes, he stiles the words of the Preacher, and therein he takes the name of the King of Jerusalem. And in the Canticles, after speaking in the title page of the excellency of it, he only puts his name of *Solomon*.

Various have been the opinions of holy men of old, concerning the time in which those portions of inspired scripture have been sent forth. Some have thought that the whole were written when he was near death. And others have said that the book of the Songs was written first, and the book of Ecclesiastes last; but this is certainly contrary to the order in which they are placed in the Bible, perhaps about 980 years before CHRIST.

I do not think it necessary to dwell at all upon the character of *Solomon*, because the HOLY GHOST hath very largely given his history in its proper place; and the uses to be made of his history are also very plainly marked out; so that every thing on this ground is superseded.

The period in which this book of GOD was written, it cannot be difficult to ascertain. The age of the church in which *Solomon* lived will serve to shew very nearly the time in which those precious sentences and maxims were committed to writing. What is said of him in one of the books of the Kings, may satisfy that it was at the time when his faculties were most bright and shining, when *he spoke of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; and there came of people to hear him*The book of the Proverbs itself, seems to be a collection of the most approved things' but eminently so as pointing in many parts to the Person and office of CHRIST; so that as we pass though the holy volume, in the perusal of it, and discover, through the SPIRIT'S teaching, the leading features of JESUS: we are frequently constrained to cry out, A greater than *Solomon* is here.

I shall only detain the Reader, before he enters upon the perusal, to observe that this book of instruction receives great sanction and authority from the LORD JESUS, as to the mode that is here adopted of conveying divine truths. So much was it the custom of the East to teach in this way, that it was the universal maxim, And in conformity to it, our adored LORD at one time, delivered his discourses so much in parables, that we are told, without a parable space he not unto them. I only

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pray Him, who is the Almighty Teacher in his church, that while we read this and every other of the sacred books of GOD, he may so graciously give to us a right understanding in all things, that while to others it is only in parables, to us may be given, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; and that in that knowledge and enjoyment, we may find the same grace as was imparted to his disciples when he said, Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.

## Chapter 1

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*The general design of parables is here described. A number of select maxims are given, and the object of the whole volume is set forth in shewing that it is to bring men acquainted with Gad, as the beginning and end of all wisdom.*

#### **PROVERBS 1:1**

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

We have here the title of the book and the name of the Author of it. But as the book itself forms a part of, the sacred scriptures, and carries With it in many parts, decided testimonies of its inspiration, we should be always upon the look out for Him, on whose account all scripture was written, and for the promotion of whose glory in the salvation a his church and people all was intended. Reader! let you and study to find CHRIST as we go over the book of the Proverbs.

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And while we are reading the Proverbs of *Solomon*, the son of David, king of Israel, recollect that our Jedidiah, our beloved of the LORD, was also the Son of David, after the flesh, and both king of Israel, and King of kings and LORD of lords. Precious JESUS! do thou, by both Writer and Reader, while we are attending to these parables, as thou didst by thy disciples in the days of thy flesh, *when we are alone with thee, do thou expound all things to us concerning thyself*, Mark 4:34; 2 Samuel 12:25

### **PROVERBS 1:2-7**

To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

These verses seem to be designed as a preamble or general preface to the book itself. And I particularly beg the Reader to remark with me, that under this idea, a proverb is said to be *a dark saying*, intimating that there is much more in it than might at first sight be supposed. And therefore, through the whole of the proverbs, we are taught to be looking beyond the surface for the grand substance that is concealed. And this if I do not greatly err, we shall find to be CHRIST. He is the wisdom which is here spoken of, and for which the proverbs are given. He calls himself by the name, Luke 7:35. LORD, I would pray, give to him that writes, and to him that reads, *a rigid understanding in all things*; that we may discover CHRIST

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to be both *the wisdom of God and the power of God, for salvation to every one that believeth*, 1 Corinthians 1:21-24.

### **PROVERBS 1:8-19**

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

The sacred writer of this book having given the preface of his book, here enters upon the subject of it; and that he might enforce what he had to say still more, he begins it with an exhortation. Under the character of an Instructor, as a father of his children, he endeavours to gain their affection by such a tender appellation, as that of a father addressing his son. And if the Reader observes, the opening of his discourse is altogether upon the plan and principles of the gospel. For it points to the corruption of the heart in the enticement of sinners, and the propensity of our nature to listen to the temptation. Among the first offices of the HOLY GHOST, the convincing of sin stands pointed out by him, whose office character' is that of *wisdom*. And I hope the Reader hath not now to learn that the very apprehension of CHRIST as a SAVIOUR, pre-supposes that we have a thorough sense of our

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need of CHRIST in the consciousness of our being sinners, John 14:7-8.

### **PROVERBS 1:20-33**

Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

These verses are introduced with great beauty after the former. Having in some measure prepared the heart for receiving instruction, by turning up *the fallow ground, to sow in righteousness*. CHRIST is here introduced in his gracious office, as calling upon the sinner, wounded under a sense of sin, *to look unto him and to be saved*, Hosea 10:12; Isaiah 45:22. I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with a long commentary on the several parts of this divine sermon; for if (as I pray the LORD may be the case) the LORD the HOLY GHOST be our Teacher, it is his gracious office to take of the

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things of JESUS and skew them to us. And under his teaching it will not be difficult to find JESUS in every part of it, John 16:14. I must not, however, omit one observation in this place, because it is important. The word here translated, *wisdom*, is in the original, in the plural number *wisdoms*. I do not positively presume to say, wherefore it is so; but I venture to believe, that as wisdom is a well-known office-character of JESUS, as the CHRIST; that is in united natures of GOD and man in one Person; it was intended to convey to the church, that CHRIST is in the abstract, all wisdoms in one; for *in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Colossians 2:3. And I am the more inclined to this opinion, because the sacred writers, in their reference to JESUS, seem to delight in plurals. We have a beautiful example of this kind in the first Psalm. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, &c.* The man here spoken of, can be no other than CHRIST, for very obvious reasons, as I have shewn in the commentary on that part of scripture. For none among the fallen sons of men can be said with truth to be blessed, but in him. But what I particularly request the Reader to observe with me now is, that the word translated in that psalm *blessed*, is also in the plural number, and implying *all* blessedness in one. And CHRIST is all this; for as blessedness doth not consist in one good thing, but a thorough and complete blessedness takes *in* all, so CHRIST and CHRIST alone is this: and He that is wisdom, being the essential source and fountain of all wisdom to all the different streams of it, is no less the whole sum and substance of *blessedness* in giving existence to it in all the distributions of it among his creatures. Reader! I pray you pause over the thought! And think what an infinite mind must our JESUS

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possess, since every portion of knowledge, and intellect, and wisdom, is derived from Him who is in himself wisdoms. Conceive, if possible, *what blessedness* in all the fullness of infinity, must constitute Him, who is our CHRIST, *in whom all nations of the earth can alone be blessed!* Psalm 72:17. And Reader! do indulge me with adding one thought more for your meditation on this sweet subject, as well as my own. If JESUS be thus *wisdoms* and *blessedness* in the full aggregate of both, to the total exclusion of every other, but as derived from him; think what unspeakable felicity must it be to be interested in him, yea, to be a part in him, by virtue of our union with him, as the Head of his church, and consequently entitled to all such proportions both of wisdom and blessedness as shall be for his glory, and his church's happiness! For we do not come to him to give us wisdom only, but for himself to be our wisdom; not only to give us blessedness, but himself to be our blessedness; and thus not only to bring us to the everlasting enjoyment of both; but to be himself the sum and substance of both, in being our wisdom, blessedness, and portion for ever. Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of CHRIST, well may we cry out with the apostle, *Now thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.* 2 Corinthians 9:15.

### Reflections

READER! Is it indeed JESUS that thus crieth Without and uttereth his voice in the streets? And shall not you and I go to him, and attend to him, and listen with suitable earnestness of soul, to what this divine Teacher teacheth? Did all the earth seek to hear the wisdom of *Solomon*, were they gathered

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from every part of it to his court? and shall not we be earnest to receive instruction, when a greater than *Solomon* is here? Oh! thou, whose name is indeed *Wisdoms!* because nothing that is wise can be found, but in thee: do thou, blessed JESUS, while thou art calling without, incline my heart within to seek for thee as for hidden treasure, and to value thy love more than the choicest gold. and while thousands, and tens of thousands, are ignorant of thee, and know not where wisdom is to be found, and where is the place of understanding; while the depth saith, it is not in me; and the sea saith, it is not with me: oh! LORD, give me to see, that in thee are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that in possessing thee, I possess all things. Be thou, LORD, to me, the Wonderful Counsellor, for then shall I understand this book of the Proverbs, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings: then, through thy grace, will my feet be kept from evil, neither shall I run into the congregation of sinners. Yes! blessed LORD, I shall delight to sit at thy footstool, to hear the gracious words which proceed from thy mouth. And I shall more and more discover in thee, that thou art all in all, the LORD, My wisdom. and my righteousness, and that thou art made of GOD, unto me *wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and that all my glorying is in thee, O LORD.*

## Chapter 2

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*Wisdom continueth her sermon through this chapter, which she had begun in the former. Blessings are promised to the faithful, and destruction shewn to be the sad portion of the wicked.*

**PROVERBS 2:1-5**

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

The subject continues the same as in the former chapter; and the address as from a father to a son is carried on under the same endearing appellation, by way of enforcing what is said. And this doth not at all lessen the idea, that it is CHRIST who is here personated; for he fills all relations and is included in all the charities of life. He is the everlasting FATHER, as well as the husband of his church, and the Brother born for adversity, Isaiah 9:6; Proverbs 17:17; Isaiah 54:5

**PROVERBS 2:6-8**

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

Is it not GOD our FATHER, that is here particularly spoken of? For who gave CHRIST to the church, but the FATHER? John 3:16. Who was it called him in righteousness, or laid up

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salvation in him, and laid our iniquities upon him? Isaiah 42:6. To whom is the church entrusted by CHRIST, and who is the Almighty keeper of the church but the FATHER? John 17:11; Psalm 121:5; 1 Samuel 2:9.

### **PROVERBS 2:9-12**

Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

How beautiful, if explained upon gospel terms, and with an eye to CHRIST, as wisdom, are these verses! If CHRIST be indeed formed in the heart, the hope of glory, then will all gracious principles be the fruit thereof. And this blessed effect differs wholly from all assumed wisdom, as much as the spring and source differs from all outward motives. JESUS becomes then in the heart the well of water, springing up to everlasting life. Well may every heart made sensible of these things, cry out with the poor Samaritan woman, LORD, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither seek elsewhere to draw, John 4:14-15.

### **PROVERBS 2:13-22**

Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

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None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

I include the whole of these verses under one view, because they are all to the same effect. Where there is no regeneration of the heart, no grace, no principle, no teaching or influence of the SPIRIT there will be confusion and every evil work. And where there is no awakening of the HOLY GHOST, the original death by sin, is followed by eternal death in that state from which there is no return. Oh! for a part in that blessed and holy state of the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power, Revelation 20:6.

### Reflections

My soul! ponder well the striking contrast which this chapter hath drawn between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth Him not!

How truly lovely is the soul that crieth after knowledge, that is, that is seeking for JESUS as for hidden treasure. Every thing in him, and about him is ornamental. In private life, in public station, whenever engaged, however occupied, he adorneth the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOUR in all things. Small, and inconsiderable as his knowledge may be in the present attainments of it, yet it will be with him as the light of the morning, that shineth more and more unto a perfect day. On the other hand, how wretched is the man who is destitute of grace! Every part of his life is perverse, and every portion of

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his conduct crooked. The calls of GOD, the warnings of his providence, the alarms of death; all lose their effect upon his unthinking and worthless heart! His joy is in evil, and the frowardness of the Wicked his delight. His life how wretched!—his death how fearful!

Precious JESUS! be thou my wisdom, for then shall I delight myself in the LORD, and triumph in the Holy One of Israel. Fill my soul with true understanding and knowledge, for sure I am, in thee I shall find every possible happiness of light and life, and the fulness of joy in my soul. And while the wisdom of this world gives pride to the worldly wise; and the might of this world gives confidence to the mighty, and the rich man glorieth in his riches; this will be my glory, that I understand and know thee, that thou art the LORD, and that in these things thou delightest, O LORD. Here, LORD, let my soul rest convinced that however poor in myself, in thee I possess all things. Thou art the strength of my heart, and thou my portion for ever.

## Chapter 3

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*The same subject is continued in this chapter as in the former; but with additional arguments. Here are many earnest exhortations to the exercise of the graces of the HOLY SPIRIT, and the sad effects of a contrary conduct fully set forth.*

#### PROVERBS 3:1-4

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My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

It was one of the great blessings of the covenant, that the LORD undertook to write his law in the minds and hearts of his people in the last days, whereby they should know him. And hence *Solomon* describes in these verses the blessing of such a state, and the comforts arising out of it, Jeremiah 31:31-34.

### **PROVERBS 3:5-6**

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Here is a divine precept, and a divine promise sweetly blended. And in many other parts of scripture we find the same confirmed, Isaiah 42:16; Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7.

### **PROVERBS 3:7-10**

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

If I do not mistake, here is a sweet reference to CHRIST in these verses. The first fruits offered to the LORD was to be all in faith. Thus Abel by faith offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, Hebrews 11:4. Every first fruit had certainly

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reference to CHRIST. The promise to this is striking. The barns and the wine presses shall not only recompense, but abound. It is most blessed to do all things by faith, for *whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*, Romans 14:23.

### **PROVERBS 3:11-12**

My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

The apostle quotes this passage in his epistle to the Hebrews, and makes a beautiful comment upon it, Hebrews 12:5-11. It is blessed to be altogether patient and passive under chastisements. Not with sullenness to receive them, for this would argue a mind determined not to bow to the rod, neither with faintings to sink under them, for this would imply unbelief and distrust, as though the LORD had forgotten to be gracious; but to receive all as the chastisements of a kind and wise father, who cannot mistake the welfare of his children, and is ordering all things for their good. JESUS hath said; *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten*, Revelation 3:19. They are chastisements, not vindictive punishments, not in a way of law judgment, for that hath been borne by CHRIST; but in a way of correction, to accomplish many blessed purposes in grace. Sweet thought, and ever to be kept alive in the heart.

### **PROVERBS 3:13-18**

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand;

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and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

There can be no question but that the attainment of CHRIST and all his blessings *with* him, and *in* him, must be the summit of happiness. And it is delightful to see in these verses how sweet the correspondence is between what is here said of finding wisdom, and what the gospel speaks of finding CHRIST. *We have found him* (said one that had through grace made this discovery) *of whom Moses and the prophets did write, JESUS of Nazareth*, John 1:45. He is the goodly pearl, which the wise merchant-man long sought, and when found, sold all that he had and bought, Matthew 13:45-46. And while all other pursuits, and all other attainments are found never to satisfy, but everlastingly disappoint; JESUS gives to them that seek and find him, *durable riches and righteousness*. Proverbs 8:18-19. JESUS is indeed the tree of life in the paradise of GOD, under whose shadow by faith, believers now sit and find the fruit sweet to their taste: and ere long they will sit down for ever to enjoy his whole fulness by the river of life, in the kingdom of glory. Song of Solomon 2:3; Revelation 22:1-2.

### **PROVERBS 3:19-20**

The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

There is another confirmation of CHRIST'S office-name as *Wisdom*, for the scriptures with one voice declare that the

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LORD *created all things by JESUS CHRIST*, Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:2.

**PROVERBS 3:21-24**

My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

These are all so many gracious lessons suited to a life of grace. The subject is still kept up and pursued under the idea of an adopted, regenerated son, in whose heart the SPIRIT witnesseth that he is born of GOD, Romans 8:16.

**PROVERBS 3:25-35**

Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee. Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm. Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous. The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly. The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Here again, as before, the blessed practical effects of vital godliness, will appear by such evidences as are here set forth. And the termination of a life of grace, and a life of

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ungodliness, will invariably produce the different states here described.

## Reflections

READER! let us attend to the several very interesting subjects which arise out of this chapter, and by reading them in the sweet spirit of the gospel, to which they plainly refer, we shall through grace make no small improvement of them.

In the first place, while *Solomon* recommends such attention to the law as never to forget it; let us examine whether GOD the FATHER'S promise is fulfilled in our experience, and he hath put his law in our inward parts and written it in our hearts. Oh! the blessed work of regeneration, when the heart of stone is taken away, and the heart of fiesh given. And when the spirituality of GOD'S law is so read and understood in the soul, that CHRIST is discovered to be the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

In the next place let us see to it, Reader, that we have such confidence, and such well grounded trust in GOD'S mercy through CHRIST, as to commit every thing for time and for eternity into his almighty hands; for this will be to honour him with our whole substance, and with the first fruits of all our increase.

And as a third improvement from this chapter, let us see to it, that as we eye the LORD in all his providences, so we never lose sight of his government in all his chastisements. Not to

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feel the rod, or not to suppose chastening to be grievous, would be unbecoming; and not to enquire into the causes of the LORD'S affliction, would be to forget the improvement intended to be made from it; and not to pray for a deliverance from trouble would be unsuitable to our circumstances. But to bless GOD for his attention in sending the affliction—to justify the LORD in the appointment of it—to acknowledge that he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works—and while the LORD is correcting, we are cleaving the closer to him; and to lean upon his promises, when matters are most dark and discouraging; this will be neither to despise his chastening, nor faint under the pressure.

Lastly and above all—while *Solomon* in this chapter recommends so earnestly, to find wisdom and to get understanding; let us see to it that nothing satisfies our souls short of the knowledge and attainment of CHRIST. He is the wisdom indeed, which in the possession of must make the soul truly happy. In the constitution of his person, the suitability, and all-sufficiency of his salvation; his offices, characters, relations, the manifold wisdom of JEHOVAH is made known. Reader! may the LORD the SPIRIT impress it both upon your heart and mine, to find him who is truly and emphatically wisdom himself and we shall then enter into the full apprehension of those sweet scriptures, *the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.*

## Chapter 4

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*This chapter hath much the same tendency as the former. It contains an exhortation to the pursuit of wisdom. And towards the close of the Chapter the sad effects of a contrary study is pointed out in strong characters.*

### **PROVERBS 4:1-2**

Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

There is but little variety in what is here said by way of enforcing what is taught, unless it be the consideration arising from the repetition of the request. But the tenderness of the FATHER is brought in by way of intimating both the expediency of the precept, and the real regard with which it is accompanied. And who can overlook, while reading it, the solicitude and love of GOD our FATHER, whose endearments are held forth to us under the sweet image of *the FATHER of mercies, and the GOD of all comfort*, 2 Corinthians 1:3.

### **PROVERBS 4:3-9**

For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

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If we pass over *Solomon* king of Israel, and contemplate CHRIST as mediator in what is here said, it will help the mind to very pleasing improvement. The love that GOD the FATHER had to the person of CHRIST as Mediator, is set forth in many parts of scripture; and indeed of itself it forms a blessed subject, Isaiah 42:1; John 10:17. I cannot think that *Solomon* had any reference to *Bathsheba* his mother in those words; neither, if read with an eye to CHRIST, did JESUS mean the *Virgin Mary*, the natural mother of CHRIST. But the church, whom *Paul* the apostle declares to be the mother of us all, is intended here, and consequently of CHRIST also after the flesh. In proof read those scriptures, Galatians 4:26; Matthew 12:49-50.

### **PROVERBS 4:10-17**

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

We have here the same blessed instructions given in other words, with the motives which ought to prompt to the due attention which they so justly demand. And under the same idea that CHRIST is all along held forth as wisdom, nothing can be more suited to the pure truths of the gospel than what is here said.

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**PROVERBS 4:18-19**

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

In these verses the contrast is finely drawn between the state of a justified soul in CHRIST, and the unawakened, unsanctified soul of the wicked. JESUS is both the light and the life of his people. And the progressive state of souls justified in his blood and righteousness, is like the advance of the morning to meridian brightness. But on the contrary, the darkness at which the ungodly stumble is growing to more and more darkness, where even the light is darkness, Job 10:22.

**PROVERBS 4:20-27**

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

There is not much variety in these verses, but they contain the same wholesome admonitions. They are all in perfect conformity to the gospel precepts. And while they very strongly recommend an uniform attention to keep the heart with all diligence, they imply the necessity of looking to God to keep it, *because Out of it are the issues of life*. The apostle recommends diligence in the work of grace upon the same

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principle, because he saith, that it is *GOD that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, Philippians 2:13.

## Reflections

How delightful is it to see the beautiful similitude the wise man adopts in this book of Proverbs, by way of recommending attention to this great subject of getting Wisdom and understanding. Beholding CHRIST as the pearl of great price, every one engaged in the pursuit of getting him, may be justly compared to the wise merchant-man. The treasure is hidden in the field of the scripture and must be sought for, if obtained, with suited diligence, and earnestness of inquiry. And though it is without money and without price, freely given, and as freely to be enjoyed; yet like the merchant-man, there must be an early search, a daily enquiry, and a constant pursuit. Happy the souls that so search as to obtain and so seek as to find. In possessing him they possess all things, and find treasure that fadeth not away. Reader! have you found CHRIST? Is he the pearl of great price in your esteem? Oh! the blessedness of such a discovery! JESUS will be, as this sweet chapter expresseth it, an ornament of grace to the head, and a crown of glory will he deliver to them that love him. He saith himself, *hold fast that which thou hast; let no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my GOD, and he shall go no more out.*

## Chapter 5

### Contents

*We have in this Chapter, and in a similar strain, to the former chapter, an exhortation to the study of Wisdom: and both the blessed effects of that study and the sad consequences of the neglect of it, are strikingly set forth.*

#### **PROVERBS 5:1-6**

My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

It forms a delightful feature through the whole of this book of GOD; that the instructions given in it are all with a view to make the soul wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in JESUS CHRIST. For as the one great object to which the wise man directs the Whole attention is wisdom, or CHRIST under the character of wisdom; so the precepts he enjoins are all with an eye to him. I hope the Reader will not have overlooked this distinguishing character in the whole book. It is as if *Solomon* had said: If, my son, thou attend to wisdom, and art sweetly taught of JESUS, then will all those blessed effects follow, which mark the life of the faithful. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come, 1 Timothy 4:8

**PROVERBS 5:7-14**

Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

I desire the Reader to remark with me, the alteration of persons with which this portion of *Solomon's* discourse begins. In the former it seems to have been his address to a single person, but here it is to more than one. But the instructions are the same, and the motives made use of are the same. Perhaps there is no particular reason for the change, unless it be supposed, which I confess I am not a little inclined to think, that the sacred writer upon many occasions, as he passed on in these discourses, had in view, the person of CHRIST; and now the people of CHRIST in him. But whether this be or not, it is always profitable to a child of GOD to eye CHRIST in every thing as first in priority of order; and then his children, his seed, his church, in him, Psalm 89:1-4.

**PROVERBS 5:15-23**

Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished

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with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

If we read this passage spiritually it will not be the less beautiful afterwards, to take it literally; for in both views there is great loveliness in it. If JESUS be my fountain, and the church saith he is (Song of Solomon 4:15) then from him, and in him, will all my springs be. And in this sense he will be my own: for as I am his by purchase and by gift; so CHRIST is mine by gift, and by marriage, having betrothed himself to his people for ever, Hosea 2:19. And surely such an alliance will induce faithfulness both to the LORD, and to his people. Who takes a more effectual method to observe fidelity in all the departments of chastity, and the several branches of moral life, than the soul that is faithful to JESUS? Dear LORD! be thou to me all I need, and then by thy SPIRIT and the preventing and restraining influences of thy grace, I shall be following the apostle's maxim both in thinking and in doing, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, Philippians 4:8.

## Reflections

PRECIUOS JESUS! at the very mention of thy name, how do all lesser objects lose their interest; and what an everlasting

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security is there found in thee, while living upon thy fulness, and deriving all strength for the practice of every social and religious obligation, in the communications of thy grace! Yes, blessed LORD, the cisterns of my poor soul, which thou hast filled, shall make me love to run to the fountain head, beholding from whence they flow, and how they are supplied continually by thee. And while thou art richly imparting all suited grace from thy fulness, to supply my necessities; gladly will I communicate the joyful tidings around, that the reports of JESUS and his glorious redemption, like rivers of waters in the street, may be circulated in every direction. I will tell to all, as far as my poor stammering tongue can utter, the truth that JESUS is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. And I will proclaim far and near, and in every direction, that he is a fountain open and not sealed, where every poor needy sinner like myself, whose heart is made willing in the day of the LORD'S power, may freely come to wash and be made white in the blood of the LAMB; and to take of the water of life freely when the soul is thirsting for JESUS, as the hart for the water brooks. Oh! thou fountain of JEHOVAH! cause my soul to drink largely of that river whose streams make glad the city of GOD.

## Chapter 6

### Contents

Under the similitude of a surety *Solomon* opens this chapter, with shewing the consequence of such engagements. He

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follows up the chapter with divers cautions, which are founded in much wisdom.

**PROVERBS 6:1-5**

My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, *if* thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, (2) Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. (3) Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend. (4) Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. (5) Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand *of the hunter*, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

I cannot possibly read these verses, expressive as they are of the tender concern of a watchful Father over his Son, how he enters into suretyship engagements, with the consequences of them, without having my soul immediately directed to him, who, at the call of his and our FATHER, stood up the willing, voluntary surety, of his people from everlasting. Surely, thou blessed JESUS, it was thou that was the first surety the world ever heard of, and which when first made known in heaven excited the everlasting wonder of all the angels of light. And of thee it may truly be said, when thou didst strike hands with thy FATHER in confirmation of the treaty, it was both for thy friend, and yet far a stranger. Friends thou hast called us through thy gracious condescension, (John 15:13-15) and yet we were strangers and enemies to GOD by wicked works, when thou camest to seek and save us by thy blood. Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:12-13. And though not snared, as this scripture terms it, with the words of thy month; yet thou wast taken into engagements by thy promises of love, which thou

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couldst not afterwards break, neither didst thou wish to break; for the baptism thou hadst in consequence thereof to be baptised with, thou didst say, thou wert straitened until that it was accomplished. Oh! the love of GOD which passeth knowledge, Luke 12:50.

**PROVERBS 6:6-11**

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

These are beautiful scriptures in which the LORD sends his people to gather instruction from the inferior creatures of his creation. For in point of divine knowledge by reason of the fall, man is sunk lower than the instinct of the brute, in providing for his own eternal safety. We have another beautiful passage to the same effect, Jeremiah 8:7

**PROVERBS 6:12-15**

A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

One might be prompted to suppose that the sacred Writer had in view, when he thus expressed himself, the seed of the serpent. A naughty person, in scripture language, is *a man of Belial*; and so it might have been rendered. And of such

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characters it is not sufficiently expressive to say, that they may commit error, but in fact frowardness is in the heart of all such; it forms their very nature. The Apostle, under the inspiration *of* the SPIRIT, called one of these men of Belial, *child of the devil*, Acts 13:10. See another instance, John 8:44. And the beloved apostle draws the line of distinction between the children of the kingdom, and the children of the evil one, 1 John 3:10.

### **PROVERBS 6:16-19**

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Here are the fruits of such a man's conduct as *Solomon* described, and the HOLY GHOST hath given a fuller catalogue, Galatians 5:19-21. And as a beautiful contrast, in the fruit of the HOLY GHOST upon the souls of his people, he adds the 22d and 23d verses in the same chapter. (Galatians 5:22-23)

### **PROVERBS 6:20-35**

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt

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for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

I make no interruption through the whole of this paragraph, because the whole forms but one and the same sermon. The binding those graces upon the heart, and wearing them about the neck, is similar to what Moses commanded the Israelites concerning the law, Deuteronomy 6:6-9. And Reader! doth it not suggest to the recollection Aaron, in his typifying the LORD JESUS, going in before the mercy-seat with the names of the twelve tribes on his breast? And doth not JESUS bind his people to him now in all his priestly office, Exodus 28:29; Revelation 8:3. What a relief would the recollection of this be to a poor believer in every trying hour, could he but steadily by faith look within the veil, whither our forerunner is for us entered, and behold him thus engaged? And what a blessed work would it be of GOD the SPIRIT upon the heart, if the believer could also by faith take to him, and bind to him, every thing that concerns the enjoyment of JESUS and his great salvation, to lead him when he went forth; to keep him when he slept, and to talk with him when he was awake.

## Reflections

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! I feel constrained while reading what is here said of a surety, and the sad state in which such an one involves himself, to call to mind what thy love must have been, which prompted thine infinite breast to enter into suretyship engagements for thy people, and what a state of unequalled sorrows the gracious act induced. In the contemplation of it, I cannot but pass over every other subject which this chapter might otherwise awaken to profit, to consider the greatness of thy love, and the greatness of the calamities which it brought to thy holy soul. Never surely was there an act so truly blessed, gracious, and beneficent as this. In this one act thou didst put thyself in the law-place, and room of all thy chosen. And by that act thou didst undertake both for our debt and for our duty; both to cancel sin and to fulfil all righteousness. And now, LORD, in such views of thee and thine unparalleled mercy, where shall I look but to thee? To whom shall I come but to JESUS? Hast thou struck out my name from the dreadful bond debt where it stood, and where it must for ever have stood but for thee, hast thou paid it all, cancelled it all; and when I lay for ever insolvent, hast thou redeemed me from all? And shall I, can I reject thine infinite love, and go about to establish mine own righteousness, and forget the wormwood and the gall, the prison and the pit from which thou hast freed me? Oh! infinite love, passing all knowledge. Let me, blessed REDEEMER, since thou hast brought me off, and brought me out, let me live to thy glory and to thy praise; and among all thy ransomed, bless for ever the almighty surety whose hand was stricken for such a stranger, and whose soul travail became so exquisite

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to redeem me from death. May the life thus saved by grace be spent to thy service, and since by purchase and redemption I am thine, may my soul bless thee, love thee, and delight in thee for ever.

## Chapter 7

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*In this Chapter under the representation of an harlot, the deception that is practised upon our fallen nature is strikingly set forth, and the departure from God in sin and uncleanness is in strong colours painted.*

#### **PROVERBS 7:1-5**

My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

The Chapter is opened in a general preface, by way of preparing the mind for the subject that is to follow. And there are several endearing titles made use of, by way yet more of enforcing the subject. But what I would particularly request the Reader to attend to in those appellations of sister and kinswoman, is the very interesting matter they contain considered with an eye to CHRIST. JESUS, in the song of loves

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calls his church his sister, as well as his spouse. For as he took upon him our common nature, so he hath declared that whosoever doeth the will of his FATHER which is in heaven, the same is his brother, and sister, and mother. See Song of Solomon 4:9; Matthew 12:50. And as CHRIST hath condescended to put himself into all relations with his people, so he authorizeth his people to look up to him under all relations. But we must not stop here in contemplating the nature of the relationship, but go on and consider the cause for which the LORD hath put himself into these condescending affinities, and is not ashamed to call his people brethren; namely, that they may come to him under these characters, in order to be kept by him from spiritual fornication and every species of apostacy. Blessed JESUS! it is delightful to see how thy people are kept by thee, and that in thee all their security is found.

### **PROVERBS 7:6-23**

For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,  
And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths,  
a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street  
near her corner; and he went the way to her house,  
In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:  
And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot,  
and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not  
in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets,  
and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him,  
and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,  
I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.  
Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face,  
and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings  
of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.  
I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.  
Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning:  
let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home,  
he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him,  
and will

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come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

Who can read this account, and call to mind the numberless scenes of a like nature that are going on every day in every town, city, and perhaps even village of the whole world, in the different transactions of sin and uncleanness, but must feel affected. Who that knows in himself what fallen nature is, or beholds in others the dreadful instances of the deceitfulness of the human heart, but must tremble. And who that conceives what a mass of such perpetrations of wickedness is continually coming up before GOD, but must be humbled to the very dust of the earth in the consciousness of universal depravity. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments. But is there not beside the particular feature of sin in uncleanness here pointed out, is there not a spiritual subject opened to our meditation in relation to our whole nature departing from CHRIST our husband? JESUS has gone for a little space, and the good man will return at the time appointed. But while the bridegroom tarrieth we all slumber and sleep. Oh! LORD keep the souls of thy redeemed in the hour, and from the power of temptation. Let us not go forth as the daughter of Jacob did to see the daughters of the land, so as to seek danger and then fall by it; but make us chaste keepers at home, and living upon JESUS. (Genesis 34:1-2; Matthew 25:5)

### **PROVERBS 7:24-27**

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Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

The conclusion is very beautiful and striking. And if we behold CHRIST as speaking to his people in these words, there is somewhat truly affectionate and interesting to work upon the mind in due attention to them. The obedience to what is here said, in leading to CHRIST, is life. The disobedience is, and must be death, Romans 6:23.

### Reflections

MY soul! pause over this chapter. Behold what a strong and affecting representation it holds forth of the carnal, graceless, and ungodly. In every state, and in every stage of life, they are the same. Young persons, from the heat of youth, and corruption of nature, are most exposed to the awful ruin here set forth; but all periods of life are open to the particular and special temptations of it. And is this human nature altogether! Are such portraits of it taken from life? Do all prefer the momentary enjoyment of the body, to the everlasting welfare of the soul! Can nothing but fleshly lusts which war against the soul satisfy them? And is it, my soul, a most certain and unquestionable truth, that they that are in the flesh cannot please GOD. Pause, my soul! and in contemplating such a picture of human life, see whether what Paul saith of the Corinthians doth not correspond, to thy case and circumstances, and such were some of you.

LORD! give me to hear and feel what the close of this sweet chapter utters, and from henceforth to attend to the words of my GOD. And oh! ye young men, see, from what is here set forth, the danger to which you are exposed, and flee youthful lusts which war against the soul. I have written unto you young men, because you are strong, and the word of GOD abideth in you. Oh! think how blessed it must be to remember the Creator in the days of youth. And what a blessedness in having CHRIST for a portion, that the age of life may be accompanied with grace, and the knowledge and enjoyment of JESUS become the portion for ever.

## Chapter 8

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*We have in this Chapter a most sublime account of some ancient events in eternity, and which, under the character of wisdom, the great speaker is calling upon the church to attend to. From beginning to end the subject is carried on by one and the same person. The chapter closeth with an exhortation.*

#### **PROVERBS 8:1-4**

Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

The chapter opens with the cry of wisdom, and both the earnestness of the subject, and the earnestness with which it is enforced, recommend the whole to our attention. I do not presume to speak with a positiveness of determination; the general design of this Commentary being more to enquire than assert; more to seek the teaching of the SPIRIT, to be led by him into all truth, than to lead the Reader's mind concerning truth. But with all humbleness of soul while going over this most sublime chapter, I would venture to say, that as it appears to me the whole contents of it are concerning CHRIST as GOD-man Mediator, set up from everlasting. And under this one well known title, and office character of wisdom, CHRIST is here calling upon His church to attend to some things spoken respecting himself, and the FATHER'S appointment of him to this office, which, if he had not communicated to the church, and by his HOLY SPIRIT given an understanding to know, never could have been known or believed. Hence the chapter begins with the cry of' this glorious person, and the subject is proposed in a way of question, Doth not wisdom cry? Is it not plain enough to be heard in the numberless ways by which CHRIST as Mediator is proclaimed, throughout the whole book of GOD? What indeed doth the Bible treat of beside? There is nothing in it from beginning to end but JEHOVAH'S love, and mercy and grace, and favour, in the gift of his SON for the salvation of sinners; and the glories of CHRIST'S person, and the grace, and love of his heart in voluntarily standing up their great surety, and SAVIOUR in redemption. Is not the whole voice of wisdom lifted up to proclaim these things? And to whom is salvation thus proclaimed, and the LORD JESUS the great author of it set

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forth, but to you O ye sons of men, that need both CHRIST and His salvation so very highly!

**PROVERBS 8:5-11**

O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Here we have both the glories of CHRIST, and the wretchedness of man strikingly represented. JESUS, well knowing how deaf and senseless our poor fallen nature is, and that unconscious of our own misery, and therefore unwilling to be prevailed upon to listen to what is proposed for our good, first declares to us our simplicity, and then the infinite importance of the things which he is going to declare to us, Excellent things they may well be called, for what can be equally excellent as the glories of his person, the riches of his grace, his suitableness to poor sinners, and the everlasting riches the possession of him must impart? And excellent things these are also in the view of the FATHER'S appointment of them for poor sinners, and the FATHER'S will and delight that they should be received by poor sinners, and made use of for his glory and the sinner's joy. Reader! are not these things excellent things; and right things, and coming from the lip of truth? And further, allow me to ask whether there be an apprehension of them as such in your soul? Hath the loud cry

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of JESUS reached *your* ear? Hath the voice of understanding been heard in the chambers of your *heart*? Do you from day to day with the *eye* of faith behold JESUS standing in the top of high places; that is by way of ordinances in the gates of his word, in the ministry of his paths, and both at the entering in, and going out of his providences, in all that is going on in the world? Surely it is in all these, and by all these, JESUS cries and calls upon the sons of men. Neither is there a faculty of the mind, in the hearing ear, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart, but what hath daily appeals made to each and to all, to listen to the heavenly preacher, and to be made wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS.

#### **PROVERBS 8:12-14**

I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

This is a short but very comprehensive statement of who CHRIST is, and what is in him. Observe, he doth not say that he will give wisdom only, but that he is wisdom itself. He doth not declare that he, and he only, imparteth understanding, but that he himself is understanding. There is a vast deal more in these expressions than simply giving promises concerning them. For if JESUS be himself in the abstract these things, then must it undeniably follow, that neither wisdom nor understanding can be elsewhere, but in CHRIST. And it must further follow, That if CHRIST be both wisdom and understanding, in possessing him we possess all with him.

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Oh! precious wisdom! give me to know thee, and so to know thee as to be sensible of my union and interest with thee, and in thee. Then shall I enter into a right apprehension of those excellent things of the love of the FATHER, Son, and SPIRIT towards poor sinners, which thou hast come forth to proclaim, and which in possession secures the everlasting happiness of thy redeemed, in time, and to all eternity.

**PROVERBS 8:15-16**

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Reader! do pause over these verses, and in the midst of admiring and adoring CHRIST in his sovereign distinction of character, as the Wisdom-Mediator, here behold him also as the Power-Mediator of GOD for salvation, to every one that believeth, 1 Corinthians 1:24. There is nothing more refreshing to the soul than the contemplation of JESUS in his mediatorial kingdom and government, the church's head and king in Zion. And what I particularly beg the Reader not to lose sight of, in this glorious distinction of character in our JESUS is, that CHRIST being king of Zion, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, is JEHOVAH's king in Zion. It is JEHOVAH that hath set him there, and set him as his king in Zion. For so he saith, Psalm 2:6. For over and above his natural and essential right to all sovereignty and supremacy in common with the other persons of the GODHEAD as GOD, our JESUS hath a donative right as Mediator-head of the church, to this universal plenitude of power. All power, said CHRIST, in the moment of his ascension, is given unto me, in heaven and in earth, Matthew 28:18. Given unto him, that is, as Mediator.

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Both for the reward of his redemption work, and for the purposes of giving out all that should be needful in grace here, and glory to his people hereafter. I pray the Reader to be sure and keep this in remembrance; for it forms the sweetest view of JESUS in this almightiness of power, in that what he is in this light he is for his people. He hath power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as the FATHER hath given him, John 17:2. And while to the providential events that are going on in the world, from the government of kings to the numbering of the hairs of our head, it is JESUS ordains, disposeth, commands, controls, and appoints all; think, Reader, what a sweet thought this is also, that this sovereign power of JESUS is no less to gather to himself a church; to call poor sinners, to comfort distressed saints; to stop the proud man's oppression, and to lift up the humble from the dust. Precious, powerful SAVIOUR! manifest, LORD, thy sovereignty by reigning in me, and ruling in me, and bringing every thought and imagination of my heart into subjection to the sceptre of thy grace.

**PROVERBS 8:17-21**

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

Reader! when JESUS saith, as he doth in the first of these verses, that he loves them that love him, do not imagine that it is meant to say, that our love of him becomes the cause of

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his love to us; for if we love him it is because he first loved us, 1 John 4:19. And certain it is that his love to us, and for us, is the sole cause of ours. Nay, more than this: if JESUS had not done more than merely looking upon us with love, and by his grace, shedding abroad his love in our hearts by his HOLY SPIRIT, he had not subdued the natural enmity of our nature against him, and both planted love in us towards him, and drawn out that love in exercise upon him, never should we have loved him, notwithstanding all that he hath done for us, to all eternity. By what the loving and all lovely REDEEMER here saith, of loving them that love him, we are to understand that in those precious souls where a love to him is shewn, as he himself is the author as well as the object of that love, such may be well assured that he loveth them who love him. And JESUS means, no doubt, at the same time to say by the expression, that he values such love, and his eye is continually upon it. And he will preserve it and keep it alive, and when they seem to feel their love towards him cool, still he will not suffer the flame to go out. Sweet thought to cherish, Song of Solomon 8:7. And see, Reader! what blessings are held forth to the lovers of JESUS, here are durable riches and righteousness. Not the fleeting, dying, transitory enjoyments of the world! Not the silver and gold of Peru! Not the righteousness of creatures, nor the bread of creatures which perisheth with using. But the durable riches of CHRIST'S blood and righteousness which are for ever, and the salvation which cannot be abolished. Oh! what fruit can be equal to the fruit of the SPIRIT, what revenue of choice silver and gold, to the possession of the everlasting income of CHRIST'S righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the HOLY GHOST. Yes, precious JESUS, thine is substance indeed, to all

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who possess thee and thy treasures. All other attainments are hollow, unsubstantial, and insecure. Reader! what saith your soul's experience to these things? Do you enjoy CHRIST; is he your portion, your treasure, your happiness, your substance? If your heart can answer yes to the enquiry, then will you have a better apprehension of these things, than by any words which I can make use of, to shew the blessedness of their state, who in the love of CHRIST, and the possession of CHRIST, and an interest in his blood and righteousness; find a revenue indeed, of durable riches and pleasure.

### **PROVERBS 8:22-31**

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

In these few verses are contained very many of the most sublime truths of the gospel, if we consider (as I have been all along considering through the chapter), that it is JESUS as Mediator, GOD and man in one person, here speaking to his church of himself and of his FATHER. In this sense CHRIST was as indeed possessed, set up, constituted and determined

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upon in the beginning of his ways. Set up secretly, not as yet openly to the church, but secretly in the divine decrees. And set up, not as GOD only, for then in this case the expression would not be suited to the divine nature, for how can GOD be said to be set up, who inhabiteth eternity. Neither as man only, for how could man be set up as man from everlasting. But in both natures as GOD-man Mediator he might be said to be set up, and possessed in the divine mind from all eternity. And in this sense also CHRIST might be said to be set up as the Wisdom-CHRIST, the pattern and sampler of the future creation of man. Paul, speaking to the same effect saith, that he is the image of the invisible GOD, the first born of every creature, Colossians 1:15. Intimating that though there is nothing visible in GOD, yet there was an *holy thing*, so called, Luke 1:35, to be openly born in after ages, which subsisted in the SON of GOD; and in this union of character, the Wisdom-Mediator elect stood by, when there were no depths, nor fountains abounding with water, and before an atom of the dust of the world was made. And in this sense also the expression *as one brought up with him*, is plain and intelligible. For the sacred persons of the GODHEAD had not then gone forth in acts of creation. The Son of GOD had not then taken into union with himself the manhood. But the contemplation of the future event of this mysterious union with, all the blessed consequences of it, in the glories of the Mediator, and JEHOVAH'S glory in him, together with all the salvation of his church; these made the Mediator JEHOVAH'S delight, and the Mediator's delights were in contemplating his love and duty to his FATHER in redemption-work, and the final happiness of his church, thus rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men: The

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same word rendered *brought up in* this chapter, is in the book of the Canticles, (Song of Solomon 7:1) translated *cunning workmen*; meaning, jointly concerned in the works of creation, redemption, providence, and grace. As one brought up with him; wrapt up in the very bosom of the FATHER, embosomed, if the expression be allowable. So that there are *two* most blessed and glorious truths here contained. The sacred persons were unceasingly enjoying and solacing themselves in one another. This is *one* sweet thought. And the *other* is, that one, of their enjoyments arose from the salvation they had determined for our nature: I was daily his delight, said JESUS; and my delights were with the sons of men.

### **PROVERBS 8:32-36**

Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

The chapter sweetly concludes as it begun. CHRIST as Wisdom Mediator having called aloud to the church to listen to him, and having opened his commission and shewn his love to his people, and the blessedness of knowing him; now folds up the whole in an earnest exhortation that his church will listen to him; and declares the happy effects of following his advice, and the awful consequence of rejecting it, in becoming their own soul's murderers.

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## Reflections

AND now, Reader! having gone over this blessed chapter, pause and enquire at your own heart what are your views concerning the contents of it? Doth it strike your mind that the wisdom here spoken of, and here speaking, is the Wisdom-Mediator the LORD our righteousness, thus unfolding the sweet and secret transactions in that high character of GOD-man, which took place before the world began? Was the SON of GOD thus constituted, thus appointed, and by the union of natures, as the REDEEMER elect, thus possessed by JEHOVAH in the beginning of his ways, and before his works of old? And was it indeed, thou blessed JESUS, was it thou that didst then stand intentionally, as thou didst afterwards stand openly and in reality, in the streets of thy city Jerusalem, and speaking to thy church in all these endearing terms, to invite poor sinners to be happy in thy blood and righteousness. Oh! LORD, cause poor sinners then, by the sweet constraining influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, to listen to thy call, and to regard thy gracious invitation. Cause both the Writer and the Reader of these lines, if consistent with thy holy counsel and will, to enter into an heartfelt apprehension of all these precious truths connected with the knowledge of thyself, and the enjoyment also; that thy love may be so shed abroad. in our hearts that we may inherit substance, and that thou thyself mayest be our treasure and fill all of them. Oh! precious LORD! let *a* daily knowledge of thee, and a daily enjoyment of thee be our portion; for then will all these blessings follow, and we shall find indeed that riches and honor are with thee; yea, *durable riches and righteousness*.

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## Chapter 9

### Contents

*In this chapter we have set before us the very different proposals of wisdom and folly. And we are shewn no less, how certainly the former leads to happiness, and the latter to misery.*

#### **PROVERBS 9:1-6**

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

We must still behold CHRIST under the office character of Wisdom, proclaiming grace and a fulness of blessings to his church and people. The house here said to be built with seven pillars, and the feast here said to be furnished, and the invitation sent forth for guests with the blessedness of those who accept thereof, and are made the partakers of it; these are plain representations of the gospel fulness, and the infinite mercy provided for poor sinners in JESUS. The house which JESUS hath built in the body of his temple, is the whole church at large; and the seven pillars spoken of, whether intended as an indefinite number to represent the whole, or referring by any allusion to what is said of the seven spirits which are said to be before the throne, the sense is the same.

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The HOLY GHOST hath explained the whole of this subject to the church, when saying by his servant Paul, that it is built upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the LORD, Ephesians 2:20-21. And that CHRIST, the Wisdom-Mediator hath prepared and built the whole, the HOLY GHOST confirmed, when drawing a comparison between Moses as a servant in his house, and CHRIST as the LORD of this house; and determining the glory of CHRIST therefrom as proving his GODHEAD by having built all things, Hebrews 3:3-4. Perhaps by the seven pillars may be intended to represent the seven-fold gifts of the HOLY GHOST, Revelation 1:4. And we know that the whole gospel is uniformly represented throughout the Bible, under the similitude of a rich feast. JESUS hath prepared it, and it is he which giveth it. He hath mingled it also. For here is his body broken, and his blood shed; his flesh being meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, to all that partake. And it is mingled as the paschal feast, which was typical of it set forth; for it is received by faith with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. A whole unleavened CHRIST into a broken, leavened, contrite heart. The righteousness, peace, and, joy, and gifts of the HOLY GHOST, are the blessed food of the soul, received, and lived upon by faith; when the poor sinner is made to see and feel his need, and turns in at wisdom's gracious invitation to the rich table, Isaiah 25:6-8; Exodus 12:7; Exodus 12:12; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8. The servants sent forth to call in the guests correspond to the gospel call by the ministers, and the plentiful means adopted to bring in the objects, for whom both the house and the feast are prepared:

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namely, the poor and the needy, the wretched and the miserable, Luke 14:16-24

**PROVERBS 9:7-12**

He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

These are so many various ways of setting forth the happy consequences of those, that at wisdom's call are made wise unto salvation, They find all the blessed effects of that grace in the heart, in following what is here said, and giving themselves up to the guidance of wisdom.

**PROVERBS 9:13-18**

A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, To call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

We have in these verses the contrast to what was given in the former part of the chapter. Under the figure of a foolish woman, meaning ignorance altogether, is set forth the rival of CHRIST, the god of this world, blending the human mind with the delusions of his several temptations, 2 Corinthians 4:4.

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The similitude of sitting at the door of her house to call passengers, who are going the right way, to turn aside, and the proposals she makes of stolen waters and bread in secret; these are most apt representations of the devices of Satan. For I would have the Reader observe that the call here given, is given to such as are going the right way. Yes! Satan never gives any interruption to his servants, while going the wrong way in his drudgery. While the strong man armed keepeth the palace, the goods are in peace, Luke 11:21. But if wisdom's call be heard among the household of Satan, where the LORD JESUS causeth it to be heard, for we all, (saith an apostle,) *had our conversation in times past with the children of disobedience*. Ephesians 2:2-3. No sooner doth a poor sinner attempt to run out of his kingdom, than all hell is up in arms to bring him back. And what a correspondence is here made of stolen waters and bread in secret, rendered pleasant to the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, 1 John 2:16. And how surely are the wages of sin death, Romans 6:23.

### Reflections

READER! do not too hastily dismiss this chapter. Can any thing be more happily chosen to represent the path of grace, and the broad road of destruction, than the very different representations here made. Pause, and contemplate the vast distinction between them. Behold the house, the feast, the fatness, fulness, and eternal duration of those provisions which JESUS hath made for them that love him. Behold the wretched, empty, unsatisfying, deceitful, and stolen pleasures

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which sin proposeth; and do not forget the close of all; the dead are there, and her guests in the depths of hell.

Oh! for grace to hear wisdom's voice. Oh! blessed JESUS, let thy seven pillars resting upon thyself be the foundation of my house; and thy table the one at which my soul may daily sit by grace here, and in glory eternally hereafter. And do thou, LORD, I pray thee, who hast spread all, furnished all, mingled all, and given freely all, *without money and without price*; give me every suited preparation to enjoy all, that I may never listen to the noise of the clamorous women, but be unceasingly eating of thy bread and drinking of the wine which thou hast mingled. Yea, LORD, may my whole soul be so hungering, and thirsting, and longing for the everlasting enjoyment of thee, that daily by faith here, and ere long in the fruition of thee in glory, I may live to thee, and with thee, and upon thee for ever.

## Chapter 10

### Contents

We are now in this Chapter, entering upon the Proverbs. From this Chapter to the twenty-fifth, we meet with a great abundance of those divine sayings. The one part is descriptive of the blessed effects of following wisdom's ways; and the other of the contrary consequences.

#### PROVERBS 10:1

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The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

If the Reader, while going over the whole body of Proverbs, will pray the HOLY GHOST, that he may be always on the look out for his divine teaching, I think very frequently he will discover in these Proverbs, that a *greater than Solomon is here*. I am very free to confess and believe, that many of the maxims here found, are maxims of morality and sound policy. But while I say this, I must be allowed to believe also, that very many sweet spiritual instructions are veiled under them. And I would beg the Reader to recollect what was said in the very first opening of the book of Proverbs, that the design for which they are given to us among the books of GOD, and as a part of the Bible was, that *we might understand a Proverb, and the interpretation thereof; the Words of the wise, and their dark sayings*, Proverbs 1:6. If a mere code of moral sayings was all that was intended, what dark sayings are there in the very plain truths, which for the most part those chapters from the 10th to the 25th contain? I cannot therefore refrain from desiring the Reader to be as attentive as possible at every verse, more or less, as he passeth through to the enquiry; what further than the first and most obvious sense, the passage may, without violence be supposed to imply. And while I beg his close attention towards a discovery, that may be for his own profit; I yet more earnestly desire that his eyes and his heart may be directed to Him, *from whom* cometh every good, and every perfect gift: *with whom* is the residue of the SPIRIT; and *in whom* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And once for all, now at the commencement of the Proverbs,

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I would desire to impress these views of them upon his mind, and in this manner recommend. the perusal of them to his heart. And having said this much, which if diligently followed by the Reader, will tend to his improvement in the knowledge of this blessed book of GOD, better than by any thing that I can propose for his help in the perusal, I beg to observe that I shall make but short comments here and there, as a passage may strike me, in order to avoid swelling this Commentary unnecessarily, and which hath indeed already extended very much beyond what was originally intended.

**PROVERBS 10:2**

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

There is a righteousness indeed, which delivereth from death, even the righteousness of JESUS, and which GOD hath set forth for this purpose, Romans 3:21-22.

**PROVERBS 10:3**

The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

See this blessing insured, as it concerns the LORD'S people, Psalm 33:18-19.

**PROVERBS 10:4-15**

He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the

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mouth of the wicked. The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot. The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall. He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known. He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall. The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins. In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding. Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction. The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.

The Reader will find here somewhat either by direct allusion, or by indirect inference, that will lead the heart to JESUS, if the HOLY GHOST be the Commentator; as for example in this last verse of the passage, The rich man here spoken of, may be considered as *the rich in faith*, of whom James speaks, James 2:5. And this wealth of faith, being all founded in CHRIST; he gives them *to inherit substance; and is* their refuge into which they *run and are safe*, Proverbs 18:10.

### **PROVERBS 10:16-32**

The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin. He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth. He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom. The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom. The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted. As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation. As vinegar to the teeth,

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and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

I detain not the Reader through these verses. They are all very plain to the understanding of one taught of GOD. The way of life is JESUS, for he saith himself that *he is the way, and the truth, and the life*, John 14:6; and he that is in this way, is in JESUS. And JESUS points out an infallible method by which all such are known. He keepeth instruction, *Solomon* saith. And JESUS saith if *a man love me, he will keep my words*. And the greatest of all blessings is annexed to this. Pray, Reader, turn to that sweet scripture, and read it, until that the very life of the passage is engraven upon your heart, John 14:23 and you will find, by comparing scripture with scripture, similar illustrations; and of consequence, how the Proverbs of *Solomon* are to be read and explained.

### Reflections

READER! let us both look to Him that gave to *Solomon* wisdom. that while some will run through these Proverbs as men may pass over a field where treasure is hidden, and are unconscious what is under them; you and I may see and know the things which are freely given to us of GOD. The parables of JESUS were still parables to the unenlightened

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multitude. But to his disciples *it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.*

In these dark sayings, here are many blessed and bright things. But like the LORD'S hidden ones, as they are unknown to the world, so is the bread of life which is handed to them in secret. And Reader! let you and I, as we go over those several passages bring them all to JESUS, He will expound them to us in order, as he did to his disciples, when we are alone. Are not we ourselves, if CHRIST'S followers, men wondered at? Is not our spiritual life a mystery; our new birth, our effectual calling, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, with all the blessings, supports, recoveries, helps, refreshments, in short, all the ways of grace here, and the promise of life in JESUS hereafter; is not the whole a mystery, and are we not frequently prompted to cry out as we go along our pilgrimage, and especially when at any time JESUS himself comes to us in a sweet visit of love, *LORD! how is it that thou dost manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?* And shall it be more a subject of wonder, that the word of his grace is to be read with other eyes, and explained with other tongues than men of the world are acquainted with? Precious JESUS! be thou our Instructor, for thou art a matchless Guide! Lead us into all truth: and if led by thee, we are made to discover thy Person, or thy work, thy grace, or thy favour, sweetly veiled under those parables: surely, LORD, we shall feel, as those disciples felt, *Our hearts burn within us, while thou talkest to us by the way, and while thou expoudest to us, in these scriptures, the things concerning thyself.*

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## Chapter 11

### **PROVERBS 11:1**

A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

What a blessed thought is it, that when our poor nature, weighed in the balance *was found wanting*; JESUS more than compensated what we needed, and, thereby delighted his FATHER, Daniel 5:27 Proverbs 8:30; John 10:17

### **PROVERBS 11:2-7**

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom. The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

I pause here to remark the striking expressions, by which the everlasting ruin of the unregenerate is marked, Job 27:8. See as a contrast, a striking portrait, Jeremiah 17:5-8.

### **PROVERBS 11:8-15**

The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead. An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of

the wicked. He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure.

I can never pass over any passage respecting suretyship, without thinking of JESUS. Oh! thou Almighty Surety of thy redeemed! thou didst smart for it indeed; or as the phrase in this verse might have been rendered, *shall be sore broken*; for thou wast bruised, and broken, and put to grief, Isaiah 53:4,5 whereas, hadst thou refused to have stood forth for thy people, or as this verse renders it, hadst thou *hated suretyship, thou hadst been sure*. For resting in thine own eternal, uninterrupted glory with the FATHER: nothing could have arisen to have broken in upon thy felicity. Oh! matchless love! Oh! peerless grace! Teach me, dearest JESUS, to love thee, who hath so loved us!

#### **PROVERBS 11:16-24**

A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches. The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death. They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight. Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered. As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion. The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

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I wish that this last verse, and the great truth contained in it, was but better understood, and better put in practice by my poor heart. JESUS, I am sure, taught it in his whole life and glorious example. How hath he scattered grace, mercy, peace, and pardon, among the unworthiest of creatures. And how hath he increased in bringing forth to himself an everlasting revenue of praise and glory, from the millions, which he hath thereby snatched from hell. My Brother! how are we following the plan of JESUS, when we withhold, and in our scanty souls, so far from scattering, are living but to ourselves; and our own enjoyments. Reader! pray turn to that sweet portion of JESUS'S sermon, which may be construed in a general way, both for spirituals and temporals; as *a* gracious direction on this point, Matthew 5:44-48.

**PROVERBS 11:25-31**

The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it. He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him. He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch. He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

If Joseph was blessed in Egypt for *selling* corn, how blessed is JESUS in our spiritual Egypt in *giving* it? Genesis 41:55-57; and that giveth it for ever; and that giveth without upbraiding; and all this in opposition to unworthiness, ingratitude, and a

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thousand, and ten thousand provocations of evil. Yea, more; that giveth not merely the corn of this life, but the wine, and oil, and bread of eternal life: yea, becometh all these, and infinitely more, in giving himself to them and for them. Precious JESUS! thou art indeed the bread of life, and the bread of GOD, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world! *LORD! evermore give me this bread!* John 6:32-34.

### Reflections

/ BESEECH thee, gracious Master, to give me a right understanding in all things. Taught by thee, I shall then discover, that thou art here folded up in this chapter. And however, as so many parables, I may first read what is here written, soon, under thy teaching, I shall learn that of thee they treat, and to thee they are intended to lead me.— And have I, my soul, so learned CHRIST? Was JESUS the parable of the Gospel upon many occasions? And is he not very frequently in the Old Testament scripture? Was JESUS the Lazarus there depicted, poor, and without food, or resting place: bruised, and laying at the gate of the rich Scribes and Pharisees, despised, and at length dead; and while they knew him not, carried amidst the chariots of Angels to his FATHER'S bosom—and do I not behold him here, amidst the parables, the surety for the poor stranger and smarting for it?—him that scattereth, and yet increaseth: the liberal soul that maketh fat—and having watered the thirsty souls of sinners, is now glorified of his FATHER; and all power is given to him, as the glory-man mediator, in heaven and in earth? Hail! blessed, precious JESUS! thou art he whom thy people shall adore, and

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blessings shall be upon the head of him that was separated from his brethren; whom GOD our FATHER, hath made Universal LORD of our Egypt; and in whose wisdom, provision is laid for selling corn, for the salvation of our souls, when without thee, the famine of the bread of life, would have caused us to have perished for ever.

## Chapter 12

### **PROVERBS 12:1-2**

Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish. A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

Is it not CHRIST here spoken of, who in our nature fulfilled all righteousness, and for which he obtained favour for himself and people? See the Commentary on Psalm 1 and Psalm 15 in confirmation.

### **PROVERBS 12:3-9**

A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit. The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them. The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand. A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised. He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

The man here said to be despised, but who hath the servant of JEHOVAH for his portion, is preferable to the self-righteous who is destitute of the bread of life, Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 20:27-28.

**PROVERBS 12:10-18**

A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding. The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit. The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble. A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him. The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

David gives one of the best comments upon the words, that are like the piercings of the sword, Psalm 141:5. And the apostle shews wherefore it is so, Hebrews 4:12-13.

**PROVERBS 12:19-25**

The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment. Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy. There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief. Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute. Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

What but JESUS, the uncreated word, can give comfort to an heart born down under the pressure of sin? *Thy love* (saith the church) *is better than wine*; Song of Solomon 1:2. Yes! for though wine may raise the drooping spirits as a momentary cordial, yet JESUS'S love raiseth the dead, Ephesians 2:1

### **PROVERBS 12:26-28**

The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them. The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious. In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

All these are expressive of one and the same thing. The margin of the Bible renders it, *The righteous is more abundant than his neighbour. Unto every one that hath* (saith our LORD) *shall be given and he shall have abundance*, Matthew 25:29; intimating that grace is an increasing gift from the LORD. So that while the sinner is waxing worse and worse, he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger, Job 17:9

### Reflections

How blessed is every portion of the divine word, when read with an eye to CHRIST. Wherever CHRIST is seen, and known, and enjoyed; there *the* word becomes life and spirit to the heart. *I found thy words and did eat them*, (saith one of the prophets) *and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart*. And what rendered GOD'S word so sweet was,

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that CHRIST filled every part of it. These were the green pastures in which GOD caused his servant to lie down, when he fed him *beside the still waters*. When CHRIST is seen in them, and the HOLY GHOST gives the soul to taste CHRIST in them; then as the church said, so all the people find; it is blessed to sit down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to the taste. Reader! do you find it to be so? Have you found CHRIST in this chapter? Depend upon it, the *grace* of GOD, and the word of GOD, which bringeth salvation, brings it from this source: and it then flows in upon the soul, in rich, full, free, and blessed streams of CHRIST as the salvation of GOD for poor sinners. Oh! for grace so to find, so to enjoy, so to relish, and so to live upon JEHOVAH's precious gift to men. *In this way* of JESUS and his righteousness *is life*, and in the very *path-way thereof*, the private, as well as the public ordinances of grace, *there is no death*.

## Chapter 13

### **PROVERBS 13:1-7**

A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner. There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

I pause at this last verse to ask the Reader if he hath marked the striking difference between the one here spoken of, as making himself rich, while poor; and the other, who having great riches, yet hath made himself poor. Every eye that reads what is here said, and looks into the world, may be struck with the application, when he seeth thousands like the church of the *Laodiceans*, fancying themselves *rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing, while ignorant that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, Revelation 3:17-18. In the spiritual sense of these words, (and it is in this sense that they are evidently spoken) what multiplied instances are every day occurring. But, Reader! passing for the moment the consideration of such characters by, you cannot need, I should hope, any help to enable you to discover one most eminently represented in the character of making himself poor, while possessing great riches: Must not every eye be directed instantly to the contemplation of the precious JESUS? Who but He hath ever so humbled himself, and manifested a lowliness of soul like him? *Ye know, saith Paul to the Corinthian church, ye know the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that though he was rich, yet, for your sakes, he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich*, 2 Corinthians 8:9. And what another lovely account to the same effect is that passage of Paul, Philippians 2:5-11. But, Reader! do not pass over the verse, until that you have questioned your own heart, whether the conscious sense of JESUS'S unequalled humbleness, and his immense treasure, hath brought your soul in love with him? Hath he blessed you with such views of him, as to delight in him; such views as to desire him, and such views as to choose him for your portion?

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**PROVERBS 13:8-12**

The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke. The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Surely CHRIST is the hope of Israel, and if he who is the hope of Israel deferreth his visits to a sin-sick soul, that soul will languish? He is also *the desire of all nations*, and must be the desire of every truly, awakened heart, and when he cometh, he is indeed *the tree of life* in the paradise of GOD. Oh! what a verse of CHRIST and his fulness, suitableness, and blessedness is here? Jeremiah 14:8; Haggai 2:7; Revelation 22:2.

**PROVERBS 13:13-20**

Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard. Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly. A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Several blessed things are within these verses. The Wicked messenger, and the faithful ambassador: what a contrast for

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those who minister in the church of CHRIST to ponder over. The consideration of walking with the wise, and the awfulness of being the companion of fools, what volumes are contained in those short, but striking sentences for all to consider. Precious JESUS! Make all thy servants faithful! Keep thy saints from dangerous society. Be it my portion, LORD, to walk with thee!

**PROVERBS 13:21-25**

Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed. A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just. Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment. He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

LORD, impress all thy ponderous truths upon my soul, and give me to search for thee in all thy word, as for hidden treasure.

### Reflections

READER! amidst many sweet and blessed things which this chapter furnisheth for improvement in reflection, I feel my mind particularly led to contemplate yet more the grace of our JESUS, in his wonderful condescension as here expressed, in making himself poor, when possessed of all the riches of heaven and earth. There is somewhat in this view of CHRIST, extremely engaging; and when connected with that view, we consider the cause and design of it, surely it holdeth out one of the most delightful subjects the human mind is capable of contemplating.

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JESUS, though LORD of all, made himself servant of all: and went on in a continued series of humiliation, until that he humbled himself unto the accursed death of the cross. So that it was grace in all his actions; grace in his first design, and grace in every purpose. And what an everlasting revenue of love, praise, and glory, must result from such acts of beneficence!

But, Reader! as an improvement from this view of JESUS, think what on opposition to this loveliness of CHRIST, must be the self-righteous; and if CHRIST be so truly amiable in this condescension, how truly unamiable must be the proud in his own self-importance! There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing. To be nothing is bad enough: and yet it is to be worse than nothing, when a man fancieth himself he is something, when in reality he is nothing. To be poor indeed in good works, and without holiness before GOD; and yet talking of our good works and holiness: to be blind to our own sin, and blind to CHRIST and his righteousness; and yet confident of our own worth; and fancying we have no great need of a SAVIOUR: to be naked of all spiritual-cloathing to appear in before GOD; and yet taking to ourselves a covering, but not of GOD'S SPIRIT.—Reader! I pray you pause: can there be upon the face of the earth a more pitiable character? To have the spots of death upon us, and yet unconscious that we are sick. Oh! that souls in this state would hear, and attend to the blessed words of CHRIST. I counsel thee (saith JESUS) to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-

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salve, that thou mayest see. Precious JESUS! thou, who givest this counsel, give grace also to follow it!

## Chapter 14

### PROVERBS 14:1-5

Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him. In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox. A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

I pass over these several verses, plain and instructive as they all are, to dwell on the sweet feature of CHRIST, as the faithful and true witness, Revelation 1:5. And, I hope that I need not remind the reader, that it is one of the gracious assurances given to us of our covenant GOD, that *he is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent*, Numbers 23:19. And the apostle makes this a most blessed argument of comfort, in the contemplation of the word and oath of JEHOVAH, that *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us*, Hebrews 6:17-18. Is it not precious, Reader, to consider how sure the divine promises are, founded in the merits of CHRIST'S blood and righteousness, and the covenant engagements of JEHOVAH? This is what Paul

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calls *grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD*, Romans 5:21.

**PROVERBS 14:6-8**

A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

This verse of *fools making a mock at sin*, is very expressive: for surely none but fools can do so; to laugh at that which offends GOD, ruins men, and which nothing but the blood of CHRIST can expiate; this must be supreme folly indeed.

**PROVERBS 14:9**

Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.

This is a sweet verse, and fully explained by every gracious soul in his own feeling's. Who knows the secret transactions between GOD and the soul on account of sin! Who shall sum up the sorrows of a wounded conscience? And who is competent to describe the sweet intercourse between CHRIST and the soul, when, through the operations of the HOLY GHOST, all that rich and heart-rejoicing communion takes place, which lifts the soul into the very suburbs of heaven?

**PROVERBS 14:10-14**

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The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

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GOD hath said this, and the soul knows the truth of it experimentally. See that scripture, Jeremiah 2:19

### PROVERBS 14:15-20

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated. The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge. The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

The poor in spirit is the object of the rich man's hatred, if the one *be a* possessor of grace in his poverty, and the other not. But, what rich are here spoken of? Perhaps the rich of this world. Yes; such have many friends, at least, many who profess to be so; but not many promises. *Go to now, ye rich men* (saith JESUS) *weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.* James 5:1. But if *Solomon* means by the rich having many friends, *the rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*, they have indeed multitudes of friends. GOD is their FATHER and friend; JESUS is their friend that loveth at all times: the HOLY GHOST is their friend. Angels, and all the church of the first-born in heaven are their friends; and all the

redeemed below. Precious thought to the exercised followers of the sinner's friend!

### **PROVERBS 14:21-35**

He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good. In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury. The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly. A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies. In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince. He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones. He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known. Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

I detain not the Reader with offering any comment upon those verses. If they be read with an eye to CHRIST, and the HOLY GHOST be the teacher, many are the gracious instructions which will arise out of them.

### Reflections

READER! amidst several very interesting views given in this chapter of GOD and of CHRIST, I know not what your feelings

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are, but I confess that my mind is led to reflect again and again on what *Solomon* saith of a faithful witness. And, precious as it is to find among the general perfidy of mankind any of this character, yet, how much more blessed is it to contemplate this perfection in the faithful, unchangeable GOD. It was the very character by which JEHOVAH demanded that he should be known to Israel of old. *Know therefore that the LORD thy GOD, he is GOD, the faithful GOD!* And, herein hath JEHOVAH pledged himself to CHRIST, and pledged, if it may be so expressed, even his holiness to him, for the fulfillment of all his covenant promises. *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.* Oh! the rich charter of grace! Oh! the security of GOD'S people! Blessed GOD! cause me to live upon it, to rest upon it, and never, no not for a moment, to call in question GOD'S faithfulness: but to know that *righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.* And as a man binds up his girdle around him, and fastens it to himself; so JEHOVAH takes to himself his faithfulness, for his people to lay hold of, and to hang upon. Precious GOD! here will I hang, and nothing, no, not even death itself shall unclasp my dying holdfast; for when both heart and strength shall fail, *thou shalt be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

## Chapter 15

### PROVERBS 15:1-6

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. The eyes of the LORD are

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in every place, beholding the evil and the good. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

I should not think it necessary to make any break in the reading of those proverbs, were it not that the Reader thereby may be prompted to make a pause here and there, to ponder over the golden words, and to gather from these precious sentences, both the spiritual and moral improvements from them, as he passeth on. And, the Reader will find, if he maketh a pause after every verse, more or less, that there is scarce one, but what, without violence to the expressions, carries with it a sweet gospel signification. And, surely it is both gracious and blessed, when we can thus bring with us the New Testament into the Old. Thus for example, if we read the several verses we have gone through in this chapter, what can induce *a soft answer* to turn away wrath, until that our poor nature is regenerated and *we have the SPIRIT OF CHRIST*. It is by the SPIRIT only, we are told, that we can *mortify the deeds of the body*; and by his influences that *we put off all these anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of our mouth*, Romans 8:9-13; Colossians 3:8. So again, the proverb saith, that *the tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright. Yes! when the LORD hath done by the sinner as by the prophet, laid the live coal taken from the Holy Altar upon his mouth, and touched the lips, his iniquity is taken away and his sin purged*, Isaiah 6:7. But without this, *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*, Job 14:4. Reader! if through a gospel medium we thus read the

Proverbs, we shall find them *words fitly spoken, like apples of gold in pictures of silver*. Proverbs 25:11.

### **PROVERBS 15:7-13**

The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness. Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die. Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men? A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise. A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

I should apprehend that the mirth here spoken of, means the true joy of the soul, arising from the consciousness of being at peace with GOD. There can be no mirth, no real comfort while the soul is at enmity with GOD by wicked works. *Solomon* hath expressed his sense of this passage, I apprehend, in another, where he saith, *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for GOD now accepteth thy works*. Yes! a soul accepted in JESUS, may indeed both eat and drink the common bread and water, for the body's sustenance, with joy, and the sacred bread and wine, in token of communion with JESUS, for the soul's health, with delight, when brought nigh by the blood of the cross! Here is a solid foundation for the most heart-felt joy, and for making the countenance always cheerful. Eccless 9:7.

### **PROVERBS 15:14-17**

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The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness. All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

Better is it to sit down to the poorest table where JESUS is, and his *love* manifested in blessing the scanty fare, than all the luxuries of unsanctified fulness. Reader! if we eye CHRIST in every thing, then shall *we* truly enjoy CHRIST in every thing.

### **PROVERBS 15:18-33**

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother. Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly. Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established. A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it! The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow. The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words. He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things. The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat. The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

Every word, more or less, in these verses is precious, and as I before remarked, if read with reference to the gospel, cannot fail of leading the soul to JESUS. I hope the Reader will not have neglected this all the way as we have come along through these proverbs. He will have found, I am persuaded, if so, upon many occasions, the truth of what we have just read in this chapter, a *word spoken in due season, how good is it.*

### Reflections

READER! pause with me over the review of this chapter, and let us mark together the improvements which an heart, taught by grace, can readily make out of it. To an enlightened eye, which discerns CHRIST in the whole field of scripture, there is not a flower in it but will yield both beauty and sweetness to our taste. And, like the bee, we shall gather by faith food from all. But, if the eye be not enlightened to see *him*, many a lovely step, which would lead to *the Plant of renown*, we shall never take; but like the wild beast of the wood, tread the whole under our feet. Oh! for grace, so to read the scriptures, as to discover in them *the mysteries of the kingdom*. All, in every part, treat of JESUS in his Person, offices, relations, characters, ordinances, communion. Let us, my brother, continually pray for this grace, to lead us, and to guide us, that we may *walk in the SPIRIT, and be taught by the SPIRIT*. For, if the HOLY GHOST bring us thoroughly to be acquainted with our LORD, *no* part of the divine word will suffer us, at any time to turn from it, until that we have discovered JESUS in it. And, when, in going over the field of the scriptures, like *the merchant-man*, JESUS himself speaks of

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*seeking goodly pearls*, we have found Him the one of great price, of whom Moses and the Prophets did write; such a Pearl, indeed, in whom all grace, glory, yea, GOD himself, in all his fulness dwells, being once found; oh! how gladly shall we go and sell all that we have, and part with all that before we valued the possession of, to obtain him, and to acquire every day an increasing knowledge of him, and communion with him, whom truly to know, and as truly to enjoy, is life eternal.

## Chapter 16

### **PROVERBS 16:1**

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

This chapter opens with a doctrine that we should do well to keep always uppermost in our remembrance, at whatever part of the divine word we open. Yea, not only when we are about to read, but when we are about to pray: in every state, under every undertaking, at all times, and in all places, in life and death. Oh! for grace to remember this sweet scripture, and for strength in grace to wait humbly at the throne of GOD in CHRIST, for the accomplishment of it. See the confirmation of the same, James 1:17; Psalm 10:17; Phillippians 2:13.

### **PROVERBS 16:2-4**

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy

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thoughts shall be established. The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

I beg the Reader to mark particularly this last verse. That the LORD is the maker of all, is a truth well known. But all things are not only made by him, but for him, we are here told: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. Reader! pray pause. The design of redemption, Paul was commissioned to tell the church was, that GOD Might in *the dispensation of the fulness of times, gather together in one all things in CHRIST*, Ephesians 1:10. Consequently all things include both good and bad; the one for happiness, the other for destruction; and the whole for the divine glory in the everlasting felicity of his redeemed, and the everlasting misery of the damned. And the song in heaven John heard was to the same effect, that GOD had made all things for himself. It was addressed to the LAMB, but the glory terminated not there; GOD in CHRIST, FATHER, Son, and HOLY GHOST, had the ascription, *Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood*, Revelation 5:9. *From JEHOVAH* is the first cause, and *to JEHOVAH* as the final end. And what a world of mystery, wonder and glory is folded up in that short scripture, *the deceived and the deceiver are his*. Job 12:16.

### **PROVERBS 16:5-7**

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil. When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

All these are most certain and solemn truths. The latter verse should always be in the believer's recollection. We are so apt to look to second causes, that we frequently overlook the first great, and predisposing cause of all. Whereas did we but keep in remembrance what we cannot but know, that the hearts of all men are in the LORD'S disposal, neither the frowns nor smiles of men would have any more than their proper effect. In proof of this, Reader, pray read Joseph's faith on this occasion: Genesis 45:4-8. And then read the church's account to the same: Psalm 105:25. And then read the words of a greater than all, and upon the greatest of all occasions: John 19:10-11.

### **PROVERBS 16:8-33**

Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right. A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps. A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment. A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work. It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right. The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it. In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain. How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul. Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he. The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. Pleasant words are as an honeycomb,

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sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him. An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good. He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass. The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

If the Reader hath his eye constantly waiting upon the HOLY GHOST, as he goes through these many verses, very sure I am that that blessed SPIRIT will give him to see CHRIST in many a part. And his conclusion therefrom will be like the beginning, and the end of this chapter. It is the LORD that prepares the heart. And it is the LORD that disposeth the heart, and all things, when the lot is cast into the lap.

### Reflections

READER! I cannot better direct both your heart and my own, to a suitable subject for the LORD to bless to our joint Reflections, than what this chapter, both at the opening and close, brings before us. If it be the LORD that prepares the heart, and gives the answer of the tongue; where shall we look both for habitual and actual preparations, but from him? Oh! that there may be always such a going forth of our minds upon the person and graces of the LORD JESUS, by the sweet influences of the HOLY GHOST, that whether we read, or hear, or pray, or praise; faith in him and his great salvation may be

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always uppermost in our affections. Yes! blessed glorifier of my LORD! I do beseech thee to give to me this constant, habitual, and unceasing preparation, *that the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart may be always acceptable in thy sight, O LORD my strength and my REDEEMER.* Sure I *Am*, that without thee I can do nothing. There is nothing in me disposed to do what is good. Nay, LORD, there is in me every thing that is indisposed. And therefore, LORD! undertake for me. *Work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure.* And then, LORD, *my voice shalt thou hear betimes in the morning, yea, I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*

## Chapter 17

### PROVERBS 17:1-2

Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife. A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

Whether it was the intention of GOD the HOLY GHOST in this account of a wise servant to lead to JESUS, I must not presume to determine; but when I call to mind that GOD the FATHER hath put JESUS at the head of all offices, and characters, that in *all things he might have the preeminence*; I confess that in reading the account here given, I find my heart instinctively as it were prompted to contemplate under this character the ever-blessed JESUS, Colossians 1:18, For was not CHRIST JEHOVAH's servant? Nay, did not the gracious

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LORD himself stoop to become the servant of all, and take upon him the form of a servant? *I am among you* (said Christ) *as him that serveth*, Luke 22:27. And who so wise as JESUS? Who so zealous in his FATHER'S service? Who so diligent in the accomplishment of our salvation, and in doing *the work which his FATHER gave him to do?* and hath he not rule over every son, every adopted son whose rebellion and departures from GOD our FATHER hath caused shame? Reader! hath not your unworthiness and mine caused shame? And is it not your glory now, that JEHOVAH'S wise servant hath rule over you? Do you not delight to bow the knee to JESUS, and to confess that he is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER? And hath not JESUS part in the inheritance which he himself hath purchased and recovered among the brethren? Oh! the blessedness of the thought, *he is not ashamed to call them brethren:* and in all that concerns them he takes part. Precious JESUS! may I delight to contemplate thee under this as well as every other tender office and character, into which thou hast condescended to put thyself. And I will say of thee as the church said, *Oh! that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother, when I should find thee without I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised. I would lead thee and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me. I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate,* Song of Solomon 8:1-2.

**PROVERBS 17:3-17**

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. Children's children are the crown of old men; and

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the glory of children are their fathers. Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince. A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth. He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool. An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly. Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with. He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD. Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

I am constrained again to pause over this verse, in which methinks I see a volume that might be made of it concerning JESUS. He is indeed both the friend and the brother. For *verily* (saith an apostle) *he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham*, Hebrews 2:16. As such therefore, he both belongs to our nature and is a true descendant indeed of Abraham. Hadst thou, blessed JESUS, when thou camest to redeem us come only as an angel, and in an angel's nature; though that would have been according to our view of things, staying nearer at home in point of dignity; yet in this case, though thy people still must have loved thee for thy works sake in redeeming us, if redemption could have been accomplished that way; yet surely we should not have known thee as we now know thee; neither have felt our hearts drawn as we now feel them into the sweetest of all loves, in beholding thee as our brother. Neither, dear LORD! could thy people have felt the confidence which they now feel, in coming to thee under all their multiplied wants, and

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the ten thousand times ten thousand occasions, which they find for thy love, and grace, and mercy, to be displayed, upon them, and thy endearing manifestations towards them. Oh! what a source of inexpressible joy doth my poor heart this moment find in this one view of JESUS, the friend that loveth at all times, and the brother born for adversity.

### **PROVERBS 17:18-28**

A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend. He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief. He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy. A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment. Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity. He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

It is very sweet to remark in these Proverbs what a striking contrast the wise man is perpetually drawing, between the wisdom which is from above, and the folly which is from beneath. And by thus putting both in their different shades of colouring, surely he hath adopted the most effectual method of answering the plan of teaching, by such a way as a proverb is calculated to accomplish in carrying conviction to the mind of the blessedness of the one and the sure ruin of the other;

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and as he saith elsewhere, while *the wise shall inherit glory, shame must be the promotion of fools*, Proverbs 3:35.

### Reflections

I PASS by, for the Reader's own improvement, the consideration of every other passage contained in this chapter, to dwell upon that heavenly character of JESUS suggested in this view of him, *the friend that loveth at all times, and the brother born for adversity*. JESUS was indeed peculiarly born for adversity. For had not our ruined circumstances been what they are, never surely had the SON of GOD any need to have been born in our nature, or have come into such an alliance with us, as a brother. But it was because our situation was desperate, because we were exposed, justly exposed to the wrath of Almighty GOD, as helpless as we were miserable, and beyond all the possibility, in ourselves, of doing any thing towards our own recovery; it was on these accounts that *JESUS* stood forth as our helper. So that he was indeed *born for adversity*. And if he will engage for us in this high character of a REDEEMER; he must (justice so requiring) put himself in our very place and circumstances; and as such he must become our brother. This therefore he hath done. And Reader! do observe how all along he hath shewn himself to be the brother eminently born for adversity. He stood in our stead, paid our whole debt, crossed the book which was full of our outstanding debts, with marks to intimate the complete payment in the red letters of his own blood; and not only purchased our lost inheritance but purchased our persons, and hath put his poor indigent brethren, of whom he is not ashamed, into such a

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state of affluence in his fulness, by giving them a right to all he hath, and commanding them to draw upon him for all they need. And what is it now?—but the brother and the friend still. *Having loved his own that are in the world, he loveth them unto the end.* Though to heaven he is returned, to take possession of his kingdom; yet he saith himself, that this is also but for them and in their name. *He will come again and receive them to himself, that where he is there they shall be also.* In the mean time he assures them of his spiritual presence, his watching over them for good, with his whole heart and his whole soul. *Lo! (he saith) I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* Hail! thou almighty friend at all times, thou brother born for adversity. Never, blessed JESUS, let my soul for a moment lose sight of thee under those endearing characters. Though I have slighted thee, forgotten thee days without number; and requited all thy love with baseness and ingratitude; still compassionate brother! do thou continue thy grace and tenderness, and overcome my unworthiness with thy love. *Thou knowest my frame, thou rememberest that I am but dust.* And do thou cause me by thy sweet SPIRIT amidst all my undeservings to be still hanging upon thee, and cleaving to thee and, like another Peter, under the siftings of Satan, and the deceitfulness of my poor sinful heart, still may I always like him be enabled to appeal to thy knowledge in testimony of my adherence to JESUS, and say as he did; *LORD, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*

## Chapter 18

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**PROVERBS 18:1**

Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

I rather accept the expressions in this verse as referring first to the person of CHRIST in his human nature, and next in him to all his people. The desires of JESUS were wholly of this kind. They were all his own. *His desire is towards me*, saith the church, Song of Solomon 7:10. And it was for the sake of the church that CHRIST separated, that is sanctified, set apart, himself, John 17:19. And when a child of GOD is also set apart, and sanctified, is not his desire towards JESUS in all wisdom? Paul's account of himself suits all of Paul's sentiments. *When it pleased GOD (saith he) who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood*, Galatians 1:15-16.

**PROVERBS 18:2-10**

A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself. When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach. The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook. It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment. A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster. The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

What a refuge there is in a covenant GOD in CHRIST for a believer, however buffeted, to take shelter in? Let a child of

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GOD sit down if he will, and ponder over all his discouragements and difficulties; and I will be bold to say, that in the LORD'S name, that is in CHRIST JESUS, he will find somewhat exactly corresponding, to suit and answer for all. Is he poor? CHRIST'S name is riches; yea, durable riches and righteousness, Proverbs 8:18. Is he surrounded with enemies? Then CHRIST is the mighty GOD, Isaiah 9:6. Is he sick? He saith, I am *the LORD that healeth thee*, Exodus 15:26. Do his people need in critical moments a thousand supplies, they know not what, and they know not how? How blessed is that name by which Abraham called the LORD in his moment of necessity; JEHOVAH-jirah, the LORD shall provide; *and at this day in the mount of the LORD it shall be seen*, Genesis 22:14. In short, in the name of JEHOVAH we have all; wisdom to guide, power to help, grace to save, mercy to pardon, righteousness to justify, and all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings. Surely, LORD, *they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee*, Psalm 9:10.

### **PROVERBS 18:11-16**

The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit. Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility. He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear? The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge. A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

*If a man's gift which at the utmost must be of a scanty and transitory nature, hath such a power of opening the heart,*

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what effect, ought the great, the glorious, durable, and eternal gift of GOD'S dear SON to have in opening our souls to love him who hath so loved us? Oh! that a deep sense of this unspeakable Mercy may bring my soul continually before the LORD, with all the acknowledgments of love, and obedience, and faith, and praise.

**PROVERBS 18:17-24**

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD. The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly. A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

I pass over again all the intermediate verses, to dwell upon this very sweet one in the end of the chapter. Amidst all the ingratitude and unfriendliness which my heart hath shewn to JESUS, the best of friends; still he is and will be the *friend that sticketh closer than a brother*. When I Call to mind how I have treated him, and shewn myself towards him; and this, not only before I knew him but since he manifested himself to me, otherwise than he doeth to the world; I blush to think of his unequalled grace, and my unequalled undeservings. In him I behold that description of him by his servant the prophet, and more especially as it concerns myself, most strikingly set forth and confirmed: *He will rest in his love,*

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Zechariah 3:17. He doth indeed rest in his love, for *the LORD GOD of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away*, Malachi 2:16

## Reflections

Reader! what a blessed thing it is to sit down under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST; and while this book of GOD appears indeed truly parables, and must continue so unexplained, until that JESUS by his SPIRIT opens it to our understanding, for us to be led therefrom to see, the mysteries of his kingdom: To the *pure* (saith an apostle) *all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure*. Mark it down my brother, among the gracious things of GOD, to be brought out of the darkness of a natural state and to be introduced into the kingdom of his dear Son; what an unspeakable mercy is here! By this one act of sovereign grace all the blessings, privileges; titles, inheritance; all are made over and secure in the everlasting covenant. The FATHER engageth to bestow all the blessings of it. JESUS hath secured them by his blood and righteousness. And the HOLY GHOST undertakes to instruct them into all the knowledge suited to their adopted state and character. He will guide them into all truth. *He shall take of mine* (saith JESUS) *and shew unto you*. All mysteries, parables, proverbs, essential for their furtherance in grace, and the knowledge of the LORD, shall be explained unto them. *Unto you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of GOD, but to others in parables*. Hence, saith the LORD GOD; in one of the sweetest and most encouraging portions of scripture, *wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My FATHER thou art the guide of my youth?* Jeremiah 3:4.

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## Chapter 19

### PROVERBS 19:1-9

Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth. The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD. Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape. Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him. He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.

I pause over this last verse particularly, to remark to the Reader that there must be somewhat more than of ordinary importance in it, it being the repetition of the same sentiment as was just before delivered, only with stronger marks of the awful sin of which it treats. Both the Writer and the Reader may well pause over these solemn expressions, and consider the very solemn meaning. A false witness is the very reverse of CHRIST, the faithful and true witness, Revelation 1:5. And therefore it may serve to shew what an awful state those men are in, who are found witnessing to lies, to any thing, and every thing, in a way of religion, short of CHRIST and his salvation. The HOLY GHOST witnesseth wholly of JESUS. *He shall testify of me*, saith CHRIST, John 15:26. And how doth he do

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this? He shews to the sinner the evil of his way, he testifieth that CHRIST only can deliver the soul from going down to the pit; he points to the blood and righteousness of JESUS as the only possible means of salvation, and he sets to his seal in the heart of the regenerate, that *there is salvation in no other; neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, whereby they must be saved*, Acts 4:12. And what then must those be but false witnesses, that would direct a sinner to any other SAVIOUR; or would tempt the heart to believe that partly in ourselves and partly in CHRIST we are to seek acceptance? LORD! in compassion to perishing sinners, send forth faithful men to be witnesses for GOD and his CHRIST, Jeremiah 3:15.

### **PROVERBS 19:10-12**

Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes. The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.

Of what king doth the scriptures here speak but of JESUS? Of his wrath we have a striking account, Psalm 2:12. And both the wrath of the LAMB, and the lion of the tribe of Judah, are characters under which JESUS is spoken of. Revelation 5:5-6. See a most striking description. Revelation 6:12-17.

### **PROVERBS 19:13-29**

A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping. House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD. Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger. He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul;

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but he that despiseth his ways shall die. He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again. Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again. Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand. The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar. The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil. A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again. Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge. He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach. Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge. An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity. Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.

I do not wish to swell the commentary for the reasons before given. And indeed if the Reader be under divine teaching, this will supersede all observations of mine. But I hope he will find in all these verses, more or less, somewhat to lead his mind to CHRIST, and in CHRIST to find the truest application.

### Reflections

I TAKE occasion from what this chapter hath suggested of *a false witness*, to admonish the Reader, while I pray for grace to receive *at* the same time in my own heart, the full admonition; to be always upon our watch-tower for the faithful and true Witness concerning JESUS; even GOD the HOLY GHOST, who is *to bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever CHRIST hath taught us*.

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And Reader! it is most blessed and refreshing to a seeking soul to mark the footsteps of his coming. For he comes to us in the Son's name from the FATHER, to propose to us, not in proverbs only, but in the plain words of GOD, the gracious proclamation of pardon, mercy, and peace in the blood of the cross. He not only proposeth to us these mercies, but he disposeth the heart to receive what he brings. He not only shews us the loveliness and suitableness of the SAVIOUR; but he inclineth the soul to see and feel the want of him, and to seek salvation in his blood. And when by his grace he hath powerfully pleaded in our conscience for CHRIST, and against ourselves; in shewing how gracious JESUS is, and how unworthy we are; how very suited he is to us, and how suited we are to him; he puts a cry into our hearts in leading us to the throne of grace, *where we may find mercy and grace to help in every time of need*. Reader! do suffer me to ask you, hath the HOLY GHOST thus witnessed in your heart? Oh! for grace not to grieve the HOLY SPIRIT of the LORD, whereby souls are sealed unto the day of redemption. LORD! grant that my soul may have this faithful Teacher witnessing with my spirit that I am a child of GOD. Keep me, LORD, from every false witness, convinced that this chapter twice hath marked it down, that the end of it is death.

## Chapter 20

### PROVERBS 20:1-6

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Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul. It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling. The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out. Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

When the question is asked, where a faithful man is to be found, the answer is direct. There is a friend that loveth at all times, and a brother born for adversity, Proverbs 17:17. Precious JESUS! thou art indeed a friend, for thou hast shewn thyself most friendly.

#### **PROVERBS 20:7-9**

The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him. A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes. Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

Pause, Reader, over this solemn inquiry. Who can say this? No man. But every man ought to say, *cleanse thou me, O LORD, from secret faults*, Psalm 19:12.

#### **PROVERBS 20:10-12**

Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD. Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right. The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.

What a sweet thought ariseth out of this account, that it is the LORD who hath given sight to the eyes, and hearing to the

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ears. And was not JESUS anointed by the SPIRIT to *preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, and to give sight to the blind*, Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18-19.

### **PROVERBS 20:13-24**

Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread. It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth. There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel. Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war. He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips. Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness. An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed. Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee. Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good. Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

Nothing can be more important to know, nor needful to have a right conception of, than that all our mercies, both in preparation work and in performing work, are of the LORD. *It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*, Jeremiah 10:23. And of all the blessed lessons that by grace we are taught, this is among them, that our inability is discovered, and the expediency of receiving strength from the LORD as clearly made known.

### **PROVERBS 20:25-30**

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It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry. A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them. The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly. Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy. The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head. The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.

Under the various images here represented, the wise man aims to enforce the infinite importance of the maxims he had been setting forth, and the happiness of those that follow them.

### Reflections

I hope that the Reader is perpetually gathering sweet instructions from this part of the word of GOD; and in nothing more so, than in the discovery of his own incompetency to enter far into the apprehension of divine things. Among the improvements of grace this is eminent, to learn, the further we go, the more of our ignorance. If at any time we do not find the sweet savour in the reading of the scriptures as heretofore, the consciousness of past enjoyments ought to become the excitement to future expectations.

If we have known the name of CHRIST to have been precious the sweet savour of his name ought to leave a fragraney now; like some rich perfume, which though the thing itself be taken away, the effects remain. And though we see CHRIST not, yet former experiences should quicken present desires. Man's goings (*Solomon* saith in this chapter) are of the LORD. Am I waiting for some renewed visit from CHRIST? Am I longing for

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his return, expecting him, on the look out for him? Is not this very frame the state in which JESUS prepares his people for the renewals of his love? Nay, is there not in this very desire and expectation of his coming even a present enjoyment in that desire and expectation? Surely all these worketh that one and the self same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. Blessed LORD! grant me a sweet savour of past enjoyments, in the absence of present communion; and when I have no immediate view of thy glory, and the sweet communications of thy love; still let my prayer, awakened by thy grace, be the prayer of the church; draw me and we will run after thee until thou shalt bring me into thy chambers.

## Chapter 21

### **PROVERBS 21:1**

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

There can be no question but that all hearts, and all the ways of men are, like the current of waters, subject to divine direction; and they that are made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER, find sweet comfort in the conviction of this undoubted truth. Even JESUS in his human nature had all the blessedness of this promise of the FATHER. From the union of the human nature with his GODHEAD, his holiness, and purity of the manhood was altogether preserved; but he needed, and therefore had, all that communication from the FATHER which might fit him, strengthen him, and carry him through

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the work which the FATHER gave him to do. Hence we read, that GOD gave not the SPIRIT by Measure unto him, John 3:34. And hence also we read, that he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Psalm 45:7. So that JESUS King Mediator was directed, fitted for his work, assisted in it, and carried through it by GOD the FATHER. See Isaiah 42:1-4; Psalm 22:9-11. And observe what is said of him at the close of all his labours, Psalm 21:1-7

### **PROVERBS 21:2-8**

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin. The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death. The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment. The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.

*Solomon* hath set forth in these verses the striking contrast, between the possession and exercise of the graces of the SPIRIT, and the fruits and effects of the works of the flesh. I do not think it necessary to offer any comment upon either, under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST their different origin, issue, and termination will be abundantly plain. The apostle Paul hath given also a striking view of both, in one and the same scripture, Galatians 5:19-24.

### **PROVERBS 21:9-19**

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. The soul of the wicked

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desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes. When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge. The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard. A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath. It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead. He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich. The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright. It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

The first and last of these verses are to the same effect. They both express the dreadful state of a sinful unregenerate heart, which pours forth evil, and that continually. Alas! what cause have we in the view of such things, to lament over a sinful, fallen, nature. Precious JESUS! what, but for thy great undertaking in the redemption of that nature, and the regeneration of the heart, could have saved from the wrath to come? James 3:14-16. And what a beautiful contrast follows in James 3:17-18!

### **PROVERBS 21:20**

There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

What treasure is this, but that which is derived from him, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Colossians 2:3. And how doth the foolish spend it up? Surely, when despising his great salvation and rejecting this counsel of GOD against their own Souls.

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**PROVERBS 21:21-22**

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour. A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

Are not these things marked in opposition to what was said of the foolish man which went before? Surely that man is wise who followeth after JESUS, who is the righteousness of his people, and *the mercy promised*. And is not such a pursuit like scaling all the walls of opposition, that stand in the way of attainment? In confirmation, read those scriptures where CHRIST is said to be the salvation of JEHOVAH, and from Whom alone righteousness is found. Isaiah 49:6 and again Isaiah 54:17. And CHRIST is the very mercy promised, Luke 1:72.

**PROVERBS 21:23-31**

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath. The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long; but the righteous giveth and spareth not. The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind? A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly. A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way. There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD. The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

I include the whole under one view that the Reader may form his own conclusions under the SPIRIT'S guidings, and which I am persuaded will correspond to the sentiment the wise man closeth the chapter with. Whatever are our plans or our

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devices, the counsel of the LORD standeth sure. All our attainments are but as the strength of horses in battle; there can be no safety but in JESUS. If he be our portion all is well. If CHRIST be for us, who can be against us? But if void of him, he can make even our very comforts minister to our destruction. Reader! pray take in with these scriptures that blessed portion of the apostle's, as a divine confirmation of the whole; Romans 8:31 to the end.

### Reflections

Reader! amidst the mingled view this Chapter affords of grace and corruption, in all their opposite effects and consequences, as well as their origin and termination, oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST may be our teacher, to give us a right understanding in all things. If the heart of man be subject to divine direction, and man of himself cannot guide his steps aright; can there be any argument wanting to induce the soul to look unto him, with whom are the issues of life, and who turneth the heart like rivers of waters whithersoever he pleaseth?

Reader! look closely to what this chapter relates of the unawakened and ungodly. They are uncircumcised in heart and ears. How prone to all evil, how averse to all good; they are in drudgery to sin and Satan, and are led captive by him at his will. Oh! that the prey may be taken from the mighty; and the lawful captive delivered.

Look at the souls of the regenerate, and those of whom JESUS hath opened the eyes, and brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death. Their delight is in the law of the LORD,

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and in that law do they exercise themselves day and night.. They have GOD for their FATHER, CHRIST for their portion, and the HOLY GHOST for their teacher and guide. LORD, help both Writer and Reader, to be thus blessed, thus led, and thus made happy! May we be conducted on from strength to strength until that we appear before our GOD in Zion.

## Chapter 22

### **PROVERBS 22:1-2**

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold. The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

There is a vast dissimilarity in those two verses, but both have great and important truths contained in them. What name so precious as CHRIST'S, and what riches like his. This name is like ointment poured forth for fragrancy, Song of Solomon 1:3 Ecclesiastes 7:1. All the inequalities of life are of divine appointment. It is blessed when both characters find their equality in JESUS. The LORD is then both the Maker and the REDEEMER of all.

### **PROVERBS 22:3-9**

A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life. Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them. Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. He that soweth iniquity

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shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

To whom can this eye of bounty be applied in an equal degree, but to that of JESUS? He indeed is the heavenly Pelican that giveth of his body and blood to his young.

### **PROVERBS 22:10-15**

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease. He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend. The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor. The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets. The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein. Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

If there were no other passage in scripture in proof of original corruption than this last, this alone would confirm the doctrine. Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; it is inmate, born there, and inwrought in the very constitution, Psalm 51:5.

### **PROVERBS 22:16-29**

He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want. Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips. That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to

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them that send unto thee? Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them. Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee? Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Whatever sameness may appear in these proverbs, there is a great variety; and the same truth is made to appear more striking, from being set and placed forward to view in different ways. Upon the whole the great object intended from them, is evidently with a view to endear CHRIST and the graces of his HOLY SPIRIT, and to *mark* out the sad consequences of a contrary pursuit.

### Reflections

READER! a name to live while virtually dead before GOD, is one of the most awful states into which our poor nature can possibly fall. But to be named with a good name in CHRIST which the mouth of the LORD shall name, is among the highest felicities our nature is capable of enjoying. *Solomon* seems to have had this in view while sending forth these proverbs. Every thing that can lead to this enjoyment in JESUS, ought to be our daily pursuit and desire. And what can tend to the attainment of it, but an interest in CHRIST JESUS? The grace of God which bringeth salvation is the only possible means of procuring it. And under the divine blessing this will ensure *whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are*

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*pure, lovely, and of good report.* Reader! let me hope that this grace hath appeared unto *you*: and then it will be found that all these divine principles will have their suited influence upon the heart. He *that walketh with wise men shall be wise, it is the companion of fools that is destroyed.*

## Chapter 23

### PROVERBS 23:1-8

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat. Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven. Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.

The wise man is guarding, in those verses, against two of the great leading sins of a fallen nature; the *lust of the flesh*, and the *pride of life*. The sin of luxury, and the deceitfulness of riches. And *what* multitudes among the sons of men are continually falling by their means. The LORD JESUS, in his unequalled manner, gives caution against *the surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life*, lest the great day of account come in the midst of our enjoyment and find the soul unprepared, Luke 21:34.

**PROVERBS 23:9-16**

Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee. Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge. Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

Here are precepts against another great leading sin, *the lust of the eye*, the coveting what is not our own; and in the accomplishment of wishes so dishonourable to trample over the just rights of such as cannot stand up for themselves, 1 John 2:16. What a blessed security, and indeed the only security is that, which ariseth from resting upon CHRIST, and having him for our treasure and portion. We have a beautiful sentiment of the Psalmist upon this occasion, Psalm 17:14-15.

**PROVERBS 23:17-18**

Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

Nothing can be more conclusive; by way of strengthening the faith of the believer, than what is contained in these verses. When we consider the transitory triumph of bad men, and the sure expectation of the just; this becomes enough to prop up the soul under all exercises. I pray the Reader to turn to a most delightful passage to this effect, Psalm 37:35 to the end.

**PROVERBS 23:19-35**

Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Harken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

All these verses are directed to one and the same subject, and a very animated subject they form, in dissuading from sin and enforcing an attendance on the means of grace. They are so plain and yet so nervous, that any attempt to illustrate, by way of comment, would weaken, instead of heightening the representation. The figure of a man sleeping on the mast, in the midst of a boisterous sea, is happily chosen, to picture the perilous condition of those, who in the voyage of life sleep on, and fancy themselves secure until they fall to rise no more, amidst the waves beneath. *There, is no peace saith my GOD to the wicked*, Isaiah 57:21.

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## Reflections

WHAT evils spring out of the corruptions of our fallen nature! And until grace hath renewed the heart it is full of uncleanness. Like the poor man under the possession of the enemy whose name was Legion; so troops of lusts, and a legion of foes of darkness lead the heart under continued captivity. Every sin, every vanity of life, as Barrabbas of old, is preferred to the REDEEMER. The meanest husks of the world, the dross of fancied happiness, in short any thing and every thing of *a* carnal nature, takes the lead in the carnal mind. LORD! I would say for myself and Reader, give to us to know and seek the unfading pleasures which are in CHRIST and his gospel. Here let our desires be directed; and in him and his great salvation let all our wishes centre. Blessed JESUS! thou hast said, and the truth of it is undeniable; he that hath thee hath substance, and *thou wilt fill all his treasures, for riches and honor are with thee; yea, durable riches and righteousness.*

## Chapter 24

### **PROVERBS 24:1-9**

Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief. Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. For

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by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety. Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate. He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person. The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

If we carry on as undoubtedly we ought, the same idea of wisdom through the whole book of the Proverbs as we began it with, and consider that CHRIST is the wisdom of GOD that is spoken of, We shall find some very sweet things concerning JESUS in these verses. It is indeed through CHRIST, and in CHRIST; and upon CHRIST, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, is built. *Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, and which GOD the FATHER himself laid in Zion,* Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 2 Corinthians 5:1. And as the foundation is CHRIST, so all the chambers of the covenant are his; and in them the believer finds retreat in times of danger, and every thing of riches that is precious and pleasant, Isaiah 26:20. But as the Proverb here expresseth it, the knowledge and enjoyment of CHRIST is too high for a fool; the LORD hath not imparted to him this knowledge. CHRIST is and ever will be to all such while precious to his people, *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.* 1 Peter 2:7-8. I detain the Reader in this place to make a short observation upon the scripture expression *of a fool*, concerning whom it is said that wisdom is too high for such an one; and I detain the Reader for this purpose, because it may serve not only for the present but for every other occasion, whensoever he meets with the term in GOD'S word. And the best, indeed the only infallible method of coming to the right knowledge of this, or any other scriptural expressions, is by comparing scripture with scripture. Now by a fool is meant, one that is ignorant of

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CHRIST. Hence therefore the wicked and unregenerate are stiled men void of understanding; they have eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not; and the like. So that when the prophet was commissioned to tell the church the final state of such characters, he expresseth himself in those striking words, for it is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour, Isaiah 27:11. And that there might be no misapprehension upon a point of such infinite consequence, but that every one might discover the cause of things; and that the folly here and elsewhere spoken of is, not the weakness of intellect, but the ignorance of CHRIST and the despising of JESUS, the LORD JEHOVAH'S one ordinance, and the only one for salvation; Job was commissioned no less to shew, in naming in what the contrary to this folly manifested itself. And unto man he said, behold the fear of the LORD that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. Job 28:28. Hence therefore, the fools of scripture are the despisers of CHRIST, the wisdom of GOD. This is indeed the highest folly: and many, very many such fools it is to be feared, will be found at the last day, among that class of men who pride themselves on great wisdom. I refer the Reader for further light upon this interesting subject to the following scriptures: Romans 1:21, &c, 1 Corinthians 1:18-29.

**PROVERBS 24:10**

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

If I pause over this single verse, it is but to desire the Reader to make the subject of it personal to himself, and to beg of him to enquire whether CHRIST be his strength; for this will

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explain to the full when it is we are weak without him; and why any believer faints in seasons of exercise. According to the strength imparted from JESUS in the actings of our faith upon him, such will be the exact proportion, either of increase or of decline. When we can say, the LORD is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation; then we shall hear the LORD say, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. And then like Paul we shall gladly glory in our infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon us, Psalm 118:14; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

#### **PROVERBS 24:11-14**

If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works? My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

I need not tell the Reader that the honey and the honeycomb of scripture, means somewhat infinitely higher than the mere food of the body. The land of *Canaan*, which was a type of the gospel church, was promised to flow with milk and honey: and hence the gospel call was to buy *wine and milk without money and without price*, Ezekiel 20:6; Isaiah 55:1. CHRIST is himself the honey and the honeycomb, for *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*. His word is *sweet unto my taste (said one of old) yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth*. Psalm 119:103, so that when *Solomon* recommends the honey and the honeycomb, the HOLY GHOST

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shews from other scriptures this is meant concerning CHRIST and his salvation.

**PROVERBS 24:15-18**

Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place: For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief. Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

We have a beautiful comment in the enlargement of part of these verses in the Prophet, Micah 7:5-10.

**PROVERBS 24:19-26**

Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out. My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change: For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both? These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.

I pause over this last verse to detain the Reader with a short observation concerning what is here said of the kissing of the lips, in giving a right answer. The church saith, that she will kiss CHRIST *her brother, when she hath found him*: which is a similar term to that of giving *a right answer*, Song of Solomon 8:1. And the church is said to be kissed by CHRIST, when at any time he manifests his love to her in some renewed tokens

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of it, otherwise than he doeth to the world. So that every man shall kiss his lips, when finding CHRIST as the poor woman did CHRIST'S feet, because she loved much and had much forgiven, Luke 7:38. Reader! do not hastily pass away from this view of affection to the person of JESUS. It is blessed, when at any time a right answer is given to the prayer of faith and the enjoyment of JESUS, to have the soul going forth in desires after CHRIST; in hanging upon CHRIST, adhering to CHRIST, rejoicing in CHRIST, and having none in heaven or earth we desire in comparison of CHRIST!

#### **PROVERBS 24:27-34**

Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house. Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work. I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

If we spiritualize what is here said of the diligence of the man that prepares his work, and then builds his house, and what is said of the negligence of the slothful; and if we make application of it to the heart, a very sweet subject will be found to arise out of the different views. JESUS passed by our whole nature, when in the ruined state of the vineyard here described. And lo! all was covered over with thorns and briars. Reader! what he wrought, and what he accomplished,

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I need not, I hope, tell you. He purchased our lost inheritance, with his blood. He then hedged it round, gathered out the stones of it, renewed the face of it; and by turning up the fallow ground of our hearts, prepared it for himself. And what is it now? Doth he not water it continually with his word and ordinances, the sweet influences of his grace and HOLY SPIRIT? Doth he not watch over it for good with his whole heart and his whole soul? And doth he not come into it, to eat of his pleasant fruits, even the graces of his SPIRIT which he hath planted? Precious JESUS! may my soul consider it well, and receive instruction! May I look up to thee continually as the Proprietor of all! See to it, my soul, that thou art of the vineyard of the LORD of hosts, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant, Isaiah 5:7.

### Reflections

MY soul! while thou art pondering over the very many sweet and precious sayings in this chapter, hast thou not found thine heart warmed within thee, by JESUS speaking to thee by the way, and opening to thee the things here written concerning himself?

Surely JESUS is the Wisdom here spoken of, and he is, my soul, thy wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption! And while thou art seeking from him strength for the day of adversity, thou wilt not faint, as those must do, whose confidence is founded in the wisdom of this world. The rock of ages will be thy support, when those, who lean on the reeds of Egypt, must fail. Yes, my soul, if JESUS be the honey, and the honey-comb of all thy affections, and confidences, and delights; thou wilt find him sweet indeed to thy taste.

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And let others do what they may, or find delight from whence they can, thou wilt kiss Him, into whose lips is poured grace, because JEHOVAH hath blessed him for ever. JESUS will be the right answer given to every case, every trial, every need. Be thou my LORD, and my portion, blessed JESUS, for all thy sayings are indeed right, and all thou hast said, my soul most cordially approveth. Then will my soul humbly kiss thy feet, and I will wash them with my tears, and wipe them in token of my sorrow for sin, like another Magdalene, with the hairs of my head. I will kiss them as a pledge of love, of duty, of obedience, of homage, of reverence; for I earnestly desire to give myself up to thee, and to be wholly for thee and not for another. And oh! thou condescending GOD and SAVIOUR! do thou kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine!

## Chapter 25

### Contents

*Here are similar proverbs to what were given before; but as the title of them observes that they were copied by the men of Hezekiah, they are particularly marked from those we have already gone through.*

#### **PROVERBS 25:1**

These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

Some have thought that those Proverbs here recorded, were copied from among the *three thousand* which is noted, 1Kings 4:32. Some have supposed that what is said, 2 Chronicles 29:3, hath a reference to this business. And others have concluded, that those who copied out these proverbs of *Solomon*, were the Prophets, who lived about the times of the Kings, Hosea, Isaiah, or Micah. But it is enough for us that the Proverbs themselves are *Solomon's*, and carry with them marks of inspiration.

**PROVERBS 25:2**

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

GOD'S glory is manifested to the poor sinner in secret, when he speaks to him by his HOLY SPIRIT, and makes him visits, like Jacob's at Bethel. And those, who are made by him Kings and Priests to GOD and the FATHER, should delight to spread abroad his glory, Psalm 66:16.

**PROVERBS 25:3-5**

The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable. Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer. Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

Such is the love of CHRIST, unmeasurable! Ephesians 3:16-19, When the HOLY GHOST hath taken away by regeneration, the dross of our fallen nature, and new formed us in CHRIST JESUS, then as gold and silver from the furnace, we are brought forth

as vessels of honor for the master's use, Malachi 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:20-21.

**PROVERBS 25:6-7**

Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

Our LORD hath sweetly set forth this grace of humbleness, Luke 14:7-11

**PROVERBS 25:8-12**

Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away. A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprove upon an obedient ear.

This is an elegant figure to represent the golden fruit of the gospel set forth by the word of the SPIRIT. And who is the wise Reprover but the HOLY GHOST himself? John 16:7-8.

**PROVERBS 25:13**

As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

Who is this Messenger, this Interpreter, one among a thousand, but the same Almighty SPIRIT? Job 33:23. Oh! how

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refreshing his doctrine! how grateful his influences! Blessed LORD! be thou the faithful witness in my soul of JESUS!

**PROVERBS 25:14-16**

Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain. By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone. Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

This last verse I beg the Reader to observe, is put in the form of a question. Hast thou found honey? If we accept it *naturally* in reference to the body, of eating the things, which perish in using; what follows may be taken literally. But if we take it *spiritually*, who can have too much of CHRIST, the honey found in scripture? We shall best explain this scripture *in* this sense by another: *I charge ye, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love*, Song of Solomon 5:8. As if she had said, I love CHRIST so much that I am overpowered with my love of him. It hath induced a sickness of soul to long after him more and more. Sweet thought of JESUS this! And which those who have found CHRIST the very honey and the honey-comb of the soul, sometimes, I hope, know what it is to feel it.

**PROVERBS 25:17-22**

Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee. A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For

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thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

The Apostle hath quoted these last verses with a peculiar reference to the blessed effects of grace in the heart, Romans 12:19-21 And what should a child of GOD, who hath tasted of the preciousness of JESUS, do to an enemy? Surely melt him down with coals of the fire of love, in recompensing good for evil. Is not JESUS here peculiarly pointed at? Did he not do all this, and ten thousand times more to us his enemies, when our souls were famished, and an everlasting unsatisfied state of thirst must have been endured, had not he quenched it? Precious, precious JESUS! thou didst indeed give us bread to eat, and water to drink, even the bread of life, and the water of life: yea, thine own body and blood! And how hath JEHOVAH rewarded thee with the felicity of having redeemed thy people?

### **PROVERBS 25:23-25**

The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

Were there ever such tidings proclaimed as the tidings of salvation? And what waters to a thirsty soul, can equal the gratification of the souls thirst, when satisfied with redemption in CHRIST'S blood. News indeed from a far country, for it comes from heaven to earth, and from GOD to man. Angels posted down to proclaim it; and JESUS came and confirmed it by his blood: blessings on his name!

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**PROVERBS 25:26-28**

A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring. It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory. He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

All these are very plain scriptures, explained upon the same gospel principles; and where the SPIRIT of CHRIST is not, they are none of his, Romans 8:9.

### Reflections

READER! many very blessed Reflections will be found folded up in the bosom of this chapter, and which I pray the HOLY GHOST to open and explain to you and to me. And among the many, that of the eating of the honey comb inducing sickness is not the least. If the blessed SPIRIT be the faithful Messenger to our souls herein, I hope and trust that we shall both be refreshed in the view, as from the snow of Lebanon in the time of harvest, or the cold flowing waters that come from another place.

And what sickness like the sickness of the soul, when from having seen CHRIST as necessary, and having had such views of him as induce those longings and desires after him, which nothing short of himself can satisfy: the whole heart is sick, and every faculty faint until CHRIST be enjoyed. Precious LORD! give me this sickness, which is not unto death, but for the glory of GOD, that the SON of GOD may be glorified thereby. Give me so to long for thee; so passionately to desire thee; that like the church I may cry out, Stay me with flagons,

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comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. Let my soul seek after thee as for hidden treasure; follow hard after thee in ordinances; set thee as a seal upon my heart, as a seal upon my arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave: may I delight to hear thy name, sweeter than all the melody of music to my ear, or the fragrancy of ointment to the smell. And never; never, give over, until such renewed manifestations of my LORD be made to my heart, that under the impression of thy soul-reviving presence, I can cry out, It is the voice of my beloved: behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills. And oh! do thou haste, my beloved, and come, for hope deferred maketh the heart sick; and when the desire cometh it is indeed a tree of life. Yes! blessed JESUS, ere long thou wilt come, and we shall part no more. I shall arrive, borne by thee on eagle's wings, to that blessed climate where the inhabitant shall no longer say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Amen.

## Chapter 26

### Contents

*Under various similitudes, the Proverbs are continued to shew the wisdom of the wise, and the sad conduct of foolish men.*

#### **PROVERBS 26:1-9**

As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool. As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by

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flying, so the curse causeless shall not come. A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back. Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage. The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools. As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool. As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

Every one of these parables, no doubt, hath a very significant and pointed meaning, But, so very different is the plan and stile of the oriental method of writing, compared to ours, that it is not very easy to discover the exact reference. One elucidation may, however, serve to throw a light upon many. The inequality of the legs of the lame should seem to imply, how unsuited mingled things in religion are in general; and especially in things which have reference to divine truths. Thus, for example, if the preachers of the gospel mingle things of human merit with divine excellency, and join creature-works with CHRIST'S salvation; here is a vast disproportion, a lameness from *inequality*. And by a parity of reasoning, the same may be spiritually applied to the other proverbs.

### **PROVERBS 26:10-28**

The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors. As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him. The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. He that passeth

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by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him. A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

I do not think it necessary to enlarge the volume by offering any comment upon what is here said. If read with *a* spiritual eye to CHRIST and his gospel, they are all, more or less, capable of conveying much instruction. And, under this point of view, I would recommend the book of Proverbs to the Reader, Proverbs 1:6

### Reflections

If the Reader discovers JESUS in the midst of these verses, he will find what the wise man hath elsewhere observed, and with truth is found to be the case, that *his name is as ointment poured forth*. The discovery of his Person, and the apprehension of his character, relations, and offices, by faith, hath a blessed effect to endear the scriptures to our hearts. And indeed without this discovery, what can we be said to learn in a way of salvation. And Reader! whether we discover him or not, depend upon it here JESUS is. CHRIST is in all, and

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through all, and with all. He fills the whole in the church, the word, the promises, and the hearts of his people. LORD! open mine eyes to see the wonderous things of thy law. Open mine heart to feel the full influences of thy grace. Be thou the sum and substance of all my pursuits and desires: and be thou *formed in my heart the hope of glory.*

## Chapter 27

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*The sacred writer in this chapter, is still prosecuting the proverbial method of instruction, and adopting various figures for conveying divine truths.*

#### **PROVERBS 27:1**

Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

The man that looks into the situation of men and things respecting human instability, will discover the beauty of this divine precept, James 4:13. CHRIST hath given an important precept on this very ground, Matthew 6:34.

#### **PROVERBS 27:2-10**

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the

wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

Amidst several beauties in those verses, I beg the Reader not to overlook that one of a man's own friend, and our FATHER'S friend, and the neighbour that is near. For what friend like CHRIST, beloved of the FATHER? And who so near or dear among the neighbourhoods of life, as JESUS? *Boaz* said, in reference to this, *There is a kinsman nearer than I*, Ruth 3:12. And so might every son and daughter of Adam say, when referring to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. For by marrying our nature and taking a portion of that nature into himself; *He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*, Ephesians 5:30.

### **PROVERBS 27:11-27**

My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me. A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him. A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself. Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured. As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied. As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise. Though thou

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shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation? The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered. The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field. And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.

There are many charming things spoken of through these verses, and which, if explained upon gospel principles, have a gracious tendency. But it will be better for the Reader to have them opened to his understanding by the HOLY GHOST, whose infallible teaching will secure from the possibility of error. JESUS hath said concerning him, that *he shall guide into all truth*: and it is he which shall *take of the things of JESUS and shew unto his people*, John 16:13-14.

### Reflections

WHAT the wise man hath said in the close of this chapter, of the diligence of looking well to the state of the flock, and the care of the herds, may well be construed into the diligence every man ought to have to the care of the soul, and to know the state in which he stands before GOD. *Tell me*, (saith the church upon this momentous subject) *tell me, O thou, whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, Where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon. For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?* We never can be too solicitous on points of this nature. Where JESUS feeds; what he feeds with; and how we are growing up in the nurture and sustenance of the spiritual life. Reader! is JESUS

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your Shepherd? Doth he, who sits in the midst of the throne, and feeds the church above, feed you in this wilderness state below? Is he the bread of GOD and the bread of life to your soul? *Are the lambs for thy clothing, and the goats the price of the field.* In other words, art thou clothed with the garment of salvation wrought out by the LAMB of GOD? And dost thou eat of the paschal LAMB, whose *flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed?* Oh! for grace to feed upon CHRIST! and to hear him say; *Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you! Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!*

## Chapter 28

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*The wise man is prosecuting the same subjects in this chapter as in the preceding. By various similitudes he teacheth the blessedness of wisdom's ways, and the awful termination of a contrary conduct.*

#### **PROVERBS 28:1-5**

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged. A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food. They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them. Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.

The sentiments contained in those verses, are all so plain as to require no comment. And nothing can be more happily chosen than in this way of parable, to shew the life of grace in its consequences, and the life of sin in its eventual ruin. The Reader will not fail, I hope, to perceive that what is said of seeking the LORD, as resulting from an understanding in all things, carries with it a correspondence to the same conduct *as the praying seed of Jacob* in all ages have adopted in seeking the LORD'S face in the LORD'S strength. CHRIST is *the way, and the truth, and the life*. And all his seed seek salvation in this way, and in none other, Psalm 27:8; John 14:6.

#### **PROVERBS 28:6-14**

Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father. He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession. The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out. When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

I stay not to point out the several very striking testimonies which are contained in these verses. I hope the reader will read them through the medium of the gospel; and then he will discover how sure the promises are, *which in CHRIST JESUS*

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*are all yea, and Amen.* Who are the poor here spoken of, but *the poor in spirit who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?* And who is the wise son, but he that keepeth an eye upon *CHRIST the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* In like manner, if the whole be interpreted by the gospel, we shall find much sweetness in every one, James 2:5; Romans 10:4

### **PROVERBS 28:15-28**

As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people. The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days. A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him. Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once. He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough. A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent. To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress. He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him. He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue. Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer. He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered. He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse. When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.

If the Reader will go diligently over the whole chapter, and read the several parts of it with an eye to JESUS, I venture to assure him that in many places, where he might be at first led to suppose there was least of CHRIST, he would still find

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somewhat leading to him. Surely it is blessed to be always upon the look out for him. And if we have but a glimpse of the *king in his beauty*; if we behold but his shade as he passeth by, it will be an ample recompence to our utmost diligence, Isaiah 33:17; Proverbs 8:17.

### Reflections

READER! I take occasion from the view of this chapter, and the contents of it, to remind your heart, and my own, how truly blessed it must be to find CHRIST in his hidden word; and what distinguishing tokens of favour it brings with it, when this is the case. And, indeed, may we not suppose, that if some portions of scripture are made more obscure than others, it is with a design to call up the more awakened attention of the LORD'S people; that when CHRIST is discovered in them, the joy of having found him, may be more blessed. Is not this like the riddle of Samson, Out of the eater cometh forth meat; and out of the strong cometh forth sweetness?

Precious JESUS! may my soul know thee as the way to the FATHER, the truth, and the life eternal! And may my soul be always found in this way, walking in it, and enjoying all divine comforts in it. Yes, blessed LORD! this is the highway which the Prophet was commanded to tell the church should be thrown open, and which should be called the way of holiness. And while the foolish see it not, and the proud despise it, and the unclean shall not pass over it. The wayfaring men, though fools, in human sciences, and human knowledge, shall not err therein. Blessed GOD! do thou strengthen me more

and more in this way, that I may walk up and down in thy Name.

## Chapter 29

### Contents

Here are many like words to the former, by way of proverbs in this Chapter to the same purport as before, in holding forth the mysteries of the kingdom.

#### **PROVERBS 29:1-4**

He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance. The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

By the king here spoken of, must be meant the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He is the king uniformly intended through all the scriptures, whose government is in righteousness, and who will minister true judgment unto the people. He is JEHOVAH'S king, and so revealed, Psalm 2:6; Psalm 20; Psalm 21.

#### **PROVERBS 29:5-13**

A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice. The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath. If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest. The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul. A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked. The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

This last verse contains an abundance of gospel truths. When the HOLY GHOST shines in upon the soul of the sinner, grace breaks through all the darkness of the mind. The poor in spirit, and the deceitful heart of the proud sinner; both are made equal debtors to the rich, free, and sovereign grace of GOD. Herein, in an eminent point of view, is that scripture fulfilled, which saith, *GOD is no respecter of persons*. For in the redemption by CHRIST, it is not that one sinner merits more than another sinner, in being made the distinguished object of such an unspeakable mercy: but that GOD'S rich grace may be magnified. It is not a respect to our person, but a respect to the everlasting covenant of GOD in CHRIST, Romans 9:16-21.

### **PROVERBS 29:14-18**

The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever. The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

I pause over this last verse, to remark, that by the people perishing where there is no vision, cannot be meant that the people of GOD perish *erelastingly*: for JESUS hath said, that

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*they, shall not perish; neither shall any pluck them out of his hand,* John 10:28. But even the people of GOD may perish *temporally*: and if they follow blind leaders, and are found sitting under a carnal ministry; here the lack of knowledge must, and will induce great leanness of soul: therefore they may be truly said to perish for the want of soul-enriching supports, arising from the open vision of the word, and secret manifestation, through the ministry of the word and ordinances of JESUS and his graces. Reader! think herefrom how inexpressibly valuable must it be to have a soul-strengthening fulness of ordinances; and a faithful ministry of the word to sit under, where JESUS hath promised his presence, Matthew 18:20.

#### **PROVERBS 29:19-27**

A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer. Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him. He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length. An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not. The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe. Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD. An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is unjust in the way is abomination to the wicked.

It is blessed to mark, both in the entrance, the progress, and the issue of things, the mighty difference between him that serveth. the LORD, and him that serveth him not. The Prophet did not, without sufficient cause, deliver that most decided sentence: Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with

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him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him, Isaiah 3:10-11.

### Reflections

READER! there is an abundance of matter for raising many profitable Reflections in the perusal of this chapter; but I beg particularly to call your attention to that solemn verse contained in it, which in itself forms a volume. *Where there is no vision, the people perish.* The most faithful ministers of JESUS have to lament the little success of their labors in the present day: and when they look round and take a leisurely survey, of the languishing state of Zion, much cause have they to weep, *between the porch and the altar*, and to besiege the mercy-seat, night and day, with the cry: *Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach.* But what an awful view doth it afford in the consciousness that in many places of this our *guilty* land, *There is no vision!* Oh! for the LORD to send forth faithful men, anxious to win souls to CHRIST! And oh! for the LORD JESUS to come himself in every place whithersoever he sends his word by faithful Pastors, after his own heart, that shall feed his people in true understanding and knowledge. Reader! where, and under what *open vision*, do you sit? That gospel, which holds forth JESUS in the glories of his person, and in the compleatness of his salvation—which humbles the sinner, and exalts the SAVIOUR—which, by laying the creature low, makes JESUS precious; and tends to promote holiness in the life and conversation, in shewing all our springs to be in him: these are precious truths to keep the soul alive, and to prevent

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leanness and perishing. Reader! may it be your portion, and mine, to be thus *strong in the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS*.

## Chapter 30

### Contents

Here are mingled, with other divine things, a collection of Proverbs, as before: but it should seem to be not of the writings of *Solomon*. Their tendency is, however, the same; and, no doubt, they are of divine inspiration, being a part of the sacred canon of scripture.

#### **PROVERBS 30:1**

The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

The Author, or writer, makes this first verse a preface to the subject. His name is Agur Ben Jakeh. And it is called a prophecy, what he here delivers. He seems to have addressed it to two persons, Ithiel and Ucal. But this is not certain. Indeed, from the names themselves of those persons, if they may be supposed to have any signification more to the doctrine herein contained, than to their own character, it should seem to be important. Ithiel means in the compound, GOD with me: and Ucal means mighty. So that it hath been supposed, that what is here delivered by Agur, is not to Ithiel, and Ucal, but concerning CHRIST, to whom those names are applicable. And this seems to be the more probable, because

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Agur means; in its original, a gatherer. So that if this be the intention, then the preface will be the word's which are gathered by Agur, in prophecy of Ithiel, even of GOD the mighty one with me. And this seems yet more probable from the similar prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 and again in Isaiah 9:6. But if there be the least authority for this interpretation of Agur's preface, we shall be sure to find somewhat corresponding in the prophecy itself, in relation to CHRIST. I pray the Reader to be very diligent in looking out on this ground. And I yet pray more earnestly for that gracious GOD, whose office-character it is to take of the things of JESUS, and shew to us, to be with us in our going through this chapter!

**PROVERBS 30:2-3**

Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

Certainly these verses contain what may well be supposed to form the creed of one taught of GOD. He begins his discourse in the best manner, in disclaiming all self-knowledge, and all self-righteousness. Thus far we may safely conclude, that if the writer is about to discourse of CHRIST, his preface is quite in point.

**PROVERBS 30:4-6**

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust

in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Surely the writer, be who he may, is speaking of GOD and of his CHRIST. Nay, he seems to have been speaking in the same words, as CHRIST! See John 3:13. I refer the Reader also to those other scriptures by way of confirmation, Isaiah 40:10-16; John 1:1-5; Ephesians 4:9-10. And when the Reader hath duly pondered over the different passages, I beg of him to say, whether any prophecy can be more pointed than what is here contained, to the person and glories of JESUS? And I beg the Reader to remark yet farther, that in the delightful method he hath here adopted of asking his name, and his Son's name; is it not decided by saying that his name then was *secret*, which hereafter was to be revealed *openly*. Jacob asked his name and it was then secret, Genesis 32:29. Moses at the bush desired also to have some name of authority to go by, and all he learnt was, that it was *a* Being self-existent, and eternal, that could, and would give a being to all his promises, *I am, that I am*, Exodus 3:14. And Manoah was told to the same amount, Judges 13:18

### **PROVERBS 30:7-9**

Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Here is the memorable prayer of Agur. In every point of view, as respecting providence and grace, it is very full. Reader! when a child of GOD hath learnt with full assurance of faith to

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commit his soul into the hands of CHRIST, he finds the greater confidence to depend upon *a* faithful GOD in CHRIST for the supplies of the body. He that saveth the greater will be sure to provide for the less.

**PROVERBS 30:10-14**

Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty. There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

All the several generations here spoken of are to be accounted for the same way. Every unawakened sinner is sleeping in the security of self-confidence, and his eyes have never been opened to see the spots of his own soul. And how then shall he be washed from his filthiness who denieth, because he knoweth not his own uncleanness. How sweet that prayer of David: *Cleanse thou me from secret faults*, Psalm 19:12. And how becoming that prayer of the leper: *LORD! if thou wilt thou canst make me clean*, Matthew 8:2. Reader! can you adopt the language of both? If so, surely you are not of the generation Agur speaks of.

**PROVERBS 30:15-33**

The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the

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ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it. There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid. Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness. For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat; For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress. There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces. There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going: A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any; A greyhound; an he goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up. If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth. Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

I include the whole of these verses into one reading. They are all descriptive of one and the same thing, namely, the depth of iniquity in the human heart, which, as the LORD hath said by the Prophet, none but He that searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins can know, Jeremiah 17:9-10. But reader! what a strength of argument do all these things furnish, to endear, and make interesting, JESUS, and his great salvation. Where, or to whom, blessed LORD, can such poor polluted creatures as are here described, look for deliverance, but to thee, who art the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS! Reader! while meditating these things, and learning therefrom the universal depravity and corruption of the heart, can you join issue in

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that blessed scripture, in a consciousness of being the happy partaker of it? *And such were some of you: but ye are washed: but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD,* 1 Corinthians 6:11

### Reflections

BLESSED LORD JESUS! I desire to adore thee, for having added to all thy servants the Prophets in their testimonies concerning thee, this charming portion of Agur. Indeed, O LORD, I cannot but accept what is here said by him, as referring to thee. For who is the *Ithiel* of the scripture, but JESUS? And who is the *Ucal* of his people, but He, that is the LORD our righteousness, mighty to save? I may well find interest in the words of Agur; for I can truly say with him, as referring to nature, void of thy divine teaching; *I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.* And hadst thou not, by the teaching of thy blessed SPIRIT, brought me acquainted with thyself, I might have been forever asking, without obtaining an answer: what is the name of JEHOVAH; and what the name of JESUS? But now, LORD, through thy grace preventing me, I do know thee, and desire to love thee, and to live to thee, and rejoice in thee. And because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth. *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.*

Matchless Instructor! let all the divine parables of thy word, be opened and explained to me by thyself. May I see in them, and through them, CHRIST JESUS; and then in Him I shall find

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all I need. And, however, to the unawakened, they may remain as a vision sealed, yet if thou, LORD, wilt open mine eyes, I shall see the wondrous things of thy law.

## Chapter 31

### Contents

This chapter, like the former, is styled a prophecy. And whether written, as some think, by *Solomon*, and others not; yet as in form and manner it is exactly like the former, it forms a very proper conclusion to the book of Proverbs.

#### **PROVERBS 31:1**

The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

Many construe Lemuel, for *Solomon*: for as the name Jeddidah, beloved of the LORD, was given him, over and above that of *Solomon*: So Lemuel, which signifies one for GOD, they think may be his also. 2Sam 12:25. But this is but conjecture. Taught of his mother, should seem to carry with it, that it means no more than that the mother of Lemuel brought him up, as all pious parents are taught to do, in the nurture and admonition of the LORD, Ephesians 6:4.

#### **PROVERBS 31:2-7**

What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to

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that which destroyeth kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

What is the strong drink here alluded to, but the rich wine of the gospel? The feast of marrow, and of wine on the lees, which the LORD of hosts hath made for all people, in the mountain of the LORD'S house.

If the Reader would see both the fulness and fatness of this feast, I refer him to the account of it, Isaiah 25:6-8.

### **PROVERBS 31:8-9**

Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

When a poor sinner hath once had his mouth and heart opened by grace, the same LORD that wrought the work in grace, will open it also in praise. And then he that hath found mercy, will plead *for* mercy, 1 Peter 4:10.

### **PROVERBS 31:10-31**

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she

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planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

This is a very beautiful description of a virtuous woman. But is it not the church of CHRIST, that is intended by it? As the scriptures are full of the praises of CHRIST, so we find in many portions of the word, similar commendations of the church's beauty. For being made comely by the comeliness which he hath put upon her, she is lovely in his eyes, and no spot is found in her, Song of Solomon 4:7. In Psalm 45, we have a very delightful account given of the church, to which I refer. And the whole book of the Songs, is full of nothing less than the mutual love between CHRIST and his church. If the Reader will compare what is here said concerning the virtuous woman, and what is said in the scriptures I have referred to, as well as other parts of the word of GOD, in reference to the church, he will find that, however individually considered, it may be said of every child of GOD what is here rehearsed; yet,

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it is collectively spoken of the Bride, the LAMB'S wife, Revelation 21:2-9. Of her as appearing in the eyes of JESUS, it may be truly said; *Many daughters have done excellently, but she excelleth them all.*

### Reflections

AND now, Reader, having gone over this book of the Proverbs, and having seen that in many parts of them, it is of JESUS they principally treat; I would desire to close this part of the sacred word, with referring all that hath been offered by way of comment, to the goodness and forbearance of the LORD; beseeching him to pardon the whole, and to let his strength be perfected in human weakness. If JESUS be the wisdom here intended to be set forth (as in many parts of this book, what is said concerning wisdom can be applicable to none but him) it will be our happiest improvement of this delightful scripture, to seek after CHRIST in, and through all. In JESUS we behold the constellation of wisdom, all the properties of it, centered in his one Person. The divine, and human nature, forming one glorious Mediator, the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to a lost world. In all his offices also, all his characters, as well as in the constitution of his person, wisdom shines out in full splendor. *Here mercy and truth meet together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* Blessed JESUS! thou art wisdom itself; even the wisdom of GOD in a mystery! And in thee are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Vouchsafe, dear LORD, both to him that writes, and to him that reads, such suited proportions as may make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in thyself. And let our souls be living under the

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gracious illuminations of thy holy SPIRIT here below until we come to the everlasting enjoyment of thee in glory for evermore.

# *ECCLESIASTES*

## OR, THE PREACHER.

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE have here another of the Books of Solomon, and written, as the one that precedes it, and as the one that follows, under the Spirit of inspiration.

The title of the book, *Ecclesiastes*, implies a Preachment. And, indeed, the whole scope of it, is to this end. And Solomon the Preacher of it (which is the title he hath assumed upon the occasion) carries with it the idea of *gathering together*, confirms the same. I hesitate not to ascribe this little volume to Solomon, because the first verse proves as much. For though he doth not call himself by name; yet as no son of David was king of Jerusalem but Solomon, it follows by undeniable consequence, that it could be no other than he.

The great design which the HOLY GHOST seems to have intended from the use of it in the church, was, to teach the emptiness and vanity of all things here below, to satisfy the desires of immortal souls. And nothing could have been more happily chosen, than in the example of the wisest and greatest of all the kings of the earth, to set forth this leading, and important truth. And, as the conviction of this doctrine must, under the blessed SPIRIT'S teaching, be made

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instrumental to lead the heart to CHRIST, here we discover in this book of GOD, one gracious method more, *to make men wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS.*

In respect to the *time*, in which Solomon committed these golden sayings to paper, writers are rather divided in opinion concerning it. But the most part have concluded, that it was towards the close of his life; inasmuch as the whole seems to be practical and experimental conclusions, which a soul taught by grace, would make from serious reflections on human life. Everything void of JESUS, being, as this Preacher's constant text expresses it, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

I shall not think it necessary to detain the Reader any longer with *General Observations*, from immediately entering on the perusal of this book of GOD. But while I look up for grace, and the teachings of the SPIRIT, to guide me through it, I pray the Reader to have his eyes directed to the same Almighty Guide; that either by immediate declaration, or by direct allusion, we may both be led to see, that to CHRIST and his one-finished salvation, the whole refers; in Him the whole is beautifully explained; and He, and He alone, is the Centre to which JEHOVAH all along intended everything should be gathered, in the dispensation of time, when CHRIST should be presented as *the Head of the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*

## CHAPTER 1

### CONTENTS

*Under a great variety of evidences, taken from the circumstances of human life, and everything around, the*

*Preacher fully proves the total inability of all the outward circumstances of nature to constitute happiness.*

### **ECCLESIASTES 1:1**

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

The book opens very properly with the name, or rather the office and connection *of* the Author, and the purport of his sermon. Where the mane of Solomon is, there is sure to be found wisdom. How much more with that of JESUS, in whom are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?* Colossians 2:3.

### **ECCLESIASTES 1:2**

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity.

This may be considered as the one text of Solomon's whole discourse. He takes this for his subject; and all that follows is in confirmation of it. And Reader! I beseech you, as you pass along, to mark with me the opposite to this vanity, which is found in CHRIST. You will discover, in exact proportion, that as all Solomon advanceth in his subject, so the proof of the vanity of everything *out of* CHRIST, tends in confirmation of it, and the contrast will be of the durable riches and righteousness found *in* CHRIST.

### **ECCLESIASTES 1:3-11**

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? (4) *One* generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. (5) The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. (6) The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. (7) All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. (8) All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear

filled with hearing. (9) The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun. (10) Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. (11) *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after.

Nothing can be more beautiful, by way of illustrating the Preacher's text and doctrine, than the representation of the things here chosen. What is the labour of one man, or the indolence of another? To what purpose are the ills of the poor, or the pleasures of the rich? let the different objects of their different pursuits, be looked into, and the ultimate end of all is one and the same; namely, all are directed to make provision *for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*, Romans 13:14. But while the fashions of the world, with all its different pursuits, end in vanity; let the subject be considered as it relates to CHRIST, and here all things become certain, solid, and substantial. Everlasting profit here will be found in that pursuit, which is directed in labouring for *the bread that perisheth not*. And let what will of worldly generations pass away, and others of the same kind succeed them; yet *the children of CHRIST shall continue, and their seed shall be established before the LORD*. Psalm 102:28.

### **ECCLESIASTES 1:12-18**

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. (13) And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all *things* that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. (14) I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit. (15) *That which is* crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. (16) I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all *they* that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. (17) And I gave my heart to know

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wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. (18) For in much wisdom *is* much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

In these verses are contained what must ever be considered as the grand part of a sermon, where the doctrine is brought to proof, and where the subject doth not rest upon mere saying a thing is so, but the most undeniable evidences are given of it: Solomon brings forward his witness in proof. Here is a man produced, who lived it all over himself, and proved it to be very vanity. He surly was well qualified to make trial: for he possessed more than any man before him ever did; to make trial of. He had riches, wealth, strength, opulence, servants, and every requisite to make life happy, if happiness could consist in the abundance of the things which a man possessed. And Solomon super-added to all these, an extent of knowledge and wisdom, far superior to every other, to seek and contrive that which might best promise success in the attainment. But what was the result? The Preacher still abides by his text, and in the conclusion declares, that he perceived that this also became *vexation of spirit*. Reader! do not fail to make your own observations as you go, and if the *SPIRIT* of wisdom be your Teacher, the conclusion of Solomon will correspond with your own: and his sentiment will be echoed in your heart, in relation to all earthly pursuits: *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity!*

## REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter; and when thou hast gathered together, into one point of view, the several weighty truths contained in it, sit down and sum up the very solemn lessons which it reads to thee. Vanity of vanities, indeed, are all the pursuits of human life, however diversified they may be: for where CHRIST is not, there can be nothing solid,

nothing substantial. And could the world, amidst its numberless avocations and amusements, hear but the voice which speaks loudly and unceasingly in exit, they would hear an echo to Solomon's words in every instance, Though all are in pursuit of happiness; all err in that pursuit. And whether it be the rich, or the great, or the vain, or the noble, the close is the same to all. *The deep saith it is not in me: and the sea saith it is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.*

From all the vanities, and follies, and pursuits of life, do thou, my soul, turn to *JESUS*. He saith, and the truth is unquestionable, *I will cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their measures.* Precious, precious *JESUS!* be thou my portion; for in thee I shall enjoy all things. And whether men speak well, or speak ill; whether creatures smile, or frown: whether my frames are bright, or dark; lively, or dull; yet *JESUS*, and his salvation, is a portion to live upon forever. And on thee, *LORD*, therefore, may my soul fix, and dwell and rejoice in thee, as my only good here, and my everlasting happiness to all eternity hereafter. Amen.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTENTS

*In this Chapter the Preacher prosecutes still further the doctrine of the emptiness of creatures, to give happiness. Having in the former Chapter stated the subject in general, he here enters into particulars, in proof that all is vanity.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11**

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also *is* vanity. (2) I said of laughter, *It is* mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? (3) I

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sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. (4) I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: (5) I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all *kind of* fruits: (6) I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: (7) I got *me* servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: (8) I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, *as* musical instruments, and that of all sorts. (9) So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. (10) And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. (11) Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was* no profit under the sun.

Here is a very faithful account of those things in which carnal men place their chief good. Mirth, and wine; and houses of vermillion and cedar, silver and gold; men servants, and maid servants; horses, and equipage; music, and no doubt dancing, also; with, in short, everything that might gratify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Reader! pause, I beseech you, over this account; and then take a look, if it be but a short one, of the present state of things around; and say, if Solomon had drawn this representation not for himself, but for the world, in this nineteenth century of Christianity, could the picture have been more accurate? Would it not excite the pity of an angel could he be supposed to be looking on, to see the multitude of those who call themselves the followers of the humble Redeemer, so deeply engaged in the reverse of what his blessed gospel teacheth. The Man of *Uz* hath drawn

a similar picture of the carnal in his day. Job 21:7-15. And *Asaph*, hath taught us, what effect such characters have in the exercises of the faithful. Psalm 73:3-13.

### **ECCLESIASTES 2:12-13**

And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the king? *even* that which hath been already done. (13) Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

What a striking conclusion doth the Preacher make of the whole in those verses? And how much the experience of men in all ages comes to the same termination. Reader! depend upon it, nothing out of CHRIST, nothing but CHRIST himself, can satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. The rich fool in the gospel, was a fool indeed, who said to his soul, *Eat, drink, and be merry*. For the soul can truly relish nothing that is carnal. Luke 12:19, 20. It was a blessed thing that Solomon was taught to make after all his pursuits this conclusion. And it is our mercy that he was commissioned to leave his testimony of it upon record!

### **ECCLESIASTES 2:14-15**

The wise man's eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. (15) Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also *is* vanity.

It is worth the Reader's close observation, that Solomon, having in the foregoing verses ascertained the little pretensions that arise from *sensual* gratifications to happiness; in these verses he sets himself to make a similar estimate of those pleasures which arise from *mental* enjoyments. And he proves that those, like the former, are alike vain and unsatisfying. Reader! follow the Preacher's

observations with your own. Wherein is happiness to be found? among the book-worms, and the studious of the earth? If CHRIST be not the object of pursuit; what, less than vanity marks all? The termination to the worldly wise and the fool, is one and the same. All is vanity.

### **ECCLESIASTES 2:16-26**

For *there is* no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now *is* in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise *man?* as the fool. (17) Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun *is* grievous unto me: for all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit. (18) Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. (19) And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise *man* or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This *is* also vanity. (20) Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun. (21) For there is a man whose labour *is* in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it *for* his portion. This also *is* vanity and a great evil. (22) For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? (23) For all his days *are* sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. (24) *There is* nothing better for a man, *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it *was* from the hand of God. (25) For who can eat, or who else can hasten *hereunto*, more than I? (26) For *God* giveth to a man that *is* good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him* *that is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

The Preacher, having fully and clearly ascertained, that both sensual pleasures and mental pursuits after human learning, void of divine knowledge, are alike full of disappointment, proceeds now to show the entire vanity and emptiness of human life, in its present fallen state, to give comfort. And if

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the Reader is brought, under the divine teaching, to learn therefrom the total insufficiency of all things here below, to afford solid and substantial happiness to the soul; the great object intended from this scripture is answered. The picture here drawn of human life, is made exactly to correspond to what it really is. Somewhat is wanting after our review, or even our enjoyment of the whole, to constitute happiness. So that let a man eat, or drink; let him study to excel his neighbour in all human science; vanity of vanities marks all; for *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! I charge it upon you to take with you the evidences which arise out of this Chapter, in favour of *JESUS* and his salvation. Surely the Preacher intended, by this way of preaching, in showing negatively what human pleasures and human learning are not, to proclaim most loudly what *CHRIST* and his graces are. For if all short of *CHRIST* be vanity; and *CHRIST* himself be the chief, the only, the substantial good; what happier method amid the wise man have adopted, in thus appealing to the experience of mankind, under the different characters of it, that it is *JESUS* only who can cause them that love him *to inherit substance, and to fill their measures*.

My soul! pause thou over the account. Look at the world as it now is, as well as in Solomon's days what it then was. What is the generality, nay, the vast majority of the world, pursuing? How are men everywhere around thee engaged. Be their case what it may; yet are not all, under whatever form their different pursuits are directed, engaged *in making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*? Mark them leisurely. Behold each and every one. And figure to thyself, what indeed is no figure, but reality. Behold what is continually

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going forth in awful fulfillment; one here, and another there, by whom that voice is heard, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee!*

Precious *JESUS!* from such views, oh grant my soul to turn to thee! Give me betimes to see, and know, thy value; and day by day to be leaving all these hollow, and deceitful pleasures, for the enjoyment of the Supreme Good. Oh! let me so know thee, as to live upon thee, to live to thee, and to rejoice in thee, as my portion. And do thou, dearest *LORD,* so manifest thyself to my soul, in all the fulness, sweetness, and suitableness, of thy love and favor, that the love of all creature excellencies may die away in my esteem. Let the language of my soul be, *Whom have I in heaven but thee: and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but thou art the strength of my heart, and thou art my portion for ever.*

## CHAPTER 3

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*Under several very interesting representations, the Preacher continues in this Chapter to follow up the same subject, as in the former. The mutability of all things here below, is strikingly set forth; and the unchangeableness of GOD's purposes clearly established.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8**

To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: (2) A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted; (3) A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; (4) A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; (5) A time to cast away stones, and

a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; (6) A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; (7) A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; (8) A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

I cannot but be led to suppose, that the HOLY GHOST had some special design in what is here said respecting times and seasons; and, especially, as it is set forth under so great a variety of terms. If we consider what the Preacher here saith, spiritually, there is indeed to everything *in grace* a season, and a blessed season it forms, when the sinner is born of GOD, and to GOD; and dead to sin, and delivered both from the guilt and dominion of sin. Blessed *JESUS!* what a sweet thought is it, that *my times are in thy hands*. Psalm 31:15.

### **ECCLESIASTES 3:9-15**

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? (10) I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. (11) He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. (12) I know that *there is* no good in them, but for *a man* to rejoice, and to do good in his life. (13) And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it *is* the gift of God. (14) I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him. (15) That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

From the fluctuating state of things, as they refer to men, the Preacher makes a beautiful transition in those verses, to the permanent and settled things of GOD, and his purposes. Here, indeed, as the Preacher saith, everything is beautiful in its time and order. In things of nature, providence, and

grace, we may well cry out, as we contemplate them; *in wisdom hast thou made them all*. Psalm 104:24.

### **ECCLESIASTES 3:16-22**

And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, *that* wickedness *was* there; and the place of righteousness, *that* iniquity *was* there. (17) I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work. (18) I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. (19) For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all *is* vanity. (20) All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. (21) Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (22) Wherefore I perceive that *there is* nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that *is* his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

We have here a very solemn but just description of the state of man upon earth: and a suitable reflection made upon it, from the common event, which takes place on the mere animal life, both of man and beast. And hence, the preacher draws a fine picture, in proof of the corrupt, and frequently mistaken judgment, among men, to confirm the certainty of the divine administration. Here, indeed, opens a large scope for meditation, amidst all the various sorrows which spring out of oppression, and unjust judgment, to take comfort in the righteous government of GOD. What Solomon said, the breast of every enlightened mind loudly bears testimony to; *GOD shall judge the righteous and the wicked*. And oh! Reader, how additionally blessed is the thought, that He, who is the appointed judge of quick and dead, is *JESUS*. John 5:22, 27. Acts 17:31.

## REFLECTIONS

MY, soul! learn from the solemn observations of the Preacher to enquire, whether in the times and seasons which he saith there are to every purpose under heaven, thou hast found the time of the new birth, and the time of a real death unto sin and a life unto righteousness? Hast thou known the time of the LORD'S planting thee in grace, and thy reaping in mercy? Hast thou marked the season, when the HOLY GHOST killed in thee the lusts of the flesh, and taught thee to crucify the affections of it by his power? Are the strong holds of sin broken down, and is the spiritual life of grace in *JESUS* built up? Hath the LORD given to thee holy seasons of mourning for sin, and refreshing recoveries, by the blood and righteousness of CHRIST, to make thine heart leap for joy? See, my soul, whether these things are in thy evidences of the new life, and thou hast truly found those changes in the times, and seasons, of a dying world, which is hastening away, and which mark not the life of the ungodly, in their purposes under heaven.

And! blessed *JESUS* teach me when I see the place of judgment among men, and behold the oppression of thy people often there; teach me to look beyond this state of things, and contemplate thy righteous administration. The time is hastening, when thou wilt come *to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people.* At thy tribunal, every cause will be reheard. By thine unerring sentence, true judgment will be administered. And while the unpardoned transgressors may meditate terror for the prospect of this great day, do thou, my soul, hail the LORD'S approach with joy. Yes! righteous LORD, thou wilt come to plead the cause of thine injured people, and to deliver them that are oppressed with wrong. Lift up thine head, O my soul, and frequently meditate thy LORD'S coming. *JESUS* will assuredly manifest himself in that day to all his people as

their brother, while he is their judge; and he who is now their Redeemer, will be their portion and glory forever. Amen.

## CHAPTER 4

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*The Preacher is still prosecuting the same subject, of the insufficiency of all things here below to give comfort. And the whole chapter is but one and the same train of reasoning on this important point.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 4:1**

So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors *there was* power; but they had no comforter.

It is impossible not to be struck with the strength of argument which the Preacher makes use of, in order to enforce the doctrine of human vanity. In whatever way he directs his attention, and whatever object meets his eye, he seems to raise sermons from everything to lead to the same conclusion. And it is yet more remarkable, that what Solomon saw and observed in his day, every reflecting mind may equally behold, and draw the same conclusions now in our day: human life is not changed, but vanity is still marked upon all. Oh I how blessed it is, in confirmation of the vast and infinite importance of the gospel of CHRIST! Where shall we look for happiness, but to *JESUS*? We may well say, as the Apostle did, LORD, *to whom shall we go thou hast the words of eternal life.* John 6:68.

#### **ECCLESIASTES 4:2**

Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

Solomon was not singular in this opinion: a voice from heaven proclaimed the same, Revelation 14:13. But, Reader! it is blessed to live, or die; provided we live, or die, in the LORD. Paul's situation was the desirable one: Philippians 1:21.

### **ECCLESIASTES 4:3-6**

Yea, better *is he* than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. (4) Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit. (5) The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. (6) Better *is* an handful *with* quietness, than both the hands full *with* travail and vexation of spirit.

If we read these verses, as they refer to the carnal, graceless, and ungodly, how striking they are. What is life, in all its highest attainments out of CHRIST? But if we read them in reference to a soul in grace, the handful only with *JESUS*, yea, the cup of cold water which *JESUS* gives, is blessed. This is what the apostle calls, *having nothing, and yet possessing all things*. 2 Corinthians 6:10.

### **ECCLESIASTES 4:7-8**

Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. (8) There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet *is there* no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail.

By vanity under the sun, surely the HOLY GHOST meant to teach his people, that all above it is satisfying. So that here indirectly, the HOLY *SPIRIT* is following up his gracious office in glorifying CHRIST. And in the instance which the Preacher hath given of a worldling, whose carnal eye is never satisfied, and whose carnal heart can never say, It is enough! he hath finely represented, though it is a mournful sight, the general character of fallen men. Reader! look

round in every direction: survey the various instances in human life, and say, whether the world at large, in the endless pursuits of things of the world, is not thus employed. Oh! what a decided proof of man's ruin by the fall! Blessed *JESUS*! what but thy glorious undertaking, in redemption, could have gathered thy people out of it?

#### **ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12**

Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. (10) For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up. (11) Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone*? (12) And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

If we spiritualize these verses, they will be beautiful and instructive. For if *JESUS* and my soul be the two here spoken of, sure I am, that I shall be lifted up whensoever I fall. In every place, and upon every occasion, my advantages will be great indeed. I shall find warmth, and life, and light, and love. But without *JESUS*, there is a woe indeed, and a fatal fall: for who but *JESUS*, can raise a fallen sinner? In his strength I shall be strong, and if thus joined to the LORD *JESUS* by one SPIRIT, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, here is a three-fold cord, which cannot be broken.

#### **ECCLESIASTES 4:13-14**

Better *is* a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. (14) For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also *he that is* born in his kingdom becometh poor.

The sense of these verses is very plain. The folly spoken of in scripture, means a state void of CHRIST, who is himself wisdom. Poverty with *JESUS* is blessed. Any state, and every state, without *JESUS*, is wretched. If we read this, or any other part of scripture, when speaking of folly in this point of view,

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those two scriptures will beautifully illustrate and explain it. The first is, Isaiah 27:11; and the second Job 28:28.

### **ECCLESIASTES 4:15-16**

I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead. (16) *There is* no end of all the people, *even* of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

If we read those aphorisms of the Preacher without looking for the explanations of them in the gospel, we shall be led to consider them rather as the melancholy effusions of a mind soured with life, than as the reflections of a wise and prosperous king, who, from the experience of carnal vanities, had formed those just conclusions, in order to lead the heart to the pursuit of better things. Nothing can be more evident, than that the HOLY GHOST designed from the public confession of Solomon, on these interesting points, in which all men by nature are so eagerly engaged, to teach, that the whole is vanity. And from a full conviction; that all is vanity out of CHRIST, to make this a means in his Almighty hand, to lead the church to CHRIST. And these divine truths, when blessed to this end, become blessed indeed! We have a beautiful and comprehensive conclusion to this effect, in a verse of the Psalms. Psalm 119:96.

## **REFLECTIONS**

MY soul! hast thou learnt to form similar conclusions to the Preacher from the same causes; and in a right estimate of human life, made calculations what the close will be? Hast thou beheld the tinge of vanity which is given to all, and from hence directed thy views to all precious *JESUS*, the complete, the soul-satisfying, the supreme, the only good? Oh! thou the pearl of great price! in thee I find everything that is substantial and satisfying: yea, durable riches and righteousness. Possessing thee, thy church must possess all

things: for thou art all in all to thy people. And what endears thee, oh! thou lovely One, to the heart of all that know thee, and enjoy thee, is, that thou art freely given, freely bestowed by GOD our FATHER, without our deserts, without our conscious want of thee, without our desire, nay, without our first wishes, and even against all our natural dislike to thee. Yes! blessed *JESUS*! never should we have sought thee, hadst thou not sought us: never should we have loved thee, hadst thou not first loved us. But in the endless pursuit of any, and every vanity rather than *JESUS*, would our poor, blind, and deluded nature, have gone on, turning from one creature comfort to another, until death had finished all, and we had lain down in the silent grave, with sorrow and disappointment!

Oh! ye that are now entering life, full of high prospects of health and youth and the many gilded objects before you, inviting you by their syren songs to ruin; oh! that the LORD may give you to seek grace, to avoid being lost amidst the deceitful pursuits of what the world calls pleasure. Look to Solomon. Hear what the Preacher said. And before you have run the mad round of vanity and folly, which can terminate in nothing short of disappointment and vexation of spirit, make now a right calculation. Look unto *JESUS*. Behold how glorious in his person: how blessed in his grace and mercy! how suited to the circumstances of poor, fallen, dying creatures! Think, from what misery he can save—Think to what happiness he can bring—How delightful his fellowship! How sweet his society. And while he becomes all that the soul can need now; how fully will he satisfy the soul to all eternity? Hear, ye young; and the LORD direct your choice. It is *JESUS* that calls at the entering in of the gates: and his promise is like himself, unalterable and sure. He saith, *I love them that love me: and those that seek me early shall find me.*

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## CHAPTER 5

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*The Preacher here enters upon a view of sacred worship in the house of God. He shows that all service void of spiritual worship is vanity. This is followed with similar observations, tending to prove that whatever men place their confidence in the world, terminates in disappointment.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 5:1-2**

Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. (2) Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Perhaps Solomon had in view the situation of Moses at the bush, and of Joshua, before the captain of the LORD'S host, by Jericho. Exodus 3:5. Joshua 5:13-15. But *keeping the foot*, on entering the house of GOD, certainly carries with it a reference to the corresponding affections suited to a true spiritual worshipper. Under the gospel dispensation, we may suppose it implies what our LORD *JESUS* taught of worshipping GOD, who is a SPIRIT, *in spirit, and in truth*. John 4:23, 24.

#### **ECCLESIASTES 5:3-7**

For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words. (4) When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. (5) Better *is it* that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. (6) Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it *was* an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? (7) For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there are* also *divers* vanities: but fear thou God.

The divers vanities in dreams are what the Preacher is particularly marking in what is here said, and which he speaks lightly of: but not those in which the fear of GOD is. The scripture account of dreams, and visions of the night, are not what Solomon is speaking of. We know that the LORD was graciously pleased to make use of them upon many and various occasions of good: and when realized, they cease to be dreams; for the divine testimony is upon them. And here they cannot deceive. Elihu saith, that GOD speaketh in them: Job 33:15, 16. And we have some blessed events said to have been first given in dreams. The dream of Pharaoh made way for great events not only in the family of Israel, but the church itself. Genesis 41:1-16. The great promise of the SPIRIT is said to be poured out in dreams, Joel 2:28. Yea, the name of *JESUS* was first given to Joseph in a dream. Matthew 1:20, 21. If the Reader wishes to see more in confirmation of this doctrine, I refer him to several scriptures: Genesis 20:3. 31:11. Ch. 28. Ch. 37. Joshua 7:13. 1 Samuel 28:6. 1 Kings 3:5. Daniel 2:4. 4:5, &c. Respecting the subject of vows, we find, it formed a part of the divine directions in this particular, with Israel in the wilderness, Numbers 30. Among the followers of *JESUS*, the solemn dedication of the soul to GOD in CHRIST, is the only vow which we are authorized to make. The purchase of CHRIST'S blood is CHRIST'S property; and as such, every vow truly such, is to glorify GOD in our body, and in our spirit, which are his. 1 Corinthians 6:20. It is not very easy to determine what the Preacher meant by the charge: *Say not before the angel, that it was an error.* An angel, in scripture, means a messenger and hence CHRIST himself as such, is called *the Messenger of the Covenant.* Malachi 3:1. But whether Solomon had an eye to CHRIST, when thus speaking, is not clear. However, his caution is good. And if every idle word is to be accounted for in the day of judgment, rash and inconsiderate expressions of the mouth cause the soul to sin. Matthew 12:36.

### **ECCLESIASTES 5:8-20**

If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for *he that is* higher than the highest regardeth; and *there be* higher than they. (9) Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field. (10) He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity. (11) When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes? (12) The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. (13) There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. (14) But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and *there is* nothing in his hand. (15) As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. (16) And this also *is* a sore evil, *that* in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? (17) All his days also he eateth in darkness, and *he hath* much sorrow and wrath with his sickness. (18) Behold *that* which I have seen: *it is* good and comely *for one* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it *is* his portion. (19) Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this *is* the gift of God. (20) For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth *him* in the joy of his heart.

I make no interruption in the reading of these verses, for one general observation belongs to all; and the Preacher's whole design from them is to impress yet stronger upon the mind, the great subject he hath in view. In everything short of CHRIST, Solomon finds vanity. And whether the Reader hath discovered his design in these sermons contained in Ecclesiastes we have already gone through, or not; certain it is, that the main object intended from the whole, is to lead to somewhat higher than this world can bestow; and that somewhat is CHRIST. Happy will it be for both Writer

and Reader, if from the perusal, like Solomon himself, we form the same conclusion, and in *JESUS* behold where GOD the FATHER hath centered all things that pertain to life and godliness. 2 Peter 1:1-4.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! are all things here below empty and unsatisfying: and is there a rest that remaineth for the people of GOD? And wilt thou not, then, after such repeated convictions as these scriptures afford of human vanity and human disappointment, be prompted, like the Patriarchs to seek a *City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD*. Enquire, my soul, in the history of these holy men gone before, from what cause it was that their lives were so peaceful, and honourable; and their deaths so triumphant and glorious. And the reason is assigned, in all that is said of them, *They walked by faith, and not by sight*. They did, as Abraham the great father of the faithful did, *they believed GOD, and it was accounted to them for righteousness*. They went out, when called upon to go forth into a place which they should afterwards receive for an inheritance, not knowing whither they went. GOD had promised, and that was enough. They took GOD at his word. And they were not afraid, but depended upon his faithfulness.

Do thou, my soul, the same. GOD's promise in CHRIST is the same now as it was then: or rather, it is now confirmed beyond the possibility of failure in that all the promised undertaking of CHRIST hath been accomplished. Look forward, look upward then, my soul, and contemplate the glories which shortly shall be revealed. And when, at any time, some renewed instance of vanity, arising from the things here below, shall occur, turn away thine eyes, and behold with faith that upper brighter world. There neither sin, nor Satan; care, nor anxiety; fightings without, nor fears within; can arise to break in upon thy everlasting enjoyments. There dwells JEHOVAH, manifesting himself in CHRIST to all his redeemed. There the LAMB, that is in the

midst of the throne, is leading the church to fountains of living waters, and all tears are forever wiped away from off all faces. Say, my soul! art thou indeed to dwell there—to go out no more. Are these vanities here below no longer to distress; neither these eyes of thine to behold sin? And shall not even the prospect of such felicity, fill thee with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Oh! for the holy longing of the church; *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.*

## CHAPTER 6

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*The Preacher openeth this Chapter with a strong proof of vanity in one man laying up for another; and the fruit of all his labours enjoyed by a stranger. He shows that the longest life spent in vanity, is spent but in vexation of spirit. And he arrives, at the close of the Chapter, to the same conclusion as before.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 6:1-2**

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men: (2) A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil disease.

I beg the Reader to observe with me, that in the gifts here spoken of, no mention is made of grace. Riches, wealth, and honour; that is, the world's honour, may be given to the most worthless of men; but these are left-hand gifts in the common providences of GOD. It is grace which is of the upper-spring blessings. Never would the LORD have marked the path of his children in the suffering way, if his glory, and their happiness, had not been highly interested thereby. Reader! I take this occasion to remark to you, what can never be too frequently,

nor too strongly impressed upon the mind, that among the mistakes of the carnal, the misinterpreting GOD'S providences is a very principal one, to quiet and still their consciences. Thousands conclude, that if they prosper in their worldly concerns, this is a proof of divine love towards them; and that therefore they are high in his favour. May the LORD deliver the Reader from this delusion, if he should be at this time under it. And though the reverse of this is not always the case, for sometimes GOD'S dear children may be blessed in their honourable and honest callings, yet so much to the contrary is the case, that prosperity is always to be suspected. Who so poor, so wretched, so great a man of sorrows as CHRIST? What servant, what apostle of his, eminent for labours, but hath been eminent for suffering also? Let the serious Reader consult those two scriptures only upon the subject, without adding more, and I will then leave him to his own comment upon them: Job 21 and Psalm 73.

### **ECCLESIASTES 6:3-6**

If a man beget an hundred *children*, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also *that* he have no burial; I say, *that* an untimely birth *is* better than he. (4) For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. (5) Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known *any thing*: this hath more rest than the other. (6) Yea, though he live a thousand years twice *told*, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?

The Preacher here proves, that prosperity, without grace, though lengthened to the greatest period, still only tends to swell the vanity and vexation of it, as the years are lengthened. And what a melancholy thought is it, that the continuance of those carnal powers, for the gratification of the flesh, only serve to lead the heart further *from* GOD, rather than bring the heart *to* GOD. Reader! nothing short of

grace can accomplish this; and therefore, it must undeniably follow, that without grace, nothing can constitute happiness.

### **ECCLESIASTES 6:7-12**

All the labour of man *is* for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. (8) For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? (9) Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit. (10) That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it *is* man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he. (11) Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what *is* man the better? (12) For who knoweth what *is* good for man in *this* life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

What a solemn consideration it is, that such and so clamorous are the demands of the body, that the whole of men's labours is directed to satisfy them. Though the whole world appear to be directed in different pursuits, yet in reality the object proposed is but one and the same; all is swallowed up in this one, how to please the flesh! And so insatiable, and imperious are its demands, that the appetite is never filled. Solomon's question, therefore, in the close, is truly striking; who knoweth what is good for man in such a life of vanity and fleeting as a shadow! Reader! pause over the thought! Is life so truly vain? Is it no better than a shadow? And is there nothing to discover of certain good, whereby to counteract the evils of our fallen state? Precious *JESUS!* it is thou alone, who by thy great redemption, hast opened a source of real, solid, and substantial good: and taught thy people that happy lesson, how to improve the vanities of the present life in the pursuits of a better. *LORD!* impress all thy saving truths, both upon the Writer's and the header's heart, that in thee we may find that supreme good, which is liable neither to disappoint,

nor to pass away. Be thou thyself our happiness, and our portion forever!

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not turn hastily away from this chapter. There are many important improvements to be gathered from it under grace. What Solomon saw as a sore evil in his days, you and I may behold the same in our day. The instances are not a few, and in almost every rank of men, where possessions bring no comfort, no sanctification, but are kept by the owners of them to their hurt. The carnal mind indeed, is never to be satisfied in its attainments. Nothing can come up to the expectation: for where the divine blessing is not upon a man's fulness, it matters not what the surrounding circumstances then are, for there can be no enjoyment of any. It is a melancholy fact, but the experience of all ages leave no room to dispute it. What scripture hath said, all find to be true: *man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*

Reader! shall we not from the conviction of this undoubted truth look up for grace, and the teachings of the HOLY SPIRIT, that we may learn how to convert such evils into good; and since life, in all earthy pursuits is vain; seek in JESUS what cannot disappoint. Oh! for grace, to walk through a world of sin, and sorrow, and vanity, and vexation, with such wise indifference, as those who seek a better country. Is the SON of God indeed calling his people to the present and everlasting enjoyment of himself? Doth he say, come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest? Doth he graciously propose himself for our portion, our happiness, and joy? And shall we be so low minded and earthly in our affections, as to prefer those shadows; to be in

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love with our chains; to pursue phantoms; and reject everlasting realities! Blessed, gracious, condescending LORD! do thou not only invite, but allure us with thy grace. And since thou hast begotten us to such a lively hope by thy glorious resurrection from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; do thou lead us by the restraining influences of thy HOLY *SPIRIT*, that we may set our affections on things above, not on things of the earth.

## CHAPTER 7

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*In this chapter the Preacher is proposing several good things, as means, in the divine hand, for a remedy against the vanities of life. He showeth the blessedness of gracious sorrow, and the superiority it hath to carnal mirth. In these, and the like observations, this Chapter abounds.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 7:1**

A good name *is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

The name of *JESUS* is as ointment poured forth, Solomon hath said elsewhere, Song Of Solomon 1:3. And to be called by that honourable name in *JESUS*, which the mouth of the LORD hath promised to name, is fragrancy indeed, Isaiah 62:2. That the day of a man's death is better than the day of his birth, is a very unaccountable saying in the estimation of worldly men: but to a gracious soul the day of death unto sin, and of being born to GOD, is, of all days, the most blessed. And how can the day of his death in the body be otherwise than blessed, when, from being in union with CHRIST, he dies here, his soul becomes alive forever in CHRIST. So the voice from heaven

told John. And so true believers in CHRIST most assuredly know. Revelation 14:13.

### **ECCLESIASTES 7:2-6**

*It is* better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart. (3) Sorrow *is* better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. (4) The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth. (5) *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. (6) For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so *is* the laughter of the fool: this also *is* vanity.

These are solemn truths, and thousand's have borne, and still can bear testimony to them. He that would desire to be conformed to the lovely pattern of *JESUS*, who, by way of eminent distinction, the HOLY GHOST himself calls *the Man of sorrows*, will find the best means under grace, for so blessed an accomplishment. It is truly remarked of our dear LORD *JESUS*, that it is never once said of him, when upon earth, that he laughed. He rejoiced, indeed, but it was in spirit. Luke 10:21. Reader! I know not what your sentiments may be; but depend upon it, all that unmeaning joy and mirth, which is in the house of the carnal, is highly unsuitable to our present fallen state. If to redeem our nature from this state, nothing short of the SON of GOD becoming man, and in that assumption of our nature dying in our stead, could bring us from it; every degree of laughter which carries with it a forgetfulness of the agonies and pains of *JESUS*, must be unbecoming. Let my soul go to the garden of Gethsemane, or to Mount Calvary, and while by the eye of faith I behold the soul-travail of *JESUS*, let me hear also by faith that earnest question of GOD by the Prophet: *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto*

*my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.* Lamentations 1:12.

### **ECCLESIASTES 7:7-10**

Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart. (8) Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit. (9) Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. (10) Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

If we read these verses by the gospel standard, their beauty will then appear to be full. The Apostle James gives the sweetest comment to them, when speaking of the oppressions which the faithful suffer from the ungodly, when he saith, *Do not they oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?* James 2:6, 7. And what doth the Apostle say by way of consolation? *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the LORD: behold, the Judge standeth before the door.* James 5:7-11.

### **ECCLESIASTES 7:11-15**

Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance: and *by it there is* profit to them that see the sun. (12) For wisdom *is* a defence, *and* money *is* a defence: but the excellency of knowledge *is, that* wisdom giveth life to them that have it. (13) Consider the work of God: for who can make *that* straight, which he hath made crooked? (14) In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. (15) All *things* have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just *man* that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked *man* that longeth *his life* in his wickedness.

If I mistake not, the Preacher is stating, in what is here said, the difference of security which men find in their different

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objects of defense. Carnal men make riches their defense. The gracious soul takes wisdom, that is *JESUS*, for his. And Solomon then demands that the subject be considered. He then puts a close question: *Who can make that strait which GOD hath made crooked?* In other words, who would put confidence in that which must deceive: *for riches make to themselves wings and flee away.* Proverbs 23:5. Reader! in what is *your* confidence?

### **ECCLESIASTES 7:16**

Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?

Various have been the opinions concerning the Preacher's meaning in this verse. Common sense, however, cannot but conclude, that if Solomon meant the righteousness of man, there would have been no cause for the caution of avoiding an overmuch righteousness among creatures, sinful and fallen as the best of men are. But if the wise Preacher meant to guard against that ill-founded and unbecoming confidence, which too often springs out of a supposed righteousness, the precept is beautiful and just. Faithfulness itself in GOD'S rich promises in CHRIST, when it is made, by our improper use of it, to beget presumption in ourselves, instead of looking wholly to that arm, which first wrought it to our heart to keep it there, will lead to the confines of danger. This is strongly and fully read to us in the instance of Peter. Had the Apostle confided more in *JESUS*, to preserve him, and less in his own strength, Satan would not have had such advantage over him. Luke 22:31-34. But a man's fall, or as the phrase of Solomon is, his own self-confidence, ministers to destroy himself, when he is overmuch righteous in anything of his own, instead of living wholly out of himself, upon the righteousness of the LORD *JESUS CHRIST*.

**ECCLESIASTES 7:17**

Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?

Here the wise man takes the reverse of the proposition, and cautions against overmuch wickedness. But here again, common sense must see that, as all wickedness is prohibited, the smallest transgression is overmuch, if in the general acceptation of the word wickedness, the wise man directed this precept to guard from. But if by the *former*, self-righteousness was aimed at, by which souls too often presume, and in that presumption sometimes fall; so in this latter, by overmuch wickedness, if the Preacher meant to preserve a soul, distressed by the view of his own unworthiness, from despair, great beauty appears in both precepts, and both are agreeable to the analogy of faith. It is as if he had said, Ye whom grace hath restrained from evil, take no confidence therefrom, as if your own arm had wrought it. And ye, who have fallen by sin, let not the greatness of it make you despond: And let the Reader judge how corresponding to the grace of the gospel of CHRIST are both these precepts.

**ECCLESIASTES 7:18-20**

*It is* good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all. (19) Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty *men* which are in the city. (20) For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

By a just man, we may suppose is meant a justified believer in CHRIST. And of such John the Apostle speaks, when declaring GOD'S faithfulness and justice, to forgive them their sins, 1 John 1:9. Even those are yet exposed to infirmities. It is only among the spirits of just men made perfect, that we

are to expect sinless perfection. How endeared in this point of view is CHRIST, and his atoning blood! 1 John 2:1, 2.

### **ECCLESIASTES 7:21-29**

Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: (22) For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others. (23) All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it *was* far from me. (24) That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? (25) I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* madness: (26) And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. (27) Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, *counting* one by one, to find out the account: (28) Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found. (29) Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

Solomon in his own life, had learnt much of the experience here recorded; and he was well calculated to be a Preacher upon such subjects. But when the Reader hath finished all his observations to this effect on Solomon's history, I would call upon him to remark with me, the concluding observation of the wise men. He sets his seal to the divine record of man's fall, and GOD'S holiness in creation; and as such, gives the finishing sentence in confirmation of the gospel. Reader! it is truly blessed to observe, as we go along, how all the several parts of the Bible harmonize in this one grand doctrine, and which in fact, is the sum and substance of all: *Though the law was given by Moses, yet grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST.* John 1:17.

## REFLECTIONS

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My soul! ponder well the many blessed truths contained in this Chapter, that thou mayest understand aright the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. Suspect thyself, and thine own heart, whenever the scriptures appear, at the first reading, with an aspect thou canst not immediately unfold. And do not forget to look up to GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Author of his own most blessed word, who if any man lack wisdom, and will ask of GOD, giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Yes! thou Almighty Teacher! under thy gracious instruction do I pray continually to come. Taught by thee, I shall find it profitable to go to the house of mourning rather than to the house of feasting. Taught of thee, I shall never find confidence in any supposed overmuch, righteousness. And taught of Thee, my soul will not despond in the otherwise overwhelming view of the multitude of my transgressions. But looking unto *JESUS*, whom thou art forever glorifying to my view in him, and his complete all-justifying righteousness, shall all my poor services be forgotten; and in his all-cleansing blood, shall all my sins be done away; and, like the iniquity of Judah, and of Israel, *when sought for, shall not be found.*

Precious LORD *JESUS*! increasingly precious be thou to my poor soul! Where, or to whom, should I look, but to thee, under the daily infirmities of a fallen nature, which even in justified souls, are breaking out continually. Oh! LORD! keep, I beseech thee, my eyes stedfastly fixed on thee. Cause me to look within the veil, whither as the forerunner of thy people, thou art entered! And let me never forget the infinite and eternal worth and excellency that there is in thy blood, though there be new defilements in my poor heart from day to day! Oh! cause me to remember thy never-failing Priesthood, and to take comfort from the assurance that thou, blessed *JESUS*, hast more to plead for thy redeemed before GOD and the

FATHER, than their transgressions have to plead against them. And let me never lose the blessed sound in my ears of the gracious voice of GOD, in confirmation of the merits of thy blood and righteousness, in which he hath said, *Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom.*

## CHAPTER 8

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*The Preacher is still following up his favourite discourse of the vanity of human life, through this chapter. Under various images he showeth the disappointments of men, by ways of directing the heart to wisdom.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 8:1**

Who *is* as the wise *man*? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.

The question with which this Chapter opens, cannot fail, I should think, to bring to the gracious Reader's recollection, Him who is indeed Wisdom itself, and *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Precious *JESUS*! thy face did shine with a lustre infinitely surpassing that of Moses, when in the mount of transfiguration, and before Pilate thou didst witness a good confession. And who shall say what glory beamed from thy countenance, when those who came to apprehend thee, in the garden, fell backward on the ground before thee? Oh! LORD! grant me, like thy disciples, amidst all the darkness concerning thee around, to behold thy glory, which thou dost manifest in grace, that I may be of the happy number that believe in thee to the saving of the soul; Exodus 34:29. Matthew 17:2. 1 Timothy 6:13. John 18:5, 6. John 2:11.

**ECCLESIASTES 8:2-7**

I *counsel thee* to keep the king's commandment, and *that* in regard of the oath of God. (3) Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. (4) Where the word of a king *is*, *there is* power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou? (5) Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. (6) Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man *is* great upon him. (7) For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

I am inclined to believe, that by the King here spoken of, the preacher (who was himself the greatest king among men), meant somewhat more than any earthly king; even *JESUS* who is King of kings, and LORD of lords. For the word of an earthly monarch is frequently without power. But He, of whom Solomon spake, hath all power in heaven and in earth. Oh! grant, blessed *JESUS*, that thy word may be always accompanied with power to my heart. Matthew 28:18. Luke 4:32.

**ECCLESIASTES 8:8**

*There is* no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither *hath he* power in the day of death: and *there is* no discharge in *that* war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

It were devoutly to be prayed for, that the very solemn truth contained in this verse, was so solemnly considered by an unthinking world. As no man dies by proxy, but each for himself, as it is appointed unto men once to die; oh! that the sure judgment that follows, were duly thought of, and as earnestly provided for! Reader! have you solemnly; seriously, deliberately considered this? How are you provided? To die Christless; is to die hopeless. Have you pondered over the awful state of unpardoned sin? Have you considered the

preciousness of CHRIST, and his blood? Think, my brother, solemnly think, of these things. Remember what the wise man here saith, *That there is no discharge in that war.* Oh! for grace to live CHRIST, that we may die in CHRIST. *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD.* Revelation 14:13.

### **ECCLESIASTES 8:9-10**

All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: *there is* a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt. (10) And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this *is* also vanity.

Reader, have you never seen what Solomon here saith he saw? If not, I have. How many indeed have mine eyes beheld of such men. They lived, they triumphed, they came and went amidst the throng of worshippers; they had their day of sensual enjoyments: and oh! what a day it was! And now, where are they? They are as much forgotten as though they had never been: their very memorial is perished with them. Oh! for grace so to live to *JESUS*, that in his book of life our names may he had in everlasting remembrance! Reader, pray read that solemn passage, Revelation 19:11-15.

### **ECCLESIASTES 8:11-17**

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. (12) Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: (13) But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong *his days*, *which are* as a shadow; because he feareth not before God. (14) There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just *men*, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked *men*, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also *is* vanity. (15) Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the

sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun. (16) When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also *there is that* neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:) (17) Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek *it* out, yet he shall not find *it*; yea further; though a wise *man* think to know *it*, yet shall he not be able to find *it*.

It is blessed to observe what a beautiful correspondence there is through all the parts of scripture. As here, so everywhere, the children of GOD are distinguished from the children of the wicked one. The prophet was commanded to tell the righteous, that it should be well with him. And the wicked, that it should be ill with him. Isaiah 3:10, 11. And agreeably to this in the general state of things, so should they be marked in particular tokens of each. *Behold, saith the LORD GOD, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed.* Isaiah 65:13-15. And as the wise man here declares, that though a sinner's days be prolonged, yet the end is ruin: so the Prophet was commissioned to say, that the infancy of days, if in grace, was old age before GOD; while the old age of the sinner, out of grace, was still accursed. Isaiah 65:20. After such decisive testimonies as these, which the preacher here gives of the difference of nature and grace, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what mirth he means to recommend; and what the eating and drinking, which he here speaks of, as the best thing a man hath to do. Not surely the mirth of the profane, nor the gluttony and drunkenness of the sinner; but the sacred joy of gracious souls, and the spiritual feasting of the heart, which is found in the kingdom of GOD. Not, saith the Apostle, in meat and drink, but *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.* Romans 14:17. Reader! think, what a rich feast, in gospel times, the people of GOD are called to, who have the bread of GOD, even the living bread which came

down from heaven for their food; who find the flesh of CHRIST to be meat indeed, and his blood to be drink indeed. LORD, I would say for myself and every gracious Reader, evermore give us this bread; and it shall put more gladness in our hearts, than sinners feel in the time that their corn and their wine are increased. John 6:5-48. Psalm 4:7.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! while the preacher is demanding, *who is as the wise man?* let us be looking unto *JESUS*, until that our eyes are enlightened in beholding him as wisdom itself, the brightness of his FATHER'S glory, and the express image of his person. And so let our souls look and gaze upon that first fair, first beautiful, first and only HOLY ONE, until that from beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the LORD, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD.

And Reader! while thus looking unto *JESUS*, until brought into some degree of conformity to him in all things; contemplate at the same time the dark, wretched, and deplorable state of those who are ignorant of him. Behold the end of these men. Though sentence against them is not executed speedily; yea, though their days be prolonged to even the dregs of old age; yet, how in the end will the voice of murdered years and days be lifted up against them? Oh! The soul agony of lying down at last in eternal sorrow!

My brother! think of the felicity of souls redeemed by *JESUS*, and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST for grace, that you may cast your lot in among them, and with them have one portion. This will be to sit down to a perpetual feast, and never to be cloyed: but the grace of *JESUS*, yea, *JESUS* himself shall abide with him, as the wise man speaks, *All the days of his life, which GOD giveth him under the sun.*

## CHAPTER 9

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*In prosecuting the same subject, the Preacher in this Chapter lays down several very weighty observations for lessening the general and unavoidable vanities of life. Under the similitude of a poor man, that by wisdom saved a city, he sets forth the great blessedness of divine knowledge.*

#### *ECCLESIASTES 9:1-2*

For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, *are* in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred *by* all *that is* before them. (2) All *things come* alike to all: *there is* one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as *is* the good, so *is* the sinner; *and* he that sweareth, as *he* that feareth an oath.

The preacher is here making a similar conclusion, to what holy melt of old, in all ages, have done, that let what will appear of worthlessness in some, or merit in others, and the common events which take place in all; yet the LORD is neither an inattentive, nor an inactive observer of either; or, to use Solomon's own words, *Their works are in the hand of GOD*. Reader! it is one of the most profitable of all studies, to have right conceptions of our gracious GOD in his providences. If we look at the state of things going on around us, we do indeed see what Solomon saith, that *there is one event to the righteous, and to the sinner*. But if we, as the prophet did, look beyond the mere surface of the wheels in GOD'S government, we shall see as he did, One like the son of man, regulating, appointing, ordering all. Ezekiel 1:4-26. And although, as far as outward circumstances appear, *all things come alike to all*; yet a mighty distinction takes place, even in the events themselves, and in the effects induced by them. The sickness of the sinner, and the

sickness of a child of GOD, differ in their operation and consequences as wide as any circumstances in life can differ. And, as in their effect, so in their design; in the instances of GOD's children, they are the marks of a fatherly love. They are messengers of sanctification and wisdom. They are angels in disguise. In the instances of the ungodly, they are tokens of displeasure, messengers of wrath, and the consequences of sin. Reader, it is blessed to be enabled to mark the difference; to *hear the rod*, (as the prophet speaks) *and who hath appointed it*. Micah 6:9.

### **ECCLESIASTES 9:3-6**

This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead. (4) For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. (5) For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. (6) Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun.

Scripture is strikingly solemn upon the state of the unregenerate when they die. They go to the dead, Solomon says. And a similar expression is made of Judas, that *he went unto his own place*. Acts 1:25. Then that awful conclusion becomes final: *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still!* Revelation 22:11. Reader, think of these things, and Solomon's observations will have their just effect, and be found true.

### **ECCLESIASTES 9:7**

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

There is a great beauty in this verse; if explained upon gospel principles. If a soul be accepted in *JESUS*, he may well eat the

bread both of body and soul, with a cheerful heart. In *JESUS*, everything is blessed: and *JESUS* blesses everything.

### **ECCLESIASTES 9:8-10**

Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. (9) Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. (10) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

How striking and conclusive are these reasonings of the preacher. And if construed with an eye to *CHRIST*, then are they doubly so. Oh! that souls convinced, that they are in *CHRIST*, would live up to their high privileges. Surely the soul that hath *JESUS* to live upon, hath a Benjamin's portion, and enough to live upon. *CHRIST* is his portion; and in him he hath all. Therefore, whatsoever he findeth to do in *CHRIST*, there should be no halving. In living *upon* him, in living *to* him, in proclaiming his praise, do all with your whole strength. *The grave cannot praise thee*, (said Hezekiah, when he thought his end approaching), *death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth*. Isaiah 38:18.

### **ECCLESIASTES 9:11-13**

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. (12) For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so *are* the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. (13) This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it *seemed* great unto me:

The world is full of evidences to these truths, and the Church manifests the same. *Not by might; nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD.* Oh! how blessed is it to eye the hand of *JESUS* in the world, both of providence and of grace. Zechariah 4:6.

### **ECCLESIASTES 9:14-15**

*There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: (15) Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.*

I am inclined to think that what the preacher here delivers as a parable; and if so, the spiritual sense of it is not far to fetch. If the city here besieged means the church of *CHRIST*, it may well be called a *little* city. Fear not, little flock, said *JESUS*, when comforting his church. It is small, comparatively considered, to the world's wide wilderness, Luke 12:32. How this city was besieged, needs not be told. Enemies without and within. The poor man can be no other than *JESUS*; for though he is in himself rich, yet, for our sakes, he became poor. 2 Corinthians 8:9. How *JESUS* manifested his wisdom, is also equally plain. Indeed grace, wisdom, love, mercy, favour, all, all were displayed by our *JESUS*, in his unequalled work of delivering us from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. And what the preacher saith of the ingratitude of the whole city delivered by him, is a most apt representation of the universal unworthiness and ingratitude of *GOD'S* Israel. *No man remembered that same poor man.* Blessed *JESUS*! I take shame to myself in the recollection of my own personal forgetfulness, of thee, and of thine unequalled love to me this day! Oh! how have I forgotten thee times without number! And not only I, *LORD*, but all have forgotten thee. Precious *LORD*! hath thy love to us been so great? And are there none,

no, not one of all our nature to love thee, as thou hast loved us? Oh! what a state must our nature have been in to all eternity, hadst thou not interposed to deliver us from it. Hail! thou wise Poor Man! thou hast by thy wisdom delivered the city, thy Church!

### **ECCLESIASTES 9:16-18**

Then said I, Wisdom *is* better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard. (17) The words of wise *men are* heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. (18) Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

Oh! how true are the words of the preacher. Though all must confess *JESUS* to be the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to everyone that believeth; yet, how are we constrained to take up the prophet's lamentation, and cry out, *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* Isaiah 53:1. Blessed LORD! give me to know thee, to love thee, to remember thee; nor let the baseness of forgetfulness of *JESUS* be added to all my numberless transgressions.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! amidst many blessed meditations, which this chapter leads to, let us seek for grace from GOD the *SPIRIT* to derive improvements from the sweet view here opened to our souls concerning the Person, worth, wisdom, love, and salvation of the LORD *JESUS*.

The church of GOD is, indeed, like the *little* city here spoken of; for though beautiful, like Mount Zion, and the joy of the whole earth, yet compared to the world's wide wilderness it is but little, and as this scripture saith, hath few men in it. Oh! how may the people of GOD in the present hour mourn over the languishing state of Zion! Oh! how doth the enemy

now scoff, saying, *Is this Zion whom no man looketh after!* And this is not all: for even Zion, though small, and her citizens few in number, yet a great king is come up against her. JEHOVAH, King of kings, and LORD of lords, hath a controversy with Zion, by reason of her rebellion and sin. And He hath besieged Zion with his law and justice He hath thrown up bulwarks against Zion, so that she is dreadfully beset with the arrows of his broken law, and the curses which must ultimately fall upon every one that sinneth. And, as if this was not sufficiently alarming, the great enemy of souls, as the accuser of the brethren, throws in his fiery darts, and threatens instant destruction.

Reader! in this representation, (for it ceaseth to be a parable being really and literally the case) whither shall we look, or to whom shall we come, for help? Who can deliver the sinners in Zion from the wrath to come? There is one, indeed, mighty to save; but he is a poor man, though a wise one. Shall we look to him? Yes, precious *JESUS!* let every eye be directed to thee. Thou wert rich, indeed, LORD, yet we know, for our sakes thou becamest poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich. And thou art wise, also; for in thee are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Here, LORD, I behold thee in this two-fold character. Poor thou art, indeed, for poverty suited thee when the GODHEAD condescended to become man. And wise thou must be, for in the moment thou didst assume the manhood, thou wert and still art the only wise GOD. Such a Redeemer became suited, and thou wert found altogether formed for the purpose. Hence, blessed *JESUS*, it is thou, and thou alone, who wert equal, by thy wisdom, to deliver the city—And thou hast delivered it, and redeemed us to GOD by thy blood. Hail! holy, glorious, triumphant LORD! *let every knee bow before thee, and every tongue confess that thou art CHRIST, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.*

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One humble boon I present before thee, LORD, this day! Oh! grant that both he that writes, and he that reads, may rejoice in the blessing granted forever! Grant, LORD, that we may not be among the ungrateful number of them that forget thee! LORD *JESUS*, forbid it. Shall we ever forget thee? Shall not the remembrance of thee be the first, and last, and everlasting object of remembrance, in our whole souls? Forget thee! Let every thought be done away in eternal oblivion, before that *JESUS* be forgotten. As long as memory can hold a place in our poor mind, let the name of *JESUS*, never, never be worn out. Let us, gracious LORD, at thy board, and table, continually celebrate, in the memorials of bread and wine, thy blessed memory. And, when at the last, the heart strings of these dying bodies give way, still may the name and blessedness of *JESUS* remain, and the last words of our trembling lips be in concord with the first of our eternal song; to *JESUS*, the LAMB slain, as the Redeemer of his people, his beloved city, be praise, love, and thanksgiving for evermore.

## CHAPTER 10

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*The Preacher is still prosecuting his sermon through this Chapter;*

*but folding up many important sayings within short sentences.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 10:1**

Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: *so doth* a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom *and* honour.

This verse may serve to show us how frequently some of the most precious things are veiled under an unpromising cover. If we take this expression in its literal sense, no

doubt it is very true. Folly will give a tinge to much reputation of wisdom, as dead flies will give an unsavory cast to the ointment of the apothecary. But if this were all to be learnt from this scripture, it required not the wisdom of Solomon, much less the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, to give such information. But if by the dead flies here spoken of, the blessed SPIRIT intended to teach the Church, that our corrupt things (nay, our best things, which from sinners by nature dead in trespasses and sin, can be no otherwise than dead,) be mingled with the righteousness of *JESUS*, whose name for fragrancy is as ointment poured forth; will it not cause all that is blessed in *JESUS* to lose in our spiritual senses, its sweetness from our ill savor? Reader! why is it that what is precious in *JESUS*, is not at all times alike precious to us, but from our mingling up with it what is our own?

### **ECCLESIASTES 10:2-6**

A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left. (3) Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth *him*, and he saith to every one *that* he *is* a fool. (4) If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences. (5) There is an evil *which* I have seen under the sun, as an error *which* proceedeth from the ruler: (6) Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.

Who that reads of the wise man's heart and the fool's, differing so widely from each other, but must be led therefrom to consider the blessedness of being guided by Him, whose distinguishing character is, *that length of days is in his right hand, and in his left riches and honour.* Proverbs 3:16.

### **ECCLESIASTES 10:7**

I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

There is no doubt great inequality in common life: and not unfrequently, men that are princes in understanding, may be constrained to walk in menial offices, while others weak in intellect, ride in high places. But the beauty of this scripture is in the spiritual sense of it. Here we find in the general, that those whom *JESUS* hath made kings and priests to *GOD* and the *FATHER*, are among the offscouring of the earth; while not many mighty, not many noble are called. Oh! how different are the *LORD'S* views from our views, and his thoughts from our thoughts. James 2:5. Revelation 1:6. 1 Corinthians 1:26. 1 Samuel 16:7.

### **ECCLESIASTES 10:8-15**

He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. (9) Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; *and* he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby. (10) If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom *is* profitable to direct. (11) Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better. (12) The words of a wise man's mouth *are* gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. (13) The beginning of the words of his mouth *is* foolishness: and the end of his talk *is* mischievous madness. (14) A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him? (15) The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

We shall have a much clearer apprehension of the Preacher's meaning in those several expressions concerning both wisdom and folly, if we always keep in remembrance that by wisdom is implied, *That wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation*: and by folly, the ignorance of the heart concerning *CHRIST*. This doctrine the *HOLY GHOST* graciously explained by Job ages before, when by the mouth of his servant he said, *Behold the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.* Job 28:28.

### **ECCLESIASTES 10:16-17**

Woe to thee, O land, when thy king *is* a child, and thy princes eat in the morning! (17) Blessed *art* thou, O land, when thy king *is* the

son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

Similar observations to what were made in the preceding verses, will be found applicable here. As in a moral sense, temperance and moderation will tend to keep the faculties clear, and in vigour for national government and rule: so in a spiritual sense, there must be blessedness, when the inability of grace, and a ripeness in wisdom, in things pertaining to *JESUS*, bring a train of covenant mercies, like the land of Judea, upon the Zion of GOD.

### **ECCLESIASTES 10:18-20**

By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through. (19) A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all *things*. (20) Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Here again, as in things of nature, so in grace, the spiritual building will not advance, when inattention to our foundation CHRIST *JESUS*, makes the soul go out of the perpendicular. And when coldness, neglect of ordinances, and of secret prayer, beget distance between *JESUS* and the soul; how shall it be otherwise than that spiritual decays are induced? *Money*, saith the Preacher, *answereth all things*, that is, it becomes the universal means of procuring supply to all our earthly wants. And what money is to the carnal, such, and infinitely more, is *JESUS* to the spiritual. He is meat to the hungry, and water to the thirsty; a garment to the naked, medicine to the sick, warmth to the cold, in short, all things for life, for light, for peace, for joy, and comfort. *I am Alpha* (saith *JESUS*) *and Omega, the beginning and the end, he that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* Revelation 21:6, 7. If Solomon's precept, with which he closeth this chapter, be important, in respect

to earthly government; how infinitely more so, in relation to that which is divine. Precious *JESUS!* I would say for myself and reader, give us grace to rejoice that thou art the universal Governor, and thy kingdom ruleth over all. Daniel 2:44.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! the whole of this Chapter leads to very many important reflections, and if followed up to the source from whence all blessings flow, and in which all terminate; we shall find that the Preacher, from the emptiness of creatures, is here setting forth the fulness of the Creator; and in the unsatisfying nature of everything out of CHRIST, is proclaiming the necessity of CHRIST to give real comfort to the soul. Doth he say that flies of death are in the richest ointments of creature-making! And what is this, but to show that all fragranciness is in *JESUS?* Doth he assert that our comforts, and our wisdom, are like the heart of the fool, at the left side? And what doth this imply, but that in *JESUS* only right-handed blessings are found! Till we find CHRIST, who alone can cause us to inherit substance, it matters not what else, beside we inherit, for all alike are hollow and unsubstantial. Precious LORD *JESUS!* cause our souls thus to inherit thee, for like a golden chain, if thus united to thee, in thee we shall inherit all things. So saith thine Apostle, and the experience of thy people in all ages confirm it. *All are ours, whether life or death; or things present, or things to come; all are ours, if we are CHRIST'S, for CHRIST'S is GOD'S.*

## CHAPTER 11

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*The Preacher, now drawing, nigh to the close of his sermon; is here laying down certain rules for the regulation of the conduct, which under grace, may tend to lessen human vanity, and soften the evils of life.*

**ECCLESIASTES 11:1-2**

Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. (2) Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

The opening of this Chapter, in the precept given, seems to be figurative. Casting bread upon the waters, is perhaps intended to imply an act of grace, or of charity, given in a way, as our LORD hath marked, so secret that the left hand knoweth not what the right hand doeth: Matthew 6:3. Like seed sown in the field, it lays hid for awhile. Its product is in future, not now. Preachers of the gospel of CHRIST, may find great beauty, as well as great encouragement, in these precepts blended with promises. How often, indeed, after many days and years do they find the fruit of their labours. Precious *JESUS!* how blessed is it to have an eye to thee in all things—to make thy glory our sole aim—and thy salvation of sinners the one design of all our poor services!

**ECCLESIASTES 11:3-6**

If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. (4) He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. (5) As thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit, *nor* how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. (6) In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good.

Nothing can be more beautiful than these verses; and both in a natural and spiritual sense, they open a large scope for the most improving meditation. The chief tendency of the whole passage, however, is to teach the inability of man in his highest attainments, to cater for himself; and how much the wisest ought to look up in every concern, both of this world, and of that which is to come, for divine direction. Under the similitude of the husbandman's unconsciousness, whether the morning seed, or the evening seed, be most prosperous, the attention to winds or clouds, for the regulation of his conduct and the like, the Preacher most strikingly sets forth the blessedness of waiting upon the LORD for direction. If the farmer sows his seed in ever so promising a soil, yet unless the dew and the rain from heaven, and the sun's heat, and cloud's fatness, be graciously dispensed in their season, there will be no harvest. Reader! can you need a more striking subject of instruction, respecting the spiritual seed of the gospel? is it not the LORD that gives us fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness? Is not *JESUS* the bread of life to his people? And is he not the FATHER's gift to his people? And as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, is it not *JESUS* that by his coming from heaven, hath visited the earth, and blessed it, and made it very plenteous? It is true, indeed, that the kingdom of GOD cometh not by observation. And so the LORD *JESUS* himself observes in that beautiful parable, Mark 4:26-29—But this is similar to what the wise man here said in this chapter. We know not even in natural things, how the bones of the child grow in the womb: and is it wonderful that in spiritual things, the seed of grace cast into the heart, should spring we know not how? But is it not blessed to refer all, and to depend for all, and seek a blessing for all, from Him who is excellent in counsel, and faithful in his promises? Isaiah 55:10, 11. Deuteronomy 32:2. Acts 14:17. Perhaps there is not a portion in the whole Bible

more pointed, to set forth the nothingness of man, and the necessity of referring all things to the divine agency, than these verses of Solomon.

**ECCLESIASTES 11:7-8**

Truly the light *is* sweet, and a pleasant *thing it is* for the eyes to behold the sun: (8) But if a man live many years, *and* rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh *is* vanity.

If to the eye of the body, as most evidently it is, this truth holds good, what must it be to the eye of the soul? Oh! thou Sun of righteousness, what blessedness is there in thee who art the fountain, and source of all light, and life, and joy, in thy church, to angels and men! Let what will of clouds and darkness intervene below, thou shinest with unceasing, undiminished lustre; neither can sin, nor sorrow, nor all the unworthiness of creatures, induce a momentary darkness in thy sphere! Shine, blessed LORD; in my heart, in a fulness of grace here, until that day when the moon shall be confounded, and the sun of this lower world ashamed, when thou shalt shine and reign as the LORD of Hosts in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem above, before thine ancients gloriously, Isaiah 24:23.

**ECCLESIASTES 11:9-10**

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these *things* God will bring thee into judgment. (10) Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth *are* vanity.

Some have thought that the Preacher, in these verses, is adopting an ironical language to the younger part of his audience, by way of deterring them from evil; as if he had said, Pursue the ways of thine own heart, and the desire of

thine eyes, and then mark the consequence. And they that adopt this opinion of Solomon's irony, suppose that it is similar to the case of Elijah, mocking the priests of Baal. 1 Kings 18:27, or Micaiah Ahab, 1 Kings 22:15, or the Prophet Isaiah 50:11. But I confess that the scripture doth not strike me in this point of view. Solomon's address all along is too serious to admit any trifling. And it should be observed, that in all the pages, where mockery is used by the servants of the LORD, it is invariably to the enemies of GOD, and not to the church. This book of Ecclesiastes is one continued sermon to the church. Solomon is now closing up his discourse on the subject of all things out of CHRIST being vanity. In addressing the young man, therefore, on the subject, he admonisheth him to dedicate the first strength of his youth, and the prime of his days to the LORD; that in the after stages of life, he may find cause of joy in that LORD, whom he had loved in his strength. Solomon had before declared; that there could be no real joy in any creature-comfort, and therefore he advised the young man to put away evil from him. And, if we accept the words of Solomon in this gracious point of view, the whole passage is beautiful and corresponding to the general tenor of the gospel. How lovely on this account is Timothy's example, who from a child had known the Holy Scriptures, and whose faith the Apostle so delightfully commends. 2 Timothy 3:15. and 1 Chap. 5.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause over the perusal of this very interesting Chapter. And while thou art studious to obey the wise man's precept, and to cast thy bread upon the waters, let thine eye, like the prophet's upon the watch tower, be upon the lookout for the LORD'S direction, and the LORD'S blessing upon thy labors. But, my soul, what are the portions which thou canst give to seven, or to eight! Alas! what hast thou

which thou didst not receive? Surely it is all the LORD'S, and of his own must thou give him. Oh! how blessed to be the LORD'S almoner, when the LORD condescends thus to employ his creatures.

And, my soul! while like the husbandman in the morning, thou sowest thy seed, and in the evening withholdest not thine hand; look to it, that the seed sown is pure and uncorrupt, and that he that ministereth seed to the sower, may both minister bread for thine own food, and multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of righteousness. Blessed *JESUS!* thou art the Almighty Sower, that hath both produced, and sown the good seed in every age of thy Church. Oh! do thou thyself dwell in the hearts of thy people. Let no tares spring up to choak the good seed. But do thou water it with the dew of heaven from above, and let the sunshine with all its loveliness and fruitfulness upon it, that it may bring forth a glorious harvest, some an hundred fold, some sixtyfold, some thirty-fold.

My aged fathers! do not forget what the wise man here saith: *If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.* Oh! for grace, when walking upon the confines of the eternal shore, to have done with this world, and all its dying concerns. Oh! for grace to see, like the Patriarch, the evil days of our pilgrimage, and like him to be waiting for dismissal, from all the objects around, that the hoary saint may gather up his feet into the bed, and from long acquaintance with a covenant GOD in CHRIST, as he had, the dying triumph may be, *I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD!* And you no less, young men! see that your rejoicing is in *JESUS.* Oh! for grace to give the strength of your days to CHRIST, that in the weakness of years, *JESUS* may be the support; and *when both heart and strength shall fail, JESUS*

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*may be the strength of your heart and your portion forever.*  
Amen.

## CHAPTER 12

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*In this Chapter the Preacher finisheth his discourse, and a beautiful close he makes of it, running up all into the love and fear of GOD, as the great object of man's creation, and the ultimate end of man.*

#### **ECCLESIASTES 12:1**

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

A beautiful and most affectionate address the Chapter opens with to the youthful part, in recommending and enforcing an earnest regard to GOD, as the Creator. No doubt the Preacher meant it, under both views of the Creator, in nature and in grace: and having closed the former Chapter with an address to the young, he begins this in the same strain. We may consider this as one of the inferences from the whole sermon. Having fully proved the vanity of human life, the younger part of those who attended to his discourse, are here called upon to make the proper conclusion from it. There is a beauty in this verse, which a mere English Reader, unacquainted with the original Hebrew, could not possibly know, unless pointed out to him. I mean, that the word *Creator*, is in the original plural *Creators*; and ought by our translators to have been so rendered. And the importance of it is much greater than at first view some may imagine. For it implies the grand fundamental truth of the Bible, namely, that the one glorious and eternal, JEHOVAH, hath his existence and self-being totally

distinct from all his creatures, and doth exist in a three-fold character of persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST. Hereby confirming the same glorious truth as was revealed at the opening of the Bible; JEHOVAH ALEHIM, in each person of the GODHEAD, concurred and co-operated in the creation of man. *Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness:* Genesis 1. 26. And as a still further confirmation of this glorious doctrine, we find the same word in that passage plural; Job 35:10, where is GOD my *makers*, who giveth songs in the night?

### **ECCLESIASTES 12:2-5**

While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: (3) In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, (4) And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; (5) Also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is* high, and fears *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

I detain the Reader to admire the wonderful beauty, as well as the great elegance in stile and figure, of those several expressions in the description of the desolated winter of old age. The sun, and moon, and stars of heaven, how bright soever they shine, have no lustre to the blind eyes of the aged. The clouds returning after the rain, is uncommonly striking to denote that unceasing infirmity of the aged, where, when one disease somewhat abates, there is a return, and the recurrence of another. The trembling of the head, the weakness of the limbs, and the tottering state of decrepit nature, through all, are strikingly represented under these several images. It would be to hold a faint taper of the night

to aid the light of the sun, the attempt to heighten the beauties by description. What I beg the Reader to observe with me in the perusal, and which the Preacher seems particularly to have had in view, is, that if age be thus necessarily oppressed from the common and unavoidable infirmities incident to such seasons, what must it be to have the pressure of unpardoned sin, an unawakened state of unrenewed nature added to the load. Oh! what a wretched old age is that which is full of transgression, without GOD and without CHRIST: ignorant of *JESUS* and his salvation, unregenerated, unwashed in CHRIST'S blood, and, as to any saving knowledge, of his grace and power, unconscious whether there be any HOLY GHOST. Isaiah 65:20.

### **ECCLESIASTES 12:6-8**

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. (7) Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. (8) Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all *is* vanity.

In what elegance of language the Preacher hath here described death. But, Reader! it is not the elegance of words that can soften the stroke of death. What Solomon saith so often concerning life, may be equally applied to the folly of life. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity.* And it is the greatest of all vanities, to overlook the awfulness of a subject in the pomp of words in which it is represented. It may be summed up in a more comprehensive manner: death is blessed in CHRIST. It is cursed out of CHRIST. Hence CHRIST told the Jews, *If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.* John 8:24. Oh! to hear that voice, and to know our own personal interest in what it proclaims: *blessed are the dead that die in the LORD!* Revelation 14:13.

### **ECCLESIASTES 12:9-12**

And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs. (10) The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and *that which was written was* upright, *even* words of truth. (11) The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd. (12) And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is* no end; and much study *is* a weariness of the flesh.

It is a part which requires much grace from GOD, to have a choice of pure words in preaching, as well as pure doctrine. *Sound speech*, (one calls it) *that cannot be condemned*. Titus 2:8. But the plainest language is most scriptural. And the word of GOD, in its own pure, simple, unadulterated form, is most likely to take effect. The polished handle of a sword will give no additional keenness to its edge. And the word of GOD, when naked, will be most cutting, and quick, and powerful. Hebrews 4:12. But after all, it is the master of assemblies, who can alone fasten his own word as goads upon the minds of the people. And who, but *JESUS*, is that Master, that one Shepherd, which can do this? Ezekiel 34:23. Zechariah 14:9. Blessed Master! do thou cause thy word to have an abiding influence in my heart; and there let it be fastened by thine own almighty arm as a nail in a sure place. Isaiah 22:23. Ezra 9:8.

#### **ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14**

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. (14) For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

Here is the finishing sentence of this whole sermon of Solomon. And in it we have the epitome of the Bible. The fear of GOD is the beginning of wisdom. And this fear is sometimes put for the whole of vital godliness. *I will put my fear in their*

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*hearts, saith GOD (respecting the everlasting covenant), that they shall not depart from me.* Jeremiah 32:40. And that this fear, which is a child-like filial fear, includes the whole of our gracious habits, in relation to our interest in the covenant, is evident from what our LORD told the Jews in answer to their question of obedience. *What shall we do, that we might work the works of GOD?* said they. *JESUS answered, and said unto him, This is the work of GOD, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* John 6:29. Hence Solomon's conclusion corresponds to the gospel. The fear of GOD in the belief of him whom GOD hath sent, is the whole of man. And the judgment by the SON of man, is to determine it. *For all judgment is committed unto the SON, that all men should honor the SON even as they honor the FATHER. He that honoreth not the SON, honoreth not the FATHER which hath sent him.* John 5:22, 23.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! may we not, after the perusal of this Chapter, and indeed from the whole of the Preacher's sermon, as contained in this book of the Ecclesiastes, take up both the wise man's direction to the young, and the Psalmist's direction to the old, and in his form or words, cry out and say, *Both young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the LORD; for his name only is excellent, and his glory above the earth and heaven.* This, indeed, is the conclusion of the whole matter, and this is the whole of man!

See; my soul, from the perusal of Solomon's whole discourse, and as the sum and close of Solomon's whole experience, the emptiness and vanity of all besides. *I have seen (with he) all the works that are done under the sun; and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.* And wilt thou not, my soul, learn from so notable a proof, how utterly insufficient all earthly

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things must be to give comfort? Shall Solomon complain at the head of a kingdom, that emptiness, vanity, and disappointment attended all; and wilt thou expect a different issue from earthly attainments? Say! Canst thou acquire possessions like his or, even if acquired, couldst thou be sure to keep them? or if keeping, would a different close mark thine from Solomon's?

Turn, my soul, turn from all these things to *JESUS*. His grace, his love, his good will, his favor, which is better than life itself, will give the finishing enjoyment to every other blessing, or make up the want of it, if denied thee. It is *JESUS* which must put a sweetness and a relish into all the comforts which are found, in creatures of any kind. And if *JESUS* be not in it, there can be no sweetness in it at all. Come, then, thou dear LORD, come and bless the young man in his youth, and the old man in his grey years. And then, when *the grasshopper shall be a burden*, and even *desire* of all nature's enjoyments shall fail; thou wilt be the strength of the heart, and the portion to satisfy forever. Oh! grant LORD, both to him that writes, and him that reads, that ere *the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bow be broken; the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto GOD that gave it; JESUS* may be the all in all to our souls, the conclusion of the whole matter, and the sum and substance of all our joy. May we have the full interest of *JESUS*, and all that is his, by faith in this life, and in the life to come, then we shall be satisfied with the everlasting enjoyment of him by sight, *when we awake up after his likeness*. Amen.

THE  
*SONG*  
OF  
*SOLOMON*

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.**

I ENTER upon my Commentary in this part of the sacred writings with more than ordinary diffidence, from a consciousness how very sublime and mysterious this book of GOD is in itself, and with what veneration it ought to be approached. And both at the door, and before that I venture to step over the threshold of perusal, I would not only put off the shoe of preparation but bend the knee of prayer, that the divine light may go before me, and guide me through every apartment of the sacred inclosure. Blessed SPIRIT of all truth, (I would say both for myself and reader) thou *who searchest all things, yea the deep things of GOD; vouchsafe to take of the things of JESUS here written, and show unto us.*

And here, at the first opening, of this precious book of GOD I detain the Reader to remark, both the authority of the author of it, and the proofs it brings with it of its divine authenticity.

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As to the first of these in respect to the author of it, there can be no question but that *Solomon*, whose name it bears, wrote it under the immediate inspiration of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And the period of the Church in which it was written, must of course carry with it a correspondence to the era in which Solomon lived, namely, somewhat about a thousand years before the coming of our LORD *JESUS CHRIST*. I stay not to enquire whether it was written in the early or later days of Solomon's life, because in a commentary of this kind it would be leading the Reader's mind unnecessarily away from the main object of concern. As it is placed last among the writings of Solomon very probably it was written last. But it may not be improper in this place to observe, as a guard against, any unfavorable impressions to be formed in the mind of the Reader to the book itself, that the sad infirmities which marked the conduct of Solomon in his old age, have nothing to do by way of lessening the blessedness of those writings. It is no doubt a very painful consideration with every faithful heart, and in itself enough to humble to the dust the pride of our nature in its highest attainments, when we behold a man so eminently blessed in grace and wisdom, so sadly falling under the power of temptation. But when we have made the suitable improvements, which through the SPIRIT'S teaching such an example is designed to induce, let it be considered that the frailty of the man ought not to have the smallest influence in lessening the importance of his ministry. It hath pleased the great head of his Church to make use of poor and sometimes unworthy instruments, for the accomplishing of the sacred purposes of his will. And the holiness of his grace is neither lessened nor polluted, though it flows to us through unholy channels. The fall of Solomon makes no more discord in the melody of this sweet song on the ear, than the fall of Peter lessens the blessed truths given to us in his divine epistles in the heart. Nay, as both carry such decisive marks with them of the *imprimatur* of GOD the HOLY GHOST; while we read and recollect the unworthiness of the servant, doth not

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the thought minister yet more powerfully to bring home, and endear to us the infinite preciousness of the master.

As to the *second* consideration, of the proof the Song of Solomon brings with it of its divine authenticity; though there are several at hand which might be produced to establish the fact, yet *to the poor man*, (and I beg under whatever form this Commentary may hereafter appear it may never be forgotten that it was undertaken, and hath been uniformly carried on with an eye to the poor man's special service), there is one evidence which this little volume eminently possesseth and which in my humble judgment becomes so decisive and satisfactory as to supersede the necessity of every other; and that is, the inward testimony it carries with it to the heart of the believer, that these are the great truths of GOD. For surely it is impossible to conceive that the LORD should have blessed as he hath done this sacred part of the divine writings in every age of the Church, and made it the sweet savor of grace to thousands, if it had not been the work of his own holy inspiration. Nothing but the most inveterate prejudice could harbour such a thought! When, therefore, the soul of an enlightened believer, in the perusal of this precious book of God, is made to feel its divine power, finds his heart warmed and animated in the contemplation of its divine truths, and is led into a participation of the many gracious impressions which the Church enjoyed in the view of her beloved; such evidences become the fullest proof of its heavenly authority, and show that it is what an Apostle calls, *The engrafted word which is able to save the soul*.

Reader! should it be your happy lot, while going over the Song of Solomon, to trace in your own experience similar effects to what the Church is here said to have experienced—should you discover that what she saith of *JESUS*, you can and do say; that what she acknowledgeth of her unworthiness you feel: her desires are your desires; her longings are the very

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same breathings as your soul is panting after; and the gracious answers of *JESUS* to her cries, are the very refreshments you covet above all that the world holds dear: will you not, from such inwrought effects upon your heart, in such a correspondence of the Church's experience to your own, accept this evidence as the strongest of all evidences, that the Song of Solomon's is, indeed, the word and work of GOD: and like the man, which the Apostle Paul speaks of upon another occasion, you will feel disposed to do as he did, when *from the secrets of your heart being thus made manifest, you will fall down upon your knees and worship GOD, and confess that GOD is in this word of a truth.*

But while I lay so much stress upon this evidence, and which becomes the more valuable to the humble believer, because it is always near at hand, and easy to be referred to; I do not mean to pass over in silence the other testimonies the Song of Solomon brings with it of its divine authenticity.

The Jews, to whom, as is well known, were committed *the Oracles of GOD*, and as such, must be supposed to have been competent judges upon this subject, have always been forward in acknowledging, that the Song of Solomon formed a part of the sacred canon of scripture: indeed, their testimony is, if possible, more convincing, in consequence of their high veneration for it, than Christians: for in their *Misnah*, they distinguish this book with a more exalted title than any other of the sacred writings, calling it *the holy of holies*. And as a further confirmation it is remarkable, that they prohibited the reading of it to everyone under *thirty years* of age; to intimate thereby also, that a ripeness of years and judgment, was needful for a proper apprehension of the glorious truths which were veiled under the mere letter of the word. I cannot help

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wishing that an equal veneration had been observed for this blessed book of Solomon, by some who called themselves Christians. For then, under grace, it would have tended to check the loose imagination of carnal readers, who from being led away by the want of chastity in their own thoughts, have put improper constructions upon what the HOLY GHOST hath said in figure and metaphor, concerning some of the most precious things which belong to salvation.

To the testimony of GOD'S ancient people, the Jews, in confirmation of the divine authenticity of Solomon's Song, might be added the very many proofs of a sacred nature, the book itself carries with it in its own bosom. For surely the subject of which it treats; the dignity, and no less simplicity of the stile in which it is written, and the correspondence it bears, in point of doctrine, with the whole of the bible, all tend to stamp its authority; and, indeed, it would be little less than blasphemy, the very title it bears, as *the Song of Songs*, intimating thereby a superiority to the other songs in the word of GOD, (and there are several, it is well known, of divine inspiration) if it could for a moment be supposed to have a doubt whether the work were of GOD or not.

Of the book itself, I shall not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any remarks, by way of recommending it to his perusal in these *general observations*. The beauties of the incomparable Song, the loveliness and sweetness of it, and the many blessed things contained in it through every part, will meet the Reader's eye as he passeth over the several chapters; and it would be only protracting his pleasure, to keep him for a moment from the work itself by any preliminary observations of mine on these things. The principal object which is held forth through the whole, (indeed it is the prominent feature,) is the love of *JESUS* to his church.

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This will meet the Reader more or less in every verse. And I hope as this love of *JESUS* is sweetly represented as awakening, and calling forth into exercise the love of the Church to *JESUS*, that the Reader, under the SPIRIT'S influence, will enter into an heartfelt enjoyment of both these divine principles, and know in himself, and in his own feelings; the truth of what the Apostle saith, *We love him because he first loved us*. And while the fire is thus kindled from the live coal taken by the HOLY GHOST from the sacred Altar, as the Reader passeth through the sacred part of the holy word, he will be constrained to cry out with David; *How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey unto my month!*

It may be proper in this place to admonish the Reader of what he hath to meet with in this part of the sacred canon, as well as the plan the inspired writer hath adopted in the execution of it. The love of *JESUS* to his Church is the subject more or less of the whole; and this discourse is set forth in the type of Solomon and his bride, under the similitude of the marriage state. It is too well known to need being much insisted upon, that parable and metaphor were the general mode of conveying instruction among the Eastern nations. In the sacred volume this is so very common, that the most ordinary Reader cannot but have noticed it. From the first moment of the LORD'S forming his Church into a distinct people from the nations around, in gracious condescension he was pleased to assume the endearing character of their Husband. This tender appellation is the great outline observed through the whole of Solomon's Song. And the Reader will do well, while he keeps in view the LORD'S love to his Church, under this title, to recollect also that the HOLY GHOST closeth the scripture in the book of the Revelation, with holding forth the same token of *JESUS'S* affection to his redeemed, in calling the Church the Bride, the LAMB'S wife. But in deed, and in truth, in this point of view, the subject ceases to be figure or

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parable, for it is a blessed reality. The Church of *JESUS* is truly his body; and his people, in every individual, *are members of his flesh, and of his bones.*

I have but one thing more to add to these general observations, before that I take the Reader by the hand to lead him to the perusal of this divine Song; and that is, to beg that he will seek grace from on high, not only to qualify him for the right understanding of it, but also to preserve him from misapprehension and offence, at certain expressions here and there to be met with in the book; which, to a carnal mind, may seem to savor of indelicacy, but to a spiritual taste have no such tendency. If the Reader will himself make application of what is frequently spoken of the *Person*, to what is as frequently intended of the *dress*; great part of the objection will be done away. He may with great safety conclude, that it is the imperfection of language, and which always suffers by translation, which hath given rise, for the most part, to what in our English copies appears exceptionable. And if the translation could have conveyed precisely the images which the original meant, no such ideas would have been created. But while I say this, I beg that I may not be misunderstood. The translation of the bible, take it altogether in our mother tongue, though here and there we find defects, is in my poor esteem so great, so truly great and invaluable a blessing, that I class it among the first mercies which the LORD hath bestowed upon us as a nation. Never can it be too highly prized—never can we sufficiently bless the LORD for it: neither can the instruments, by which the LORD accomplished it, be too highly honoured.

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Reader! may the LORD command *the north wind and the south wind to blow upon this part of his sacred garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*, while you and I go over it. And let us implore our Beloved, *to come into his garden, and eat of his own pleasant fruits*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONTENTS

*The Chapter opens with giving the title of the book. The Church then takes up the subject with expressing her love to CHRIST, and desiring fresh manifestations of his affection to her. She compares his love to the fragrancy of the richest ointment. She prays to be drawn by him, and professeth her readiness to run after him. She describes her blackness as in herself, and comeliness as in him: complains of the unkindness of her relations; and desires to know where JESUS feeds his flock, longing to be in his and his people's company. In return to these vehement desires of the church, JESUS now takes up the subject, and distinguishing her by the title of the fairest among women, directs her in her enquiry where to find him and his fold. JESUS then enlargeth upon her beauty, and gives her many sweet and precious promises. The church, in return, commends the loveliness of JESUS, and the chapter concludes in mutual congratulations.*

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 1:1

The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's.

The first object which calls our attention in opening this blessed book of GOD, is the title of it, namely, *A Song*. And as

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it is Solomon's Song, by which is evidently meant, as will hereafter more plainly appear, *JESUS CHRIST*, (for a greater than Solomon is here); we may, without violence to the expression, call it *a gospel song*; for its whole contents is of salvation by *JESUS CHRIST*. When a soul is taught by the HOLY GHOST to sing this song, then is that scripture fulfilled, *In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: we have a strong city; salvation will GOD appoint for walls and bulwarks.* Isaiah 26:1. And Reader! when *CHRIST is truly formed in the heart*, the LORD hath *put a new song in the mouth*. Psalm 98:1. But it is not only *a song*, but *the song of songs*; and if it treats wholly of *JESUS* and his great salvation, well may it merit this distinguished name. Well, indeed, may that be called the excellency of all excellencies, which hath *JESUS* for its object, and his love to his Church for the subject matter. How very sweet and precious to trace in it the several marks, and testimonies of his love. And on the other hand, delightful to behold the goings forth of the Church's love, awakened by the HOLY GHOST on the person of *JESUS*. Surely such a person as the LORD *JESUS is*, and such subject-matter as the mutual love and union between *JESUS* and his people forms, may well be called *the song of songs*. Oh! for grace to bear a part in it with all the redeemed of the LORD! But we must not stop here. It is not only the song of songs, but it is *Solomon's*. I do not deny but that Solomon king of Israel was the penman of it; nay, I have no doubt but that Solomon, David's son, was the writer of it: but I hesitate not to believe, that in the writing of it he acted only as the penman to the HOLY GHOST, as his Father David had done before him in the Psalms: and in those scriptures, they, with all the other inspired writers, *wrote* as the Apostle tells us the prophets and holy men of old

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*spake*, as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST. 2 Peter 1:21. I venture to believe, that there is not a line in it which hath the smallest reference to Solomon king of Israel. So far from being, as some impious men have said, the love-song of Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, that it carries with it a contradiction in many places. Whoever consults the life and reign of Solomon, will discover that his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter was full twenty years before this book was written. *Seven* years was Solomon in building the temple, and *thirteen* years more in building his own house. Compare 1 Kings 6:38, with 1 Kings 7:1; after which we are told he built the house of the forest of Lebanon, which is noticed in Song Of Solomon 7:4. compared with 1 Kings 7:2, and 1 Kings 3:1. And if it be proved, as I think this one view of the subject fully proves it, that it could have no reference to Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, it will as fully prove also that it is not, as some have ventured to think, *typical*: for how can that be a representation by type concerning Solomon's marriage, when the subject itself could never arise out of it. Besides, Pharaoh's daughter was never what the Church is said to be, a *keeper of vineyards*: neither beaten by *watchmen*, nor *running about by night* in quest of her beloved. These accounts figuratively considered, have a sweet reference to the Church looking after *JESUS*; but would be ridiculous and false, if read with an eye to the daughter of Pharaoh. See Song Of Solomon 1:6. 5:7. 3:2. But if by Solomon's Song we accept the expression as it might have been rendered, the Song of Songs *concerning Solomon*; meaning the true Solomon, the LORD *JESUS* CHRIST, then we shall at once enter into the proper apprehension of what is meant by the expression, and be led to a right conclusion,

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that it is indeed the Song of Songs, as infinitely transcending all other songs, in treating of Him, who is *the altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand.*

## SONG OF SOLOMON 1:2

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love *is* better than wine.

Thus the song, opens: and there can be no hesitation to discover the singer, namely, the Church. It is she which begins it. But Reader! do not imagine, that because the Church opens this Song, that thereby is meant to intimate love begins first in the human breast. No! thou blessed *JESUS!* thy love is first in the field; and if we do love thee, it is *because thou hast first loved us.* 1 John 4:19. Hadst thou not loved us with an *everlasting love*; nay, hadst thou not found out some way of subduing the natural enmity of our hearts; hadst thou not sweetly constrained and drawn us with the bands of love to thyself; never should we have loved thee, or desired to love thee. But when that everlasting love of thine prompted thy sacred breast to manifest it to us, and by thy sweet SPIRIT to give us a sense and perception of it; then thy love to our souls became the source and fountain of our love to thee, and hath drawn us to thyself, and now will keep us near thy dear Person forever!

There is a great beauty in the manner of the Church's expression when she saith, *Let him kiss me.* She doth not call *JESUS* by name, but *him*: meaning, no doubt, that her whole soul and heart was so full of him, that it was needless to mention whom she meant. She could refer to no other. We have several beautiful examples of the same kind in scripture.

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The Psalmist; Psalm 73:25. Mary Magdalene; John 20:15. Peter's account of the Church; 1 Peter 1:8.

The object of the Church's request is interesting, that *JESUS* would *kiss her with the kisses of his mouth*; meaning the manifestation of his presence. This was what the *Old Testament*-saints longed for; the appearance of *CHRIST* in the flesh: and the same is what *New Testament* believers continually desire more of. The manifestation of the *LORD JESUS*, in substance of our flesh, might well be called *kisses*; because his incarnation was a sure pledge that he came to redeem our fallen nature; and the acceptance of redemption by us, is, in one part of scripture, summed up in this comprehensive way, as *kissing the Son*. Psalm 2:12. Well might the *Old Testament Church* thus long for *CHRIST'S* coming, that the salvation of *Israel* might come to *Zion*. Psalm 53:16. For however *GOD* spake in sundry times, and in divers manners, to our fathers by the prophets; yet prophets, nor angels, nor wise men, nor scribes, none were like *JESUS*: *never man spake like him*. Thou, and thou only, dearest *JESUS*, hast the words of eternal life. But, my soul, was this the request of the *Old Testament Church* only? Dost not thou, doth not every real follower of the *LORD JESUS* in the *New* as earnestly long, and passionately cry out, for frequent, constant, uninterrupted manifestations of himself, and his love to our hearts? Yes! the language of all that know our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, is, like the *Church*: *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*.

I hardly think it necessary to remind the Reader, that the request is for *kisses* in the plural number, and not for one kiss only, a single token of *JESUS'S* love. The cause of this is very

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obvious. They who have tasted that the LORD is gracious, will desire to taste more and more of him. There must be repeated manifestations of his love, and repeated desires of the soul going forth after him. And though a believing soul may, and will say, when under a dark state of mind, and an absence, as to our view of things, of the light of GOD'S countenance; oh! that *JESUS* would but grant me one token of his love, one kiss of his mouth, one sweet smile of his favour, which is better than life itself; yet, when the LORD *JESUS* comes with his hands full of grace, and his heart full of love, the soul finds such rapture in communion, that she will not be satisfied with a little; but, like the Patriarch, will wrestle for a blessing, and will lay hold of the skirt of his mantle, saying, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* Genesis 32:26. Pause, Reader, and admire with me the condescension of our *JESUS!* doth he, indeed, whom angels adore, kiss with the kisses of his mouth poor polluted sinners. Is it an honour to kiss the hand of an earthly prince? And will our heavenly King himself kiss with his mouth the beggars of the dunghill? Oh! precious *JESUS!* what a love is thine. But we must not stop here. The Church gives the reason for her request: *Thy love is better than wine.* Let the Reader remark with me, that the manner of expression in the song is now changed. She had before been speaking *of* him. And now she particularly speaks *to* him. But what an endless subject is opened here in the view of *JESUS* love? Who shall describe it, as it is in itself; as it is in its effects; or as it manifests itself to the souls of his people.

Yes! thou dearest *JESUS*, none but thyself can tell what it is. It began before all worlds. It had its rise in thyself: nothing in

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us, no, not even our misery prompted thee to it, though our misery afforded occasion for its display. But it would rob thee, dearest LORD, of thy glory, in thy love to us, to say that anything in us became the cause. No! it was spontaneous in thy holy breast. And as it was *from* everlasting; so it is *to* everlasting. And the duration of thy love is only equaled by the nature and quality of it, in its greatness, extensiveness, aboundings, unmeasurable by heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths: a love indeed that passeth knowledge: and as infinitely surpassing all creature love as *the drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance*. Its blessed effects also are such as no language can describe. All that we have in time: all that we look forward to in eternity. All the mercies of redemption, all the works of grace, and all the hopes of glory; the whole hath its rise in this unparalleled love of *JESUS*. Neither are the manifestations of it less wonderful on the hearts of the LORD'S people. For what can equal the astonishing powers of this love in converting such an heart as mine, (may I, Reader, add yours also) from an hatred to the LORD and his ways, to the love of him and his salvation. Can you be surprised, Reader; then, that the Church should cry out under such views of *JESUS*; *Thy love is better than wine*. Wine is an high cordial, and as such it is recommended in the book of the Proverbs, to be given *to the heavy in heart*. Proverbs 31:6. But then it can reach no further than to the refreshment of the body. But the love of our *JESUS* reacheth to the soul. If I give a poor, famishing, fainting creature a little wine, it may revive his spirits. But if *JESUS* gives his precious love to me, it will heal my soul. It hath done so, dearest LORD, for thou hast quickened my soul which before was dead in trespasses and sins. And now the renewed draughts of the

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same everlasting love keep my soul alive, and preserve it from day to day. Reader! do you know anything of this love of *JESUS*? Can you say, as the Church did, *Thy love is better than wine?* If so, let us ask the dear LORD to shed abroad the sweet tokens of this love more and more in our hearts: here is no danger of intoxication. We would be drunken, but not with wine. *JESUS* hath said, *Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:3

Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name *is as* ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

It is the Church which is here addressing herself to *JESUS*. And the substance of what this verse contains seems to be, that there is in her esteem so much fragrancy and preciousness in the very name of her LORD, that, like the holy ointment of the sanctuary, which was both costly and odorous, her spiritual senses were gratified by it. And not only the Church, but the heart of the virgins were sweetly influenced by the same. It may be proper to remind the Reader, that the LORD himself gave Moses the prescription for making the holy ointment, to be used in the sanctuary, with which Aaron and his sons, and the tabernacle were to be anointed. See Exodus 30:22-30. And we find in after ages, that the consecration of kings, and priests, and prophets, as well as the vessels of the tabernacle was by this ointment. Hence, therefore, the LORD *JESUS CHRIST* is said to be anointed, both as King in Zion, as Priest after the order of Melchisedek, and as Prophet, when he was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. He as our great Head and Mediator, was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, when, like another Aaron, (and whom Aaron typified),

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the holy oil of the SPIRIT was poured out without measure upon his sacred head, which ran down to the skirts of his garments, even to the humblest and poorest of the members of his mystical body, who are said thereby to have *an unction from the Holy One, and to know all things*. 1 John 2:20. Psalm 110:2-4. Psalm 45:7. Isaiah 61:1. Psalm 133:2. Reader! how sweet is it to observe, that our LORD *JESUS* CHRIST, whose name for his redemption-work to his Church and people becomes so precious and savoury, was thus anointed as the GOD-MAN Mediator from all eternity. Well may his name be as ointment poured forth, when we behold him as the anointed of the FATHER, *full of grace and truth*, and engaging before all worlds for our redemption, anointed by the HOLY GHOST from the womb in his human nature, at his baptism, through his whole offices and ministry, and, when returning triumphant to glory, receiving all the gifts of the HOLY GHOST for his people, and all power as Mediator both in heaven and in earth. Reader! is not his name as ointment poured forth to *you*?— But here is another sweet part in this verse to be noticed by us. The Church calls these ointments *thy* good ointments. Yes! they are peculiarly belonging to our *JESUS*. They are his, in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, as GOD. *All things were made by him, and without was not any thing made that was made*. John 1:3.

But these are yet more peculiarly his as GOD-MAN Mediator, because by redemption-work he hath purchased all the gifts and graces of the HOLY SPIRIT for his people: for all these are included in the covenant. See Isaiah 59:21. Isaiah 44:2, 3, &c. And they are his, being himself the sum and substance of the whole of them, to bestow them on whom, and in what

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degree and extent he pleases; for *it pleased the FATHER that in him should all fulness dwell*; and it is of his fulness all his people receive, and grace for grace. John 1:16. John 17:2. Reader! is not *JESUS* name most sweet and precious to you on these accounts? Doth it not give a lift to your soul, when you hear him say, I have all grace, and faith, and strength, and consolation, and every new covenant mercy; and I have it for my people. But we must not stop here in our review of this blessed verse. The Church saith, that it is the name of *JESUS* which is as ointment to her soul. Here, therefore, as no one particular name is mentioned, and he hath condescended to reveal himself under so very many, and all of them most precious, precious names, have we not authority to conclude, that every name of *JESUS* is; or ought to be, like the most fragrant ointment to our spiritual senses? And didst thou not, dearest *JESUS*, purposely in this verse cause thy Church to speak only of thy name in general, without particularizing which, that thy people might learn from hence, that all are equally dear, and all equally to be prized, as the most costly ointment of the sanctuary? Reader! where shall you and I begin, or where end, in the enumeration of the many precious names of the LORD *JESUS*. Oh! my adored LORD GOD, I would call thee JEHOVAH, ALEHIM, ADONAI, EMMANUEL, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty GOD, the everlasting FATHER, the Prince of Peace. The Shiloh, the redeemer, the HOLY ONE of Israel. The CHRIST of GOD, the sent of GOD, the anointed of GOD, the sealed of GOD. I would call thee *JESUS*, the Saviour of poor lost sinners, my Saviour, my King, my GOD. Oh! how shall I enumerate the thousandth part of thy loveliness, or of the sweet savor of thy name. Blessed be GOD, there is salvation in no other; my soul renounceth

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every other, most completely and fully satisfied as I am, that *there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*. Acts, 4:12. There is yet remaining to be noticed, that part of this lovely verse which speaks of the virgins affection to *JESUS: therefore do the virgins love thee*. By the virgins, it seems probable is meant true believers. And this title of virgins is not singular when applied to such, for the undefiled in heaven before the throne are called by the same name. Revelation 14:2. And there is a great propriety in it, if we consider that the followers of the LAMB are supposed to have a single eye to the Redeemer's glory: are chaste in life, in conversation, in doctrine, in fellowship, and above all in their attachment to *JESUS*. Paul beautifully speaks of believers to this effect in one of his epistles: *I am jealous over you (says he) with godly jealousy, for I have espoused to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to CHRIST*. 2 Corinthians 11:2. Reader! do you and I love *JESUS* on the same account? Have we such regard to his person, that his name, his people, his word, his ordinances, and all that belong to him, are precious in our esteem? Every poor follower of *JESUS* may ascertain his real love and faith in the LAMB by this rule. Peter saith, *that unto them which believe he is precious*. 1 Peter 2:7. Then it will plainly follow, and I am a believer if *JESUS* be precious to me.

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 1:4

Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

The Church is still going on in her discourse in this verse: and her address is still to him, whose *name is as ointment poured*

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*forth.* The verse opens with a petition to the LORD, *draw me.* As if conscious, that without this precious act of sovereign grace, and which is literally the case, the church could not come to *JESUS.* It is a promise of JEHOVAH, arising from his everlasting love, to draw his people. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* Jeremiah 31:3. And our LORD *JESUS* hath laid so much stress upon those drawings of the FATHER, that he expressly saith: *no man can come unto me, except the FATHER which hath sent me draw him.* John 6:44. and again repeated to show its importance, verse 65. But, as if to show at once that one-ness in the GODHEAD, which *JESUS* hath with the FATHER, and to encourage the poor sinner which like the Church here desires to be drawn to CHRIST, *JESUS* himself sweetly promised in his gospel, that *when he was lifted up upon his cross all his redeemed ones he would draw to himself.* John 12:32. Reader! do you know what those gracious drawings mean in your own experience? Have you felt your heart constrained to come to *JESUS CHRIST* for life and for salvation, convinced by the HOLY GHOST that you need his salvation, and that without it you are lost forever. If so, you will be able to describe, better than any form of words I can make use of, what that sovereign and effectual grace is, which totally differs from all moral persuasion, and which sweetly constrains the soul to fly out of itself into the arms of *JESUS,* for pardon, mercy, and peace, in the blood of his cross. You will then be able to tell me, how the LORD wrought upon your heart, how divinely he taught you the evil of sin, and loveliness of *JESUS:* and led out your whole soul upon his person and righteousness. And since the first drawings of his love, how he now at times inclines your whole soul to desire nearer communion with him, and

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more frequent manifestations of himself; and to keep you from ever more being drawn away by the world, by the suggestions of Satan, or the remains of indwelling corruption in your own heart, from *JESUS*, the sole object of your love. See David's desire to this effect, Psalm 27:4.

But we should observe on this verse, that while the church prays to be drawn to *JESUS*, she promiseth for herself and companions (perhaps the virgins before spoken of) that they will run after him. Draw *me*, we will run after thee. When she says draw *me*, *we* will run after thee; the Church did not mean to say that the drawing of her would incline all to run, unless indeed we consider the Church in this place, as the collected body of believers, and then the doctrine is sweet and consolatory. For the Church as one made up of the whole body, of which *JESUS* is the head, is *his fulness*. Ephesians 1:23, But without reading the passage in this sense, it will follow that the drawings of the LORD are necessary for every individual member of his mystical body. There is a great beauty in the expression running *after* CHRIST. Not simply running *to* him once for protection, but always pursuing him: *following the LAMB whithersoever he goeth*. Revelation 14:4. *Cleaving to him*, as Moses expresseth it. Deuteronomy 10:20; or as Isaiah hath it, *hanging upon him all the glory of his FATHER's house*. Isaiah 22:24. It is in this sense David meant it no doubt, when he said; *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart*. Psalm 119:32.

The next clause in the verse seems to carry with it an idea, that her request hath been heard and answered: for the Church saith, *the king hath brought me into his chambers*.

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And this proves the truth of that most blessed promise: *And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* Isaiah. 65:24.

By the King, as hath before been observed, can be meant no other than the LORD *JESUS*. And by the Church distinguishing him, peculiarly by this title in the very opening of her song is meant, no doubt, to show the sovereignty of JEHOVAH in redemption. It is beautiful if we consider the title given, in the very commencement of the communion and fellowship between CHRIST and his Church, on this account, as referring the whole into the LORD'S supremacy. When a poor sinner in the afterstages of his warfare is enabled to look back and trace sovereign power in the founding of salvation; whatever difficulties then occur, he feels a proportioned confidence in the issue of every event. Is it not JEHOVAH that hath founded Zion, and shall not the poor of his people trust in it? Isaiah 14:32. Can anything undo his purposes, or make him alter the plan of his counsel *Hath he said, and shall he not do it: or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Numbers 23:19. Oh! Reader it is very sweet in times of trial to rest upon the sovereignty of GOD, and his faithfulness in the promise: for then, like the prophet, the soul can sing; *The LORD thy GOD in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.* Zephaniah 3:17. Reader! what are your views of this glorious, this sovereign, this almighty king *JESUS*? Do you know him in his GODHEAD, as *one with the FATHER over all, GOD blessed for ever?* Do you know him as the GOD-MAN Mediator, to whom as the constituted head of his Church an universal empire is his, in heaven and in earth; the

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sovereign of angels, of all worlds, of heaven, hell, death, and the grave? He saith himself, *all power is mine in heaven and in earth*. And he hath not only received a kingdom which cannot be moved, from the gift of his FATHER; but by his blood and the conquests of his grace he hath purchased to himself universal and everlasting dominion. Doth my Reader's heart, with holy joy, bend to the sceptre of his kingly throne? And doth his tongue as gladly confess *that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER*? This is made one striking mark of his people, and confirmed by the solemnity of JEHOVAH's own asseveration. Isaiah 45:23.

By the king's having *brought the Church into his chambers*, we may understand that the marriage between CHRIST and his Church is consummated. The union is formed. The poor sinner is one in CHRIST *JESUS*. The SON of GOD hath accomplished the long planned object of redemption. From the gift of his FATHER, the purchase of his blood, and the conquests of his SPIRIT, he hath now brought home his bride the Church, hath led her into his chambers, made her savingly acquainted with the treasures of his grace, and put her in possession of all his promises, which neither death, nor hell, no, nor the unbelief of her own heart shall finally deprive her of. Well might the prophet in the contemplation cry out; *Sing, O ye heavens, for the LORD hath done it; shout ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel*. Isaiah 44:23. I beg the Reader particularly to remark with me the delightful expression in this part of the verse, the king hath brought the Church into his chambers. Not that the Church found her way there, neither

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of herself *came* there; but the king *brought* her there. Yes! thou dearest *JESUS!* thou must bring thy people in, or they will never come. It is thou that hast opened a new and living way for us through thy blood. And the way thou hast once opened by thy blood, thou ever livest to keep open by thy power, and the all prevailing efficacy of thy merits, death, and intercession; but unless thou bring us in, and by the sovereignty of thy *HOLY SPIRIT* lead our souls by the hand into thy presence, and the presence of *GOD* our *FATHER*; never would any of thy people draw nigh in their own strength and merit. Reader! I trust the *LORD* hath taught you this precious truth; that *having the sentence of death in ourselves we may not trust in ourselves, but in him that raiseth the dead.* 2 Corinthians 1:9.

But what are those chambers into which the king brings his Church and people? Not those mansions above, I apprehend, which *JESUS* is gone before to take possession of in his Church's name, and whence he will come again by and by to take his people to himself. Though believers now, may truly be said by faith to rest in *JESUS*; for he is *the rest wherewith he causeth the weary to rest, and he is their refreshing.* Isaiah 28:12. But concerning our everlasting home it may be said of this, as *Moses* told Israel in the wilderness: *ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the LORD your God giveth you.* Deuteronomy 12:9. Those chambers of the king therefore seem to mean, acquaintance, and knowledge, and communion, into which the *LORD* brings poor sinners when *he shows them his covenant*: when he reveals to them his love, and brings them more intimately acquainted with their own corruptions, and their need of him: when he

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opens to them the scriptures of truth: pours out upon them the gracious manifestations of himself: gives them ravishing views of his glory, and in short, reveals himself to them otherwise than he doeth to the world. John 14:22. Reader! hath our king *JESUS* in any of those ways brought *you* into his chambers?

The joy of those spoken of in this verse, is the next point to be regarded. *We will be glad and rejoice in thee*: that is, in CHRIST. But who the persons are that are said here to be glad and rejoice in CHRIST, is not said; though it should seem from what was related before, that it means the virgins, or believers in *JESUS*. And there is indeed enough cause to be glad, and to rejoice in him. His person, his salvation, his love to his people; his great undertaking for them, and his accomplishment of it: everything indeed relating to *JESUS* furnisheth subject for joy. When we consider what he is in himself, what he is to his Church, what he hath wrought, what he will perform, and what will be the everlasting source of happiness in him; these thoughts furnish endless matter of rejoicing, so that well might the virgins be said to express themselves in the words of this verse: *we will be glad and rejoice in thee*. Reader! what saith your heart to the same? Have you ever contemplated the LAMB of God in his own spotless purity? Have you ever beheld him taking away sin, by the sacrifice of himself? Have you looked at our *JESUS* and contemplated him under all his endearing characters, bringing in his Church as the king into his chambers: acting as the High Priest in making atonement for his people by his blood, and pleading their cause by his complete righteousness and intercession? And as the great prophet of his Church teaching

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by his HOLY *SPIRIT* all things, and guiding and leading into all truth? Do you behold him who is thus set forth in his blessed word, and do you not find your heart going forth in the same earnestness as the virgins: *We will be glad and rejoice in thee.*

But this is not all. It is added: *we will remember thy love more than wine.* Hath not this an allusion to the ordinance of the supper? The LORD hath made in this mountain *a feast to all people, of wine on the lees well refined.* Isaiah 25:6. But saith the believing soul, the remembrance of *JESUS* love shall more exhilarate my soul; than the strongest, richest, wine. Reader! it is one thing to have communion with the cup at the table, and another to have fellowship with *JESUS* in his blood. In that sacred service are your eyes singly to him, and his person, *whom GOD hath set forth a propitiation through faith, in his blood?* Romans 3:25.

The last clause of this verse is, *The upright love thee.* By the upright we may suppose are meant, sincere followers of *JESUS*. David calls them *the undefiled in the way, and that walk in the law of the LORD.* Psalm 119:1. Precious souls who have given in their names to *JESUS*, and will not go back. The book of Ruth furnisheth a beautiful example of the kind in the person of that converted Moabite. The language of every true believer in *CHRIST* corresponds to what she said to *Naomi.* *Intreat me not (she said) to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy GOD my GOD. Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.* Ruth 1:16, 17.

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 1:5

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

There is a very great beauty in this verse, considered as to the view the Church had of herself as she really was in herself, and as she really was in CHRIST, and as beheld in him. And I think, if the Reader connects these expressions (as no doubt he ought) with what went before, he will discover a still greater beauty. She had desired the LORD to draw her that she might run after him—this was done. The king had brought her into his very chambers. Overpowered with such condescending grace the Church looks into herself, and sees so much vileness and iniquity that her soul swoons in the view, and cries out "I am black, O ye daughters of Jerusalem:" full of spots, and in myself covered over with the leprosy of sin. But behold, by the clothing of *JESUS'S* righteousness and the washing in his blood, how comely I am in the comeliness which he hath put upon me?

By the daughters of Jerusalem I should conceive is meant the same as the *virgins* before noticed: only as a beautiful variety to heighten the representation they are here called *daughters*. For considering *Jerusalem which is above*, as the Apostle calls her, *the Mother of us all*, who belong to the gospel church, and of *the general assembly whose names are written in heaven; they are all one in CHRIST JESUS*. See Galatians 4:26. Hebrews 12:22, 23. Galatians 3:27, 28. The comparison the Church makes of her corruption by nature to the tents of *Kedar*, and of her loveliness in *JESUS* to the curtains of *Solomon*, is uncommonly beautiful. *Kedar* was one of the children of *Ishmael*, whose posterity dwelt in tents, being

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shepherds. And no doubt those tents being exposed to the weather acquired blackness from variety of seasons, of sun, and storms, and rain. The blackness of those tents became no unapt representation of the dark state of the mind by nature, and the habit of mourning in the soul by reason thereof. And moreover, it might be meant to show also the black estate in which the Church of *JESUS* appears in the eyes of the world. See Genesis, 24:13. Isaiah 42:11. The contrast to all this in the curtains of Solomon, which, no doubt, from the riches of Solomon, and the splendour in which he lived, must have been very superb and elegant, is equally striking to represent the loveliness of the Church, who as *the king's daughter is all glorious within*, when beheld in the garment of CHRIST'S salvation, and made as Zion is said to be, a *perfection of beauty, from the comeliness JESUS hath put upon her*. See Lamentations 2:15. Psalm 45:13. Ezekiel 16:14. Reader! what say you to this account the Church gives of herself? Can you adopt the same language? Do you behold yourself as in yourself, vile and worthless: but in the righteousness of *JESUS*, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing? Can you join issue with the Church; *I will greatly rejoice*

*in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my GOD, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.* Isaiah 61:10.

Before I dismiss this verse, I would call upon the Reader to remark with me what a precious view this state of the Church gives, both of our LORD'S unparalleled grace and condescension, and the happy state into which the sinner is

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brought by his great salvation. I stand amazed, dearest *JESUS*, notwithstanding all I have heard, and all I have known of thy love to our fallen nature, in the contemplation of such grace as is here displayed. Was it not enough that thou shouldest come down from the realms of light and glory, to seek and save that which was lost; but dost thou go on to such unequalled condescension as to receive sinners, and eat with them? to make those that are by nature black as the tents of *Kedar*, fair and lovely as the curtains of *Solomon*? Nay, more, to unite them to thyself, and to make them one with thyself in the human nature, as thou art one with the FATHER in the GODHEAD. Reader, if happily the LORD thy GOD hath wrought this work of grace on thee, learn why it is the King hath brought thee into his chambers, namely, from his love and mercy; not thy desert. And in the consciousness of this, however despised and looked upon as black by the world, rejoice in the hidden glory put upon thee by the LORD thy righteousness. This is enough to support thee under all thy afflictions.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:6

Look not upon me, because I *am* black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; *but* mine own vineyard have I not kept.

If, as some have thought, the Gentile Church is here particularly referred to, who being converted from heathenism and idolatry, to the knowledge and enjoyment of the covenant GOD in CHRIST, may be said to have been gathered from a dark estate, there will be an uncommon degree of beauty in the expressions. Look not upon me with an eye of disdain by reason of my former situation, nor of envy,

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because *JESUS* hath regarded me in my low estate, *for his mercy endureth for ever*. Reader! it is always precious to keep in view *the rock whence we were hewn; and the hole of the pit from whence we were digged*. Isaiah 51:1. But, indeed, in a more general point of view, the converted soul, conscious of its own worthlessness and unsuitableness to bear inspection, begs favour in the eyes of all lookers on, not to estimate the state in which the soul stands in *JESUS'S* love, by what they recollect of her former condition by nature, or the many infirmities since grace hath been vouchsafed her. The ungodly, unawakened, and carnal world, delight in the frailties of GOD'S children. *Aha!* is their language, if at any time they fall, so would we have it.

By the *sun looking upon her*, some have thought is meant *the Son of righteousness*. But this blessed aspect would not contribute to make black, but fair, for so is the promise. Malachi 4:2. I rather think that the expression is similar, in allusion to hot countries, to what our LORD saith in his gospel, concerning the scorching sun on the seed; inducing, heat like the fire of persecution. And then the sense will be, look not upon me with a jealous or suspicious eye; questioning the reality of the work of grace in my heart, because I have so much blackness of infirmities upon me; for I have been so scorched with the sun of persecution, that I am not in myself what I am in CHRIST *JESUS*.

*My mother's children were angry with me*. This phrase is very plain in its meaning, after what our LORD *JESUS CHRIST* hath taught us of the displeasure of carnal relations, as soon as ever a work of grace is wrought upon the heart. *A man's foes are they of his own household*. How strikingly is this

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manifested in every age of the Church. Reader! put it down as a maxim of everlasting truth and certainty. As in the case of Jacob and Esau; *as he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.* Galatians 4:29.

*They made me the keeper of the vineyards.* Keeper of the vineyards was the most servile office; and, from the extreme heat and sultry exposure out of doors in the execution of it, became an irksome employment. In a spiritual sense, perhaps, it means that the Church was long exposed to false teachers when in the unconverted state of heathenism. And in the Jewish Church our LORD told the scribes and pharisees, that they had made the commandments of GOD of none effect by their traditions. Nothing can be more opposite to the true spirit of the gospel than forms of godliness without the power. In a figurative language this may be called *the vine of Sodom, and the fields of Gomorrah; the grapes of which are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter.* Deuteronomy 32:32.

*But mine own vineyard have I not kept.* How beautiful is grace which thus induceth humility. We find a little further on in this Song the LORD *JESUS* calleth his spouse the fairest among women; yet in the view she had of herself, she sees nothing but blackness as the tents of Kedar; and the neglect of her own soul, while engaged in the service of others. Such, Reader, depend upon it, will ever be the teaching of the HOLY GHOST. The soul who lives nearest to *JESUS* in sweet fellowship, and communion, will be led most to discover his own poverty and negligence. We see most dust in a room where the sun shines must clear; and the believer never lies

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lower before the LORD in humbleness of spirit, than when the LORD *JESUS* exalts that soul with brighter views of his glory.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:7

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

There is a great beauty in this verse. The Church had been speaking in the preceding to the daughters of Jerusalem. She now turns from them to speak to *JESUS*. The communion of saints is sweet: but, oh! how infinitely sweeter is fellowship and communion with the FATHER, and with his SON *JESUS CHRIST*. 1 John 1:3. But what doth thee Church say to *JESUS*? She considers him under one of his precious characters, as the great Shepherd of his fold, the Church; and viewing herself as his property, both by the FATHER's gift, his own purchase, and the conquests of his grace by his HOLY *SPIRIT*, she earnestly desires that he would tell her where it was that he fed his flock, and where he caused it to rest at noon. Every word in this sweet verse is most highly interesting; but it would swell the Commentary to a length not admissible in a work of this kind, to enlarge upon the several portions of it. A few of the more striking particulars must be sufficient.

In the *first* place, the cry of a truly awakened soul, for personal enjoyment of *JESUS* and all his benefits, is here strongly expressed, *Tell me, O thou, whom my soul loveth!* Reader! it is the truest sign of interest in *JESUS*, when the soul is going out after him in longing desires. And do observe further, that the soul may be going out in the most earnest desires after *JESUS*, when, as in the instance of the Church here, the soul may be at a loss where to find her Beloved.

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There may be, and there sometimes is, in the best of CHRIST'S disciples, darkness upon the mind from the persecution of the world, the temptations of Satan, and from the body of sin and death they carry about with them: but when *JESUS*, by his HOLY *SPIRIT*, awakes anew this desire in the soul, these desires plainly prove that the grace of the LORD *JESUS* remains unextinguished.

In the *next* place, we may observe the unanswerable strength of the arguments the Church makes use of to prevail with *JESUS*. He is her Beloved; and she is in extreme need. Reader! it is a precious testimony in the soul, when, like Peter, amidst the numberless circumstances of unworthiness which are in me, I can still say, LORD! *thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee*. And shall one that loves *JESUS*, be as one that loves him not? Shall I be in doubt like others, that know thee not; whether I am thine, or not? Shall I, whom thou hast betrothed to thyself as thy spouse, be regarded as if I was an harlot? Shall it be thought by others that are turned aside, and who are not of thy fold, that I am like one of them? Oh! show me where thou feedest, where this flock is; that, like a lamb of it, I may be found among thy fold, and fed from thine own hand, and brought under thine own eye and care.

There is a very great beauty in this character of the LORD *JESUS*,

considered in his pastoral office, in which the Church here beholds him. And if the Reader hath not been much accustomed to consider *JESUS* under this character and office, I shall rejoice, if the reference to him, which the Church

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makes in this most interesting point of view, should call up his attention. Through the whole of the eventful history of the Church, from the very first forming of it, to the ministry of *JESUS* at his incarnation, the LORD seems to have been pleased that his people should consider him under this character: hence one of the sacred writers cries out, *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock: thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.* Psalm 80:1. And as if GOD our FATHER meant to hold him forth to his people in a yet more endearing point of view, it is remarkable that he is called GOD'S Shepherd. See Zechariah 13:7. And that his people might know him as such, as suited to all their wants and circumstances, he is expressly distinguished under the various names of the *great Shepherd*, Hebrews 13:20; the *good Shepherd*, John 10:11; the *chief Shepherd*, 1 Peter 5:4, and the like; intimating that he is exactly suited to every case of his flock. His *greatness* becomes their security for all things: his *goodness*, never to let them want: his sovereignty, and being the only One, implies that every other is unnecessary. And as the FATHER'S Shepherd, coming in his name, appointed by his authority, all his acts are valid, and his sheep cannot but be eternally secure. *They shall never perish, nor any pluck them out of his hand; because his FATHER gave them, who is greater than all, and none can pluck them out of his FATHER'S hand. I saith JESUS, and my FATHER are One.* John 10:28-30.

I stay not to particularize the many precious things folded up in this one character of *JESUS*: I only refer the Reader to the several passages in his sacred word, which confirm this glorious truth: and I beg of him, to read the same with

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attention; and form, under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, his opinion of their importance. John 10:16-18. Psalm 23. Ezekiel 34

throughout. Hebrews 13:20.

But beside the *character* of *JESUS* as a Shepherd, We must notice the *office* also belonging to our dear LORD, of feeding. *Tell me* (saith the Church) *where thou feedest*. Now this is a most delightful feature in the portrait of *JESUS*. It was prophesied of him before his coming, that *he should feed his flock like a Shepherd*. Isaiah 40:11. And it is affirmed of him after his return to glory, that *he is the LAMB in the midst of the throne to feed his Church*. Revelation 7:17. So that this act of CHRIST is perpetual. And if we take into our consideration what is evidently implied in feeding, we shall discover that it intends every thing necessary to be done for the welfare of his flock. It is the office of the Shepherd, not only to provide pasture, but to protect from rapine; not only to guard the weak, but to restore wanderers, to heal the diseased, to search and seek out those that are scattered in the dark and cloudy day; or as *JESUS* most graciously expresses it himself: *To seek that which was lost, and bring back again that which was driven away: to bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick*. Ezekiel 34:16. Reader! have you ever considered your Almighty Shepherd under this sweet character? Have you yourself experienced the tenderness of your Shepherd? Do you know him, of going in and out before you in the pastures of his holy word, in the ordinances of worship, and in the gracious services of his house of prayer? Do you know him in his voice, in seasons of wandering, in his watchings over you like the Shepherd of *Bethlehem* in right

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seasons; in his deliverance of you *from the lion's dens, and the mountains of the leopards*. Oh! the preciousness of knowing the Redeemer under this endearing character! The sheep of CHRIST, who are the objects of his care, can best describe what is implied in this one feature of their LORD'S love towards them. The office of a Shepherd is distinguished in the freeness and graciousness of his love. Though the sheep fail in their obedience, *JESUS* never fails in his love. It is his own grace, not our desert, which becomes the rule of his conduct. Frequently the poor silly sheep is unconscious of his wants and weaknesses; but doth the Shepherd wait to be informed? Is it needful that they should cry before he relieves? Oh! no. Their need affords the opportunity for the display of his grace; and his own love is the sole motive of all his mercy and tenderness towards them. Precious Shepherd of thy blood-bought sheep! the flock of slaughter? how delightful is it to my soul, that the needy as well as the full, the distressed as well as the strong, the wandering as well as the restored, are the peculiar objects of thy care. *I have gone astray, dear LORD, like a sheep that is lost: O seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.* Psalm 119:176.

But we must not stop here. The LORD *JESUS* not only feeds his flock like a shepherd; but in the act of feeding, the food with which he feeds them, infinitely surpasseth all other sustenance: for he not only feeds them in his ordinances, by the ministry of his word, with the discoveries of his grace, the precious nourishment of the gospel; but he himself gives them to eat of the hidden manna, the bread of life, even his own body and blood, *which is meat and drink indeed*. And his

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language is, *Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*. Reader! doth not your very soul cry out, in the contemplation of this unequalled love of the LORD *JESUS*, LORD! *evermore give me this bread*. John 6:27-58. Oh! dearest, merciful, gracious Redeemer! feed my soul with the manifestations of thy glory—give me to see what thou art in thyself, what thou art to thy people, what thou hast done for thy Church, and what relation thou standest in to them! Feed my soul with the communications of thy love—let my soul live upon thee in thy pardoning, refreshing, renewing, strengthening, confirming grace. And let the consolation of thy HOLY *SPIRIT* become the perpetual nourishment of my soul, when, in all his blessed offices, he is taking of thine, and showing unto me.

There is another point to be considered in this delightful verse; and that is the question of the Church: Where *JESUS* feeds, and where he causeth his flock to rest at noon? by which we may observe, that it is not enough for the seeking soul to know *how*, and with *what* sweet and suitable food the Great Shepherd supplies the necessities of his flock, but *where* the seeking soul is to come. To this the answer is direct: wherever the pure and unadulterated gospel is preached, and gospel ordinances are faithfully administered, there the Redeemer hath promised his presence, wherever *two or three are met in his name*. Matthew 18:20. There he will be found of them that seek him. And also under the noon of persecution, the noon of temptation, the noon of affliction, or any other season of trial, like the scorching heat of a sultry day, in a dry and barren land, where no water is; there *JESUS* hath his resting places, and deeply exercised souls may find a

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sweet resting place in him, through the everlasting covenant love, and faithfulness of the FATHER; the justifying blood and righteousness of the LORD *JESUS* CHRIST; and the powerful efficacy, strength, and aid of GOD the HOLY GHOST. *This is the rest* (saith the Prophet, in allusion to all these grand things) *wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing*; Isaiah 28:12. Reader! do you seek with the Church to the Great Shepherd for this resting place? Here set up thy rest in the faithfulness of JEHOVAH, against all the accusations of conscience, the charges of Satan, the arrest of justice, and the curse of GOD'S broken law. This is what my soul would plead, in the double plea, of the sovereign grace of GOD the FATHER'S covenant love, and GOD the Redeemer'S justifying blood and righteousness: and sure I am, as Job justly argued; *God will not plead against me with his great power*, when he hath put the strength of his own salvation in me. There, in *JESUS'S* finished work, the righteous might dispute with him; *so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge*. There can be no ground for fear of a condemnation from GOD the FATHER; while my soul stands clothed and justified before him in the appointed and approved righteousness of GOD the *SON*. See Job 23:6.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 1:8

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

Some have thought, that this answer is given by the virgins or daughters of Jerusalem: but, not to remark that it is a little unlikely, that young converts should better know where CHRIST is to be found, than elder believers: it should seem to

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be much more probable to be the answer of the LORD *JESUS* himself: for the promise is, *Before my people call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.* Isaiah 65:24. And, Reader! do not fail to observe, how sweetly and affectionately *JESUS* speaks to his Church, and by what endearing names he calls her. Remark, then, that however black, in their own eyes, believers appear; yet, in *JESUS'S* view, they are fair. But do not forget to connect with this view the sole cause, namely, because they are beheld by him in his robe of righteousness, and made comely from the comeliness he hath put upon them. Oh! precious *JESUS!* is this thy love, thy matchless, unparalleled love, to make souls that are in themselves black, fair in thy loveliness, and then to admire them for thy own graces!

But, Reader, observe further in this verse, how very gentle the rebukes of *CHRIST* are, for the ignorance of his people. It is as if he had said, After so many evidences as I have given thee of my love in my communion with thee, and manifestations towards thee, art thou ignorant where to find me? As he said to Philip, *Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* John 14:9. Reader! call to mind that scripture in all thy moments of doubts, and fears, and ignorance. *He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.* Isaiah 42:3. Matthew 12:20.

The latter part of this verse, in the direction of *JESUS*, is as plain as it is precious, and as refreshing as it is important. The *flock*, to which the spouse is directed, can mean no other than the whole body of *CHRIST*, his Church, which the *FATHER* hath given him, and which is the purchase of his blood. *The Shepherds* here spoken of, are the ministers, the under

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pastors of the fold, such as are faithful in the work and doctrine, and correspond to such as the LORD promised he would give *Pastors after his own heart, which should feed them with understanding and knowledge*. Jeremiah 3:15. And by *the footsteps of the flock*, evidently are intended the several ordinances and means of grace. And perhaps the *kids* refer to the case of young believers; so that our LORD *JESUS* directs his people in this verse to search out a pure ministry of his Holy Word, that their souls may be fed and nourished, and built up in their most holy faith; that whether they are babes in CHRIST, or young men, or fathers in GOD; the soul-reviving, soul-refreshing truths of his holy gospel may be their daily food.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 1:9

I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

I beg the Reader to be particularly careful in his observations on the very tender appellations which pass between *JESUS* and his Church. It is, indeed, one of the most distinguishing features of this delightful book; and as, more or less, he will meet with such in every chapter, and many times in the same Chapter, I do desire once for all, that he will mark it down as an object of great note. Indeed the Church and her spouse seem, at times, to labour for expressions, as if to excel the commendations of one another: nor is this to be wondered at.—How dear soever to a truly awakened believer the LORD *JESUS* is; yet we must conclude, that in love, as well as in all other things, *JESUS* hath the preeminence. *If we love him, it is because he first loved us*. I hope, Reader, that we both love Him, on account of his Person, his love to us, his suitableness

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to us, the manifestations he hath made of Himself to us, our union with him, and our communion from him. But when I call to mind the source of his love, the commencement of his love, the nature of his love, the quality of his love; the extent, the power, the degree, the unchangeableness of it; and, if possible more than all, the unmerited freeness, fulness, and sovereignty of it, bestowed upon such objects as we all are by nature; I fall down under the conviction, that His love is *a love that passeth knowledge*. Ephesians 3:14-19. This verse affords a beautiful example of it, in the rich similitude the LORD makes of his spouse, the Church, (made up of the whole body of believers), to that of a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. To a mere English reader, it might seem but a coarse kind of compliment, the comparison of men to horses; but when it is considered, that the manners of the East were very different from ours; that no animals were so highly prized as their horses, which were always on gaudy days adorned with trappings of gold and the costly jewels: and yet, more particularly to our present purpose, when it be recollected, that the dressings of the horses were exactly as is said in this place of CHRIST concerning his Church; *The neck with chains of gold, and the cheeks made comely with rows of jewels*; the objection is lost in the elegance and beauty of the similitude.

And if the Reader considers for a moment, how many striking qualities may be supposed in the character of Pharaoh's horses, which, by way of illustration, point out the loveliness and value of the Church in the eyes of her husband; the figure will appear very striking and instructive.

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We read in the first book of the Kings, chap. 4:26. that Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots. Will not the abundance be considered as no unapt representation of *JESUS'S* army, which *no man could number*. Revelation 7:9. And if we calculate the price of each, which, in another part of that same scripture we are told cost 150 *shekels* of silver (2 Kings 10:29), which, supposing the shekel at the lowest value to be but equal to *three shillings* of our coin, makes the whole stud of horses to be somewhat more than *eight hundred and eighty thousand pounds* of our money; although the figure falls infinitely short, because the purchase of our redemption cannot be calculated with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; yet it may serve to show the justness of the application that souls purchased with a ransom so inestimable as the blood of *CHRIST*, are more valuable in *JESUS'S* eye than Solomon's costly horses were in his. But these are not all.

No doubt the horses in Pharaoh's chariots were picked out and selected; paired, if one may so say, in size, colour, form, shape, and strength. And is not this a beautiful allusion to the people of *GOD*, who are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, the objects of Almighty grace? Moreover, the qualities of horses in their order, discipline, trainment, management, and the like, bear no unapt resemblance to the regularity of *CHRIST'S* household. And the distinguished place the horses in Pharaoh's chariots held beyond the common labouring horses of the field, may illustrate the peculiarity of that exalted situation believers in *CHRIST* enjoy, who wait chiefly upon the service of the *LORD*, and live in the presence of the King of kings. And lastly, to

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mention no more, when we consider what care, what attention the horses in the chariots of Pharaoh had shown them, above the ordinary run of others; we may, without violence to the figure, say, that here is represented somewhat very striking of the superintendence shown the LORD'S people in the service of angels, and ministers, and providences, and grace; and above all, the care over them by the LORD himself, *who watches over them night and day, lest any hurt them.* Isaiah 27:3. Precious Redeemer! am I a part in this gracious view to which thou hast compared thy Church? Didst thou indeed purchase my poor soul with so great a price? Didst thou set thy love upon me at the first. Hast thou adorned me with thy coverings, and now dost thou set me apart for thyself and thy glory? Oh! for grace, not to recompense such unequalled bonnty, for that is impossible; but to love and adore such matchless mercy, that being bought with a price so dear, I may *glorify thee, my GOD, in my body and in my Spirit which are thine.* 1 Corinthians 6:20.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:10

Thy cheeks are comely with rows *of jewels*, thy neck with chains *of gold.*

The Bridegroom is still going on with commending the beauty and loveliness of his bride as she appeared in his eyes. For, notwithstanding the consciousness she had of her own blackness and deformity, yet to him she appeared most lovely, from the comeliness he had put upon her. Ezekiel 16:14. The Reader cannot need much recollection here to see the justness of the expressions in reference to every redeemed and truly regenerated believer. For when a soul is washed in *JESUS'S* blood, and clothed in *JESUS'S* righteousness,

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the imagination is not able to conceive how surpassingly beautiful that soul must be found! But concerning the particular parts of the believer which are here spoken of as adorned, the *cheeks* and the *neck*; perhaps it is not so easy to determine the exact reference. Some have thought, that as the neck is immediately joined to the head, it is intended by the expression to show the nearness to *JESUS*, the head of his body the Church. And others have thought, that it hath respect to the special grace of faith, since by faith we apprehend and lay hold of *CHRIST*. And by the adornings with *jewels* and *gold*; (though I beg the Reader to observe that these words are not in the original, but are supplied by the translator): it hath been supposed also, that the ordinances and means of grace, which certainly are highly ornamental in the Christian walk of faith, *JESUS* intended to convey his approbation of the Church's diligent use of them. But whether these things are intended or not, nothing can be more evident, from the whole construction of the verse, than that *JESUS* was looking upon his spouse with complacency and delight. As if the *LORD* had said, How lovely art thou in my sight! I behold thee as the purchase of my blood, and the gift of my *FATHER*. Everything about thee, which is mine, I am pleased with. The gifts and graces of my *SPIRIT*, which I have imparted to thee, give a comeliness to thy countenance, which is graceful like rows of jewels; and I have united thee to myself as with chains of gold:—such and so fair art thou in my eye. Reader! oh! how blessed is it to be thus seen by *CHRIST*, and to be loved by him from our interest *in* him, and our union *with* him!

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:11

We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.

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I desire the Reader to remark with me the alteration that is here made in the language of the Speaker. All that went before is delivered by one person, and is in the singular number. But here, it is as if by more than one, and is in the plural. And what can this mean, but that *JESUS*, as the Speaker, promiseth in his own name, and jointly in the name of the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST with himself, to give his Church the blessings here spoken of. Let the Reader recollect a similar form made use of at the creation: *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*. Genesis 1:26. And so again at that glorious vision the Prophet saw; *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Isaiah 6:1-8. Let the Reader further recollect the commission CHRIST gave to his Apostles in the moment of his departure, when committing his blessed gospel into their hands, that they should go forth and baptize in the joint name of the FATHER, *of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST*. Matthew 28:19. And let the Reader call to mind at the same time the HOLY GHOST's words by Paul the Apostle, when blessing the Church; *in the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the love of GOD the FATHER, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST*. 2 Corinthians 13:14. Let the Reader bring all these scriptures into one point of view together; and then let him determine for himself, whether we are not to consider what is said in this verse; *We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver*, as the covenant engagements of all the Persons of the GODHEAD to the Church in *JESUS*, that she shall be blessed with all spiritual blessings of GOD in CHRIST *JESUS* the LORD. Ephesians 1:3. I need not enlarge on that part of the verse, in inquiring what those blessings are. No doubt the borders of gold and studs of silver mean to include all blessings, temporal, spiritual, eternal. Everything, and every

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state, shall be sanctified and blessed: for GOD having chosen the Church in CHRIST, and *JESUS* having married the Church to himself, and washed her from all the filthiness, and from all her idols; the HOLY GHOST hath made her, and, will make her a *glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish.* Ephesians 5:27.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 1:12

While the king *sitteth* at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

At this verse the Church takes up the conversation. And as her Husband had spoken so graciously of her, she now breaks out in commendation of him, and his loveliness, and condescension. By the King, there can be no question who is meant; it could be none but *JESUS*. By the table, may be understood, either the covenant of grace, the scriptures of truth, the several ordinances of the gospel, or his providences, dispensations or the like:—and as it is said to be his table, no doubt it is intended to express that all are his, and of his own do his people give him. The spikenard is a beautiful figure to represent the state and exercise of a true believing soul. Naturalists tell us that it is a poor, little, contemptible shrub in itself: but yet by a process when made into an ointment, it is most costly and highly esteemed, both for its fragrancy and virtues. And is not this strongly expressive of the soul? When sunk by sin, how low, how despised, and even offensive in the sight of holy angels. But when washed in the blood of CHRIST, and made comely in his comeliness, how beautiful and graceful to every beholder! By the Church's expression of her spikenard sending forth a

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fragrancy while *JESUS* is sitting at his table, and she with him, is meant to imply what a blessed frame the soul is in, when the graces, which the *HOLY SPIRIT* hath planted in the heart, are called forth into exercise by the presence of her Lord, similar to the effects wrought on some sweet flower of the garden or field, which, while the sun shines upon it, and melts by its beams the fine oil of its foliage, the air becomes impregnated with the odour; so the *LORD JESUS*, shining in upon the graces he hath given to the believer, brings forth the sweets thereof in the life and conversation all around. Thus Mary's spikenard is recorded with peculiar honour, as a token of her love which she poured on *JESUS'S* feet. And it was at supper at the table when this was done; which should seem to refer to this very scripture; John 12:3. What a beautiful view doth this verse afford, both of the graciousness of the Redeemer, and the happiness of the soul when living under the immediate enjoyment of his presence. He saith himself, that he stands at the door, and doth knock; and that if admitted there shall be a mutual feast. He will sup with his people, and they shall sup with him. Revelation 3:20. And so it is, indeed, for while his grace flows out to them, their exercises of faith, and love, and hope, and desire, are all going forth to him, and upon him, and while blessings come down, praises go up; and all his goodness and his glory is made to pass before them. I must not quit the verse before that I have first observed that some have thought that the Church meant by her spikenard her Beloved, her *JESUS*: and if so, the expression is still more interesting: for then it is as if the Church had said, While my *LORD* and King sitteth at his table, my Redeemer who is to me all that is blessed and costly, sendeth forth all his fragrancy. He is the whole of the

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enjoyment. He is the Altar, the Sacrifice, and the Sacrificer in the sanctuary. And he is the glorious Head, and Provider of the whole feast at his table. Everything here is *of JESUS*. Everything is *in JESUS*. Everything is *from JESUS*. And everything *to JESUS*. He is the LORD my Righteousness. And he is made of GOD to me wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD. 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:13-14

A bundle of myrrh *is* my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. (14) My beloved *is* unto me *as* a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.

I bring both these verses into one view, for the sake of making one observation answer for both. A bundle of myrrh, and a cluster of camphire, are intended to convey the same thing, namely, the infinite riches of the Person and work of *JESUS*; and that everything in him is abundant and as the richest clusters. *Myrrh* is well known as a rich spice. It formed a principal ingredient in the holy ointment. Exodus 30:23. And perhaps in allusion to this, in the anointings of the HOLY GHOST, the Church is said to be perfumed with it, when *coming up out of the wilderness*. Song Of Solomon 3:6. And no doubt the Person and sacrifice of CHRIST is precious to the soul as myrrh, while we consider that *JESUS* in his oblation of himself to GOD, for the salvation of his people, offered himself *for a sweet smelling savor*. Ephesians 5:2. But though, no doubt, by the church's comparing CHRIST to a bundle of myrrh, might well be understood those and numberless other things in reference to the loveliness of *JESUS*; yet I rather

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think in this place is intended by the expression, an allusion to CHRIST in his sufferings. Myrrh was given to *JESUS* in the offered vinegar; and the bitter taste that there is in Myrrh, might be well suited to convey this idea. Hence, under this view, there will be a double meaning as suited to the representation of CHRIST; for both in his sufferings and all-sufficiency, CHRIST is altogether precious to his people: and the church might very properly call him *a bundle* of myrrh, for a fulness of every blessing, both in doing, and dying; both in himself, and in all his offices, characters, and relations is in him, and she might well say, that he should lie all night between her breasts; intimating the closest communion as an object of all others most desirable, during the whole night of her pilgrimage state, until the light of that everlasting day-break in upon the soul which shall have no night. And perhaps the church might allude in this expression of CHRIST'S *laying all night betwixt her breasts*, to the two Testaments, the old and the new, where indeed CHRIST may be said to lie, and where he is discovered by his people; for these are strictly and properly the breasts of the Church: so, in like manner, *the cluster of camphire*, though the figure is different, yet the subject is the same. The copher (which some have thought means the Cyprus pine, and others the Cyprus tree, and others the grapes of Cyprus, and some the dates or fruit of the Palm-tree), hath a beautiful allusion to CHRIST: for the sweet savour and medicinal qualities intended to be denoted by the expression, are all applicable to *JESUS*. Our LORD himself takes himself the same figure, John 15:1. And indeed, when we add to these several considerations, that the word *Copher* hath another meaning distinct from all, and, literally might be translated atonement; in this sense there is an uncommon

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beauty in the thought, and the Church's view of CHRIST under this character, is very striking. *Engedi*, it is said, was a remarkable spot for the production of Palm-trees. But we must not dismiss those verses until that we have particularly remarked that special right of appropriation which the Church makes in both, of *JESUS* as her own. In the *former*, she calls him her well-beloved; and in the *latter*, she repeats the same as her beloved. Reader! in every way, and in all points of view, CHRIST is lovely. What he is in himself, and what he is to his people; all is lovely. But faith finds a great sweetness when she can say, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*. Oh! for grace to know this, and to enjoy it; that while CHRIST is the only begotten SON, and well beloved SON of the FATHER, he may be our truly beloved also, *the altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand*.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:15-16

Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes. (16) Behold, thou *art* fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed *is* green.

I include in one reading these verses, because the beauty of them is in my apprehension, heightened in being read together. The *former*, I conceive to be the words of CHRIST: the *latter*, those of his Church. Both are introduced with a *behold*, as if to intimate their importance, *JESUS* speaks of the fairness of his love; and he repeats it for her comfort: and he ascribes to her the eyes of the dove.

There is a vast comprehension in those few words to show the complacency and delight which *JESUS* hath in the person of his people, CHRIST himself is fairer than the children of men, for grace is poured into his lips: Psalm 45:2. And as CHRIST

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and his Church are one, through his comeliness, which he hath put upon her, she is lovely also. But what is particularly intended to be set forth by the ascribing to the Church *doves' eyes*, is not perhaps so easy to determinate. It hath been supposed by some that the ministers of the gospel are thus represented; for their office is to be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame: to go in and out before the people, and to act as stewards, watchmen, and guides, to the LORD'S Zion. But whether there be a peculiar reference to them, or a general reference to all the redeemed of the LORD, the representation is alike beautiful; for the eye of the dove is supposed to be chaste, and meek, and gentle; not beholding so much the blemishes of others, as earnest in humbleness to discover her own. The weeping eye of a penitent is suited also to the dove; for the Prophet describes holy mourners as the sorrowful dove of the valley. Ezekiel 7:16. And in another part of this Song the Church describes the eyes of her LORD, as by the rivers, washed with milk and fitly set. Song Of Solomon 5:12. But if *JESUS* commends her love under these characters as a perfection of beauty, the Church, with all suited humbleness, takes his own gracious words and makes application of all that is truly lovely to him in the verse that follows; and to her view *JESUS* is all in all: as GOD and as man, and as both GOD and man in one person. She beholds him as the disciples beheld him, when he manifested forth his glory and they believed in him. John 2:11. She adds, as a further commendation, that he was *pleasant*; meaning, no doubt, that everything in him, and on him, was blessed to her soul: his cross, as well as his crown; his Person, blood, righteousness; all his promises, his providences, doctrines, ordinances, people, interest, communion, fellowship,

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exercises; yea, all belonging to CHRIST, and in CHRIST. The *bed* here spoken of, and which is said to be the mutual property, both of CHRIST and his Church, may probably mean the human nature; but some have supposed it refers to Zion herself. Certain it is, that it must have respect to what both parties are equally interested in. In this the Church is equally so with CHRIST, by virtue of her connection with him; for he is the Head of her body the Church, the fulness of Him that filled all in all. Ephesians 1:23. The *greenness* of it may be designed to set forth the everlasting verdure and fruitfulness of the Church in CHRIST. The seed of CHRIST are promised by JEHOVAH to spring up in the gospel Church *as among the grass, as willows by the water courses*. Isaiah 44:4.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 1:17

The beams of our house *are* cedar, *and* our rafters of fir.

The same thought is pursued in this verse, as in the former. The house is said to be their joint-property; and the parts of it are described under images suited to the Eastern manner, of the best and most durable materials. And whether we consider the house here spoken of, to mean the Church above, *not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*: or the house CHRIST himself hath builded, which is his Church; and *which house* (as the Apostle said) *are we*—the sense is the same. Everything *in* CHRIST, and *of* CHRIST, is firm, sure, and everlasting; and from the union and oneness between CHRIST and his Church, all that belongs to Him as Mediator is the property of his Church. Believers have communion with his Person, his name, his righteousness:—all he is, he is for his people; all he hath wrought, is for them; all he is now engaged in is for them; all he is gone to take possession of; is

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for them, and in their name. Oh! the preciousness of *JESUS*. *All are your's*, (saith an Apostle), *and ye are CHRIST'S*, *and CHRIST is GOD'S*. 1 Corinthians 2:22, 23.

## REFLECTION

READER! what sayest thou now thou hast gone over the first chapter of this incomparable hymn? Is it to thee what the title terms it, The Song of Songs? And is it of thy Solomon, thy *JESUS*? If so, shall we not join in singing it here upon earth, until we come to the everlasting hallelujahs of heaven? Yes! surely I would say for you, and for myself, Let *JESUS* kiss us with the kisses of mouth, for grace is poured into his lips, and he will communicate life, and grace, and pardon, and salvation unto our souls. And oh! that you and I may kiss the SON, for his love is indeed better than wine. Never was it known, that the highest cordial of wine recovered the dead; but thy love, blessed *JESUS*, can, and will recover sinners, that are dead in trespasses and sins: and surely thou, dearest LORD, as the virgins found, so have we known, that thy name surpasseth, in fragrancy and in odour, the richest ointment. Every name of thine is dear to a poor sinner: neither can a poor exercised soul of thine be so sadly circumstanced, but that thou hast a name suited for his case; and thy name, through faith in thy name, is the universal relief for all the maladies of thy people. Draw me then, thou dear Redeemer, with the cords of a man, with the bands of love, and every heart will run after thee. Surely the LORD the King hath drawn me into the chambers of his love, of his grace, his everlasting covenant, Oh! LORD, I will remember thee; I will be glad in

thee; I will hail thee under all thine endearing characters, offices, and relations for thou art the LORD our righteousness.

And now let me tell the daughters of Jerusalem, and all that love our LORD *JESUS* CHRIST in sincerity and truth, of the grace, and mercy, and loveliness of my LORD. I am, indeed, in myself a poor, black, fallen son of Adam, but *JESUS* hath made me comely in his comeliness, and adopted me into his family; so that I, that in myself merited hell, am made in him an heir of heaven. Oh! do not look upon me, then, as I once was, but as I now am. Behold me in CHRIST, and be not angry with me.

But, LORD, I turn to thee. Tell me where thou feedest thy sheep here in this wilderness. I know, LORD, that thou art the LAMB in the midst of the throne, feeding the church above: but I know also that thou art not less attentive to the humblest and poorest of thy family here below. Feed me, LORD, a poor weather-beaten lamb of thy flock, and bring me home at length to thine everlasting fold.

Reader! mark what *JESUS* hath directed the church in this place: If we are at a loss any time to know where *JESUS* feeds his flock like a shepherd, let us seek out for a faithful, pure, and gospel ministry. Here let us sit under the word, and be very diligent in the use of means and ordinances. Here let the kids, that is, our little ones also, the children of our houses and families, be brought beside the Great Shepherd's tents in the congregations of the faithful, and the LORD will bless and own his word to his people.

And, Reader! let us, with humble reverence, look up, and implore the fulfillment of this blessed promise of the FATHER,

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SON; and HOLY GHOST; that, from their joint love, and joint agency, we may have indeed borders of gold, with studs of silver. Hail! holy, undivided; THREE IN ONE, the LORD JEHOVAH! do thou regenerate our souls, and form them anew in CHRIST *JESUS*. Creating work, and renewing work, and refreshing work; all, all is thine. LORD! carry on and complete thy work, unto the day of thy coming.

Be thou then, thou blessed *JESUS*, all and everything our souls can possibly need or require: and while thou sittest at thy table, and art handing to my soul thy bread in secret, my soul will go out in desires after thee, as the fragrant smell of the spikenard; for surely thou art to me more refreshing than myrrh—more healing than camphire. Thou art more fair than the morning, more lovely than the sun rising, even in a morning without clouds. May my soul live to thee, walk with thee, rejoice in thee; and be thou my portion, and mine everlasting rest, in time, and to all eternity. Amen.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTENTS

*The subject which the first chapter contained is the same as is continueth through this: indeed there is none other through the whole book of the Song, the mutual love of CHRIST, and his church. JESUS commends his spouse, and the spouse commends her Beloved.*

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:1

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

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There is a lovely obscurity which runs through the whole of this Song, more or less, which prevents us from determining, upon many occasions, who is the speaker, CHRIST or his church. I call it a *lovely* obscurity, because, as the point is undetermined, the awakened soul may consider the several expressions wheresoever this obscurity prevails, as in the person of both, and, thereby derive a double sweetness from them: and I hope that I do not err when I say, that perhaps the HOLY GHOST might be graciously pleased so to leave the words, on purpose that the soul of the faithful might occasionally apply them to both; and, under his teaching, find a blessedness as referring to both. Thus in the verse now before us, in the first reading, it should seem that the words are the words of the church; for how can we expect to find the SON of GOD comparing himself to similitudes so very low and familiar as *the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the vallies*. But yet, when we consider to what a wonderful degree of humiliation the LORD of life and glory came down, we may suppose, without violence to the figure, that CHRIST thus expressed himself as this verse sets forth. Jewish writers for the most part, have accepted them as the language of the church; and many among christians have been of the same opinion. Reader! let you and I see whether they are not very delightful if applied to both. And first of CHRIST; the rose of Sharon, as a figure of CHRIST, may be supposed to refer to his human nature. Adam, the first man, is so called from red earth; and the rose, in its beauty and redness, can be no unapt representation of him who is *fairer than the children of man, into whose lips grace is poured, and whom JEHOVAH hath blessed for ever*, And from the fruitfulness of Sharon, it is probable that the roses grew there in the greatest beauty and

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loveliness, and were of a superior quality: neither do I think it an improbable circumstance, that CHRIST, in this view of himself, had an eye both to the sweet savor of his merits, and the incense of his righteousness, with which all heaven is perfumed; and thereby efficacy and acceptance is given to the poor polluted prayers and offerings of his people; the offering of his precious blood corresponding to the redness of the rose, and his righteousness set forth under the image of the whiteness of the lily. Let the Reader, if he be a real lover of *JESUS*, and enamored with his Person, blood, and righteousness; let him determine whether the sweetest rose hath a fragrancy equal to the order of CHRIST'S oblation; or the loveliness of the lily, comparable to the purity of *JESUS'S* holiness? I must not overlook what some have thought, when accepting these words as the words of *JESUS*, that they intimate by the rose of Sharon, that CHRIST declared himself to be *the flower of the field*: for some translate the passage. And they conceive this not only because it is planted, watered, and brought forth without human art or human labour, as CHRIST was in his human nature wholly by GOD; but also because a flower of the field, like his gospel is open to all: *Whosoever will*, that is, whomsoever the HOLY GHOST makes willing in the day of CHRIST'S power, *Let him come, and take of the water of life freely; without money and without price*. Certainly these things open to our meditation sweet views of *JESUS*; but if the words of the rose of Sharon are thus beautifully considered as referring to the person of CHRIST, and spoken by him, we shall find an equally sweet allusion in the latter part of the verse, in which he compares himself to *the lily of the vallies*: for here, the unequalled whiteness of the lily may well be supposed to resemble the purity of CHRIST'S human nature; and the valley

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where this humble modest flower delights to grow, sets forth the gracious humiliation of our *JESUS*, in the assumption of our nature. Of him indeed it may be, and must be truly said, that *Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these*. And hence in both, the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley, we may find these, and perhaps many other very pleasing similitudes concerning the Person and character of our dear LORD to lead to him. But if the obscurity I just now remarked, hath rendered it difficult to ascertain with certainty, whether the words belong to CHRIST or the church, let us now consider them with reference to the latter:—and here it is certain we cannot err, if it be supposed the church used such language from her union and interest in CHRIST. She may truly call herself all that is beautiful, and fragrant like the sweetest flowers, from *the comeliness that CHRIST hath put on her*. In his eye, he saith himself, *she hath no spot*. Song Of Solomon 4:7. Ephesians 5:27. And from the many qualities of his grace in her heart, she may consider herself complete in him. But though by way of setting forth the glories of her LORD, and as she had before said, *I am black, but comely*; Song Of Solomon 1:5. she still felt her own original worthlessness, while taking delight in what she was in *JESUS*; yet, I confess, I am inclined rather to accept this first verse as the words of the LORD *JESUS*, thus recommending himself to the notice, love, and acceptance of his people. Isaiah 65:1.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 2:2

As the lily among thorns, so *is* my love among the daughters.

But whatever obscurity is found in the former verse to whom the words belong, there can be none here. Evidently *JESUS* is here speaking of his church, and by a comparison with all

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others to point out her superiority; and in his grace, and love, he hath done it in a most gracious and blessed manner. And observe how the Lord expresseth himself: He calleth his church what he calleth himself, a *lily*: as if to express the oneness between them: and not only the oneness and union, but interest; for it is this which gives all the beauty and loveliness to the church, her conformity and likeness to *JESUS*: and by this she is distinguished among all others; for as the loveliness of the lily is made to appear more striking, when beheld in the midst of thorns; so the church of *CHRIST* and every individual believer, is found most graceful *in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they shine as lights in the world*. Pause, Reader, before this verse be dismissed, and remark with me, the love and tenderness of *JESUS* for his church. Though she dwelleth among briars and thorns, yet is she in his eye the lily still. She hears his name—she is owned as his love, and *JESUS* regards her with an eye of delight, and will never leave her, until he comes to remove her from the thorns and briars of this world's wilderness to the garner of his paradise which is above.

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:3

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so *is* my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit *was* sweet to my taste.

These are the words of the church, and very expressive they are, of her affection to her *LORD*. It should seem, as if conscious of her own undeservings, when hearing herself so spoken of and praised by *JESUS*, that she interrupts him to tell of his excellency and loveliness, as the sole cause of every grace which induced loveliness in her. Probably the apple tree

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in those warm countries was vastly superior to these in our colder climates; and this, indeed, historians tell us it was: for in loftiness, fruitfulness, and beauty, this tree surpassed all others. Now *JESUS* is all this and infinitely more, in the eyes of his people. *JESUS*, in our nature, is far above all angels, and principalities, and powers; probably these are the sons the church speaks of, and we know, that when *JESUS* as GOD-MAN Mediator is brought into our world under this exalted character, as the first begotten, JEHOVAH said, *Let all the angels of GOD worship him*. And though in his human nature he is said *to have been made a little lower than the angels*: yet in that nature, united to the GODHEAD, *he is crowned with glory and honour*. And how preferable, then, must *JESUS* be in the eye of the church, compared to that of the highest angels, or the best of men? None of them could redeem the church. *None of them make agreement with GOD for her*. I stay not to enter into a larger view of the beauty of the comparison between the graces of CHRIST, and the qualities of the apple-tree. It is sufficient to our purpose to observe, that for beauty, usefulness, grace in its appearance, and the fruitfulness of the apple-tree beyond all the trees of the wood, *JESUS* in his person; offices, and character, may be supposed to be by this similitude strikingly represented. *JESUS* is indeed himself *the Tree of life* in the midst of the garden; and so lovely, and so prolific in all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, that he is unceasingly blessed. *He beareth twelve manner of fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations*. Revelation 22:2. But the church doth not stop with commending CHRIST'S Person; she goeth on in the same verse to tell of her enjoyment of him. Reader, mark with me, that in those two grand points the whole of a

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believer's joy in the present life, yea, and in a future, is made up. To know CHRIST, and to enjoy him; to accept him as the FATHER's gift, and to make use of him according to the FATHER's will. And the church in this verse tells us how she did it. *I sat down (says she) under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* This opens a beautiful view of CHRIST, and of the believer also; when, under the blessed influences of grace, a full use and enjoyment of CHRIST is made by him. The LORD *JESUS* is not only a refuge to protect, but the whole of sustenance and food. Like a rich, luxuriant, and prolific tree, which affords not only shelter to the traveller from the heat, but fruit to live upon; so CHRIST is made of GOD to his people, both life, and light, and strength, and supply; *Wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.* The prophet gives a blessed account of the Lord in similar representations; Isaiah 25:4, 5. and so again, Isaiah 32:2. And when the souls of his people have found CHRIST, and known CHRIST under these characters, then they can, and do set to their seal, that GOD is true; for they then dwell under his shadow, and *revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.* Hosea, 14:7. And when then is it that the church, or any individual of the church, find CHRIST all these, and may be said to sit down under him, and live upon him? No doubt, when from a sense of a want of CHRIST, the soul betakes herself to Him; and having discovered him to be a full, present, suitable, and all-sufficient Saviour, she sits down as one determined to rise up no more. There is such a fulness, such a blessedness, and such an immediate grace and kindness in him to bestow of his mercy, that the poor soul finds a complacency and delight, and will neither go further in quest of any other Saviour, or accept of any other. That

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precious child of GOD that hath so seen CHRIST as fully to trust in him, and delight in him, hath adopted, and entered into the enjoyment of that sweet scripture, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart fail, but thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* Psalm 73:25, 26.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 2:4

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me *was* love.

Various have been the opinions of pious men, what is meant by this banqueting house of *JESUS*. *Some* have supposed it to mean the scriptures, which are indeed full of wine on the lees, and of marrow, for the perpetual feast of GOD'S people. *Others* have conjectured, that it is meant to convey by the expression, the gospel of CHRIST, which is much the same amount. And *others* have formed an opinion that it refers to the several ordinances of CHRIST'S church, which also open stores of rich banqueting. And *others* have conceived, that it implies the covenant of grace, which, of consequence, includes all the rest. And perhaps, as this is most comprehensive of blessings, we may very safely accept this sense of the passage. But, what I particularly beg the Reader to remark with me, that under which sense soever the banqueting house of *JESUS* be accepted, it is CHRIST, and CHRIST himself alone, that it is here said to bring the church into it. Sweet and blessed thought this to the believer! *No man, says JESUS, can come to me, except my FATHER who hath sent me draw him.* John 6:41. *No Man says JESUS, cometh unto the FATHER but by me.* John 14:6. *It is the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.* John 6:63. Oh! how

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thrice blessed is it to behold all the Persons of the GODHEAD engaged in one and the same act, to bring souls unto CHRIST! And how truly delightful is it to the souls of the faithful, when, from the quickening, enlightening, leading, and strengthening influences of the HOLY GHOST, a soul finds himself savingly brought to and acquainted with *JESUS? The banner of love*, was perhaps meant to intimate the warfare and conflict in a life of grace. *JESUS'S* name and love, are unfurled over the believing soul; but though in him we have peace, in the world we must have tribulation. John 16:33. Isaiah 11:12. And yet perhaps in an higher sense than this of the battles of his people, the banner over the church in her LORD'S banqueting house, might be meant to set forth the victory which he hath obtained over death, hell, and the grave, in the blessings of which conquers the church hath her part: and hence in the after part of this song, the church is described to all her foes *as terrible as an army with banners*. Song Of Solomon 6:4. 10. Reader! let us each ask his own heart, hath *JESUS* indeed brought us into his banqueting house? Can we at this moment look up and behold his banner over us! If so, we may and must indeed read his love in letters of blood; for so hath *JESUS* marked his love to all his redeemed.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 2:5

Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I *am* sick of love.

There is a great degree of earnestness in these expressions, which evidently shows the mind of the church to be going forth, upon the Person of her LORD with much warmth of regard. Whenever we meet with such vehemency of language, it certainly is intended to convey, that faith, and

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grace, and love, are in most devout exercise. See Psalm 63:1-8. Reader! I fear that we, who live in these cold languishing days of Zion, can hardly have a conception what is meant by these passionate cries of the church. It is to be deeply regretted that we do not: but yet it is possible, and the instance here set forth as fully proves, that, when devout souls get to CHRIST'S banqueting house, such rich discoveries of his love in the glories of his Person, and such amazing grace displayed in all his redemption-offices, there may be such an overwhelming power of love coming over the soul, as to induce that kind of sickness as requires the arms of *JESUS* to keep from fainting. If the queen of the south swooned, and had no more spirit in her at the display of Solomon's wisdom; ( 1 Kings 10:5.) what may be supposed to take place on the soul of the redeemed, when at anytime *JESUS*, breaks forth in the blessed manifestations of his grace, and love, and favor! The flaggons and the apple the church requests to be stayed with, are, no doubt, figurative of spiritual comforts; as if she had said, LORD, while thou art thus gracious, oh! give me every suited grace for support that I may go forth in love and praise, while thou art coming forth in such rich displays of goodness and favor.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 2:6

His left hand *is* under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

I do not apprehend by those different expressions of left hand supports, and right hand embraces, that it is meant to convey any thing of one being inferior to the other: but rather from both the hands and arms of *JESUS* to imply that all that CHRIST is, he is for his people. *In him it hath pleased the FATHER that*

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*all fulness should dwell*, and this fulness is for his redeemed, in such degrees and proportions as his glory and their necessities render needful. Hence he hath comfort for the afflicted, and strength for the weak. He is the bread of life, and the water of life to all. The babes in CHRIST shall have the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby: and the young men and fathers shall have their spiritual senses both exercised and supported with the stronger food of the same bountiful LORD. All shall be taken care of, and all supplied, for CHRIST is all in all to his people.

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:7

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please.

It appears from what is said in this verse, that the church was so delighted with being stayed with flaggons and apples in the arms of CHRIST, that she was jealous of being disturbed from a situation so very blessed and desirable; and therefore, she here gives a charge, even to the nearest and dearest connections, even believers with herself, not to interrupt her communion with *JESUS*, by even their spiritual communion with her. This is a beautiful and most interesting view of the church, and opens to a truly regenerated soul large scope for meditation. However blessed it is for the saints of GOD to be often talking one to another of the great things of salvation; and, no doubt, upon such occasions, *JESUS* himself is with them, (Malachi 3:16. Matthew 18:20. Luke 24:15) yet it is still infinitely more blessed to have sweet communion with *JESUS* alone. Matthew 14:23. Genesis 45:1. Reader, I hope you know somewhat of this blessed life. It is sweet; it is gracious

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and delightful to take communion with the faithful, and to tell anyone and everyone what the LORD hath done for our souls. But, what an infinitely more blessed enjoyment is it to turn aside from the whole earth, and tell *JESUS* himself what passeth in our souls concerning him. And moreover, by this secret and private fellowship with *JESUS*, we find more real solid and substantial testimony in our own minds in one short hour's conversation, than much longer meetings in the society even of the faithful. There may be, and perhaps there often is, much talking *of JESUS*, where there is but little walking *with JESUS*: but no soul can retire alone to seek enjoyment with *CHRIST*, unless the heart be drawn to *CHRIST*. *Two cannot walk together except they be agreed.* Amos 3:3. Reader! pause over this and satisfy your own heart on this grand point, before you dismiss it.

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:8

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

I conceive that at this verse is the beginning of a new subject. Probably some short space might take place between this and the former. The Church appears to be in great delight in hearing the voice of *JESUS*. And indeed, when *CHRIST* speaks in the word, and by the word, there is such a sweetness, power, efficacy, and grace accompanying it, that it cannot but delight the soul of a believer. It is observable, that the church knew whose voice it was. She could and did distinguish it from all others. So *JESUS* hath marked his people. *His sheep know his voice and follow him, a stranger will they not follow.* John 10:3-14. And it is further observable, that the church heard *CHRIST'S* voice, before she said she beheld his person. A sweet

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thought ariseth from hence. *JESUS* may be out of the believer's sight; but yet the believer can discern him in his word, from its power and gracious influences. Reader! it is a privilege which none but GOD the HOLY GHOST bestows, to know how to discern the voice of *JESUS*, from the errors of the present day. David hath left upon record a blessed testimony to this great truth. *I shall never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.* Psalm 119:93. The church calls upon others to behold him with her. He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. Old Testament saints were always by faith upon the lookout for his promised advent. *He that should come*, was the well-known character by which the LORD was in all ages expected. So that the church is here speaking of his approach in the general acceptance of it, in respect to his first coming in substance of our flesh. But over and above this general view of *JESUS*, no doubt the church had an eye also to his private and personal manifestation. *Mountains and hills*; yea, even the mountains of sin, and the hills of unbelief in our nature, shall not obstruct his sweet visits to his people; for his love and grace will cause him to leap over all. Reader! think for your encouragement, and let the thought bear both your mind and mine up in the blessedness of it, that as no discouragements kept *JESUS* back from coming for the salvation of his redeemed, so nothing shall arise to keep him hack from fully accomplishing their deliverance. All the mountains of divine wrath against sin, and all the terrors of a broken law falling like hills upon the mind and conscience; yea, and all the hidings of his FATHER's countenance for a season, could not restrain the LORD from coming to satisfy GOD'S justice, and to ransom his captives. So neither now shall anything separate his people from his

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love, though their rebellion and slights of him are so very strong in testimony of their unworthiness. *JESUS* doth come, and will come speedily; as in his first appearance in our flesh, so in all the after visits of his grace and *HOLY SPIRIT*; and, ere long, finally, and fully *to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.* 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:9

My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.

The *former* part of this verse is but a continuance of the former; in which the coming of *CHRIST*, as the Church's beloved, is compared to the swiftness and loveliness of a roe or young hart. By which, no doubt, is intended, to convey the promptness with which *JESUS* flies to the relief and joy of all his redeemed. *It shall come to pass before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* Isaiah 65:24. But it seems a very sweet addition to these features of *CHRIST*, what is said in the latter part of this verse, that *JESUS standeth behind the wall, looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice.* Our nature, that is our corrupt part of it, the body of flesh, of sin, and death, becomes, no doubt, a thick wall of separation. In ordinances and the several means of grace; believers get sweet glimpses of *JESUS*. And he, when those ordinances are refreshing by the *HOLY GHOST*, may be said to look in upon his people. But, after all, every view of *JESUS* is but partial and imperfect; and he that seeth most of *CHRIST* seeth but *as through a glass darkly.* Yea, *JESUS* himself having enshrined the *GODHEAD* in a veil of flesh, is seen but behind the wall of our nature. Reader, the

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slightest views of *JESUS* are blessed, the smallest manifestations he is pleased to make of himself are gracious to the soul. Shall I venture to ask, Have you seen the king in his beauty? Hath he looked in upon you through the windows and lattices of his love, and mercy, and favour?

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:10-13

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. (11) For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over *and* gone; (12) The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing *of birds* is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; (13) The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines *with* the tender grape give a *good* smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

These verses hold forth so endearing a view of the grace and condescension of the LORD *JESUS*, as must argue a very cold heart, not to feel a warmth of affection in them; *JESUS* is represented as calling upon his church to arise and come forth with him, and he calls her *beloved*, his love, his fair one; intimating the tenderest and most affectionate regard for her, and to show her at the same time what confidence she might put in him. Never, surely, was there any love like the love of *JESUS*. He so loved his church, as to give himself for it; to die for it, and now to be everlastingly interceding for it. Behold the love of GOD which passeth knowledge. The persuasions CHRIST adopts to prevail upon the church to arise up and follow him, are very endearing also. *The winter past and the rain gone, the singing of birds being come, and the flowers appearing on the earth, with the voice of the turtle being heard in the land;* these are all highly beautiful in point of figure; It was a long dark winter indeed, in which our nature lay before the coming of CHRIST; *darkness had covered the*

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*earth, and gross darkness the people.* Both Jew and Gentile lay under it before the SON of righteousness arose with healing in his wings. And what it was to the nations of the earth at large, so is it to every son and daughter of Adam, before that CHRIST by the manifestation of his grace makes day-light in the soul. And Reader, as it was, and is, in the first awakenings of grace; So in the many wintry seasons in the after-stages of the believer, Who but CHRIST causes the spring to bud forth, and the flowers to appear? Who giveth the green figs, or the tender grape? Precious LORD! in every state, and in every stage, thou, and thou alone art the life and light of thy people. The voice of the turtle, the dove, the well known emblem of the HOLY GHOST, is indeed heard in the land, when the soul is led to CHRIST: and then all those sweet effects follow, to induce the church to come away to *JESUS*, who alone makes a dispensation from nature to grace; converts sinners, comforts saints, and becomes a sure pledge of the complete renovation of all things, when the earth shall give up her dead, and the winter of desolated circumstances shall be folded up and lost, in an eternal spring; *where JESUS hath wiped away all tears from of all faces, and taken away for ever the rebuke of his people.* Isaiah 25:6-8.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 2:14

O my dove, *that art* in the clefts of the rock, in the secret *places* of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet *is* thy voice, and thy countenance *is* comely.

Here are several very grand parts in this verse. *JESUS* here calls his beloved by a new name, that of the dove, perhaps from several causes. The dove is considered the most harmless of creatures. Hence *JESUS* enjoined his disciples to

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be harmless as doves. Matthew 10:16. And as the dove is harmless, so is it a beautiful creature in its plumage, exceedingly social also and attached in its affection, but timid to an excess. Now on all these accounts there should seem a great aptness in the LORD'S comparison of his church to the dove, For what so weak as a poor believer, so fearful, so apprehensive, and full of doubting? What so lovely or beautiful as a soul washed in the blood of CHRIST, and made comely in his righteousness? And who so attached as the believer when brought into the privilege of an union with CHRIST? *The clefts of the rock* have been thought by some the enclosed and eternally secured purposes of GOD in CHRIST, the rock of ages. And if so, the *secretness* of it may be well understood in allusion to the other expression, *of the stairs*. It must be confessed, that as JEHOVAH hath from everlasting ordered all things according to the counsel of his own will; there seems a great propriety in this view. And JESUS calling to his dove in this sense seems to be as if he had said, O thou beautiful, but timid and fearful creature, thou art in the clefts of the rock, eternally secured in me; as in my side pierced by the soldier's spear; there I have placed thee, and there from everlasting thou art secret. I do not presume to decide upon a point of such sublimity; but I conceive that there is no impropriety in the thought. And under this idea was not Moses the man of God, somewhat typical of this, when the LORD GOD in passing-by and making his glory to appear before him in the mount put him in the cleft of the rock? Exodus 33:22. The next thing to be considered in this verse is, what CHRIST said to the church. JESUS had called her his dove; and had said where she was; he now bids her to let him see her countenance, and hear her voice, and adds as a reason that

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the former was sweet, and the latter comely. If it be supposed that the church was mourning like a dove, when *JESUS* thus calls her, it should seem to imply, that the cries and mournings of his people for sin are noticed, and come up with acceptance before him. And the blushing countenance of the penitent is what the LORD regards. A beautiful view we have of it in Ezra, Chap. 9:5-15. And in the prophet's account of Ephraim, Jeremiah 31:18-20. Reader! it is truly comfortable and encouraging to GOD'S people, to consider, that however vile and refuse they may be esteemed by the world, yet, in the eyes of *JESUS* they are lovely. Oh! LORD *JESUS*! to be countenanced by thee, to be noticed by my LORD, how preferable to all the honours and distinctions of men!

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:15

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines *have* tender grapes.

It should seem that CHRIST is in this verse giving direction to his servants, perhaps the pastors in his church, to be on the lookout for the enemy, who, like a fox is insidious, sly, and crafty, deceiving CHRIST'S church: And to show the subtleness of the foe, even the little foxes are to be taken. The smallest heresy in the church, the least sin if allowed to have hold in the heart, will prove of fatal consequence. They spoil the tender vine, that is, they wound the peace and comfort of young believers. And *JESUS* hath an especial eye to the lambs of his fold. Dear LORD! give grace to all thy faithful servants in thy church, to have a constant regard to this precept. Oh! for the LORD'S constant grace to be imparted to all that minister in holy things, and for his strength to be perfected in their weakness. Give them, LORD, more of thy tender mind and will,

that they may lay themselves out for greater usefulness, and take the foxes, the little ones of craft, and subtilty, and design; those foes which from their apparent smallness too often escape unnoticed, and yet commit greater evil. And oh! may they in imitation of their divine LORD, not only feed the flock of CHRIST in the whole body of believers, but carry the lambs of the fold in their arms, and gently lead those that are with young.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 2:16

My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his: he feedeth among the lilies.

Here is a short verse, but as comprehensive a one as almost any in the Bible. I need not observe that these are the words of the church, in which she asserts and seems to enjoy the blessedness of it, the mutual property which CHRIST and herself hath in each other. Perhaps the words might be read, and which would rather make them stronger; *My beloved is to me, and I am to him*. For then it might be asked, what is CHRIST to you, and what are you to him? The answer is, Everything: more in it than words can express. CHRIST is mine, saith the church, for GOD my FATHER hath given him to me. JESUS himself hath so loved me as to give himself for me: and the HOLY GHOST hath confirmed it by quickening me and uniting me to him forever. *For he that is joined to the LORD is one Spirit*. And I am his from the same causes. For JESUS hath purchased me by his blood. And GOD the FATHER gave the church to JESUS that he should give eternal life to it from everlasting. And GOD the SPIRIT hath made me his, by the conquests of his grace upon my heart. Hence, CHRIST is mine, and I am his. And this my beloved *feedeth among the lilies*. JESUS had before declared that his beloved was in his view as

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a lily among thorns; and here he is said to feed among them. By which we may suppose is, meant that his eye is always upon them, and he is perpetually manifesting himself to them by his grace. He feeds or takes delight in those exercises of theirs in grace, which he himself hath first given to them. Thus *JESUS* testifies his complacency and delight in them.

*SONG OF SOLOMON 2:17*

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

The church in this verse is looking to her beloved with great confidence and joy, that he will be to her all she needs, for the support of her faith in him, and dependence upon him; until the gospel-day shall fully break in upon the church at large, and *JESUS* will appear in the open display of himself both to Jew and Gentile. This was the longing expectation of the Old Testament Saints, when the law of ceremonies, and types, and shadows of good things to come should be done away and lost in the substance. Hence, we read in the opening of the Evangelists of those who departed not night and day from the temple, *waiting for the consolation of Israel*. Luke 2:37. And what is the cry of the soul now CHRIST is come, and all the Jewish ordinances as the shades of night are done away, but for *JESUS* to be like the roe or the hart for swiftness, in flying to his people's need in seasons of darkness and temptation, upon the mountains of Bether? And is not the holy expectation of the soul going out also, for the last coming of *JESUS*, when he will finally appear to gather his people to himself in glory? Surely the cry of each believing heart is, *Come, LORD JESUS come quickly*. Amen.

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## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD *JESUS*, while reading this chapter of thy love, do thou, I beseech thee, gracious LORD, lead out my heart, and the heart of every Reader of it on whom thy grace hath shined, to behold thy loveliness in all the several parts of it, which so beautifully holds thee forth to thy church. Methinks I hear my beloved say as to the church of old I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the vallies. To which my soul replies, Yes! thou dear LORD! thou art indeed in thy bloody vesture, and thy spotless humanity, red as the rose, and whiter than the lily. And oh! how infinitely precious in both, beholding thee as I do through these similitudes in thy blood and righteousness, as the sure tokens of thy great redemption. And if thy church, LORD, is as the lily among thorns, is it not from thee that she derives all her beauty while living in the midst of a sinful world, the children of whom by nature in their best performances, *are but as a briar, and the most upright as thorn hedge*. But thou, LORD, art the chiefest among ten thousand sons, as the apple-tree transcends the trees of the forest. And oh! for grace, dear LORD, like the dumb, to sit down under thy shadow with increasing rapture and delight, and to eat freely and fully of all the precious fruits of thy great salvation. Do thou, blessed SPIRIT, by thy sweet influences both provide the food and give the appetite, and cause me to enjoy all the good things in the everlasting covenant of GOD my FATHER, purchased by the blood of *JESUS*, and brought home to my soul by thy divine power. And, as for thy banqueting house, my rich bountiful LORD, I know that thou wilt bring me there, and spread thy banner of love over me there. *I do* know it, LORD, that thou wilt do this for me, and a

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thousand other blessed things of thy love; for never should I have known thee or thy house, much less delighted in it, or desired to have been brought into it, unless thou hadst first shown it to me, and opened for me a new and living way in thy blood. Reader! I break off for a moment from addressing my LORD, to ask you whether such views, and such desires of CHRIST are in *your* heart also?

But, LORD, I turn to thee again, and in the language of the church, would beg of thee to stay me with flaggons, and comfort me with apples, even the enjoyment of all thy rich covenant-promises, manifestations, and the unceasing communion of thyself to my soul; for without thee I am sick and sorrowful. And, LORD, the more thou givest, the more I need; the more of thee I know, the more I desire to know; for in thee alone I find comfort. Embrace my soul, O LORD, and let all my stay and support be in thee!

Ye daughters of Jerusalem! I mean all ye that love my LORD, (for one church is my beloved's and his Jerusalem, which is above, is the mother of us all); I charge you as I charge myself, let nothing be said or done to wound or disturb our LORD. Let us seek together his grace, his SPIRIT, his manifestations; and by everything that is interesting, as the roes or hinds of the field, let us be very cautious of grieving his HOLY SPIRIT. Hark! do you not hear *JESUS* speak? Yes! it is his well-known voice; and he cometh to us notwithstanding all our sins, like mountains and hills, which might obstruct, for he is, and he will be *JESUS*. He looketh in upon us through the windows of ordinances, and, ere long, when this wall of our mortality is taken down, we shall see him as he is, and dwell with him forever!

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But I leave the church to listen to my LORD, inviting me to come forth to him in this spring-season of grace. Yea, LORD, I will rise, for the voice of the HOLY GHOST, like the voice of the turtle after the winter, of life, is heard in mine heart. Yea, I would follow thee whithersoever thou goest; and, as like the dove, thou hast sheltered me, and hidden me in the clefts of thy pierced side, and desirest to hear my voice and behold my countenance, thou shalt hear, LORD, my voice betimes in the morning; early will I direct my prayer unto thee, and I will look up: and do thou, LORD, take away the foxes of the desert; yea, even both the greater and the lesser hindrances to my soul, which, in the tender buildings of grace by thy bringing forth in me, my sins and corruptions joined with the temptations of sin, too often nip, and would destroy. Haste, LORD, to me, and to my rescue, for I am thine, and thou art mine. Make all intervening shadows flee away, and be thou to my poor soul *as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.*

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTENTS

*The church is here in a season of sharp exercises: seeking, but not immediately finding her LORD. She relates the conflicts she sustained in her pursuit and enquiry after JESUS. Having at length, found him, she rejoices in the discovery. The chapter closeth with an account of the King's glory.*

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 3:1

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

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We left the spouse of CHRIST in the close of the preceding chapter, in a very comfortable, and even rejoicing state; for she was sitting down under the confidence that she was her beloved's, and her beloved was her's. But we have a great change of circumstances in the opening of this chapter. Evidently CHRIST had withdrawn himself, and the church was sensible of it. A great instruction ariseth from hence, which all the followers of the LORD should be earnest to learn. When the LORD, at anytime hides his face from the house of Jacob, it is specially with a view to make his people know his value, and more earnestly to prize his presence; and, though he seemeth to withdraw and hide himself; yet, it is but to excite their greater desires after him. And I beg the Reader particularly to remark with me, that the church being made sensible of her LORD'S departure, and determining to seek him, becomes at once a plain proof that there was no change in *JESUS'S* love; for, by his grace, he was still working upon her heart to seek him. And I beg the Reader also to remark, that the church's going forth to seek CHRIST, was as plain a proof that dark seasons and dull frames do not altogether make dead the life of GOD in the soul. *JESUS* was still *Him, whom her soul loved*; though, if needs be, the soul is in heaviness through manifold temptations. Reader! though it be night often, when our souls are wanting fresh communion with *JESUS*, and we return from seeking after him without success, yet, it should support our minds during the trying hour, that *JESUS'S* love, and our covenant interest in CHRIST, do not depend upon what we feel, but upon what CHRIST is. Read that precious scripture, for it is a sweet one; John 13:1. *JESUS having loved his own which are in the world, he loveth them unto the end.*

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 3:2

I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

The streets and broad ways here spoken of, into which the church, resolves to go in quest of *JESUS*, I should apprehend mean the public Ordinances of worship in the LORD'S house of prayer. She had sought him in private prayer by night on her bed; but this mode being unsuccessful, she hastens with greater diligence to seek him, whom her soul loved, among the assemblies of the faithful. Reader! everything is beautiful in due order. When we follow up the employments of the closet with public worship, and again close the duties of the church with retirement and prayer, these are sweet successions. Our LORD was eminent in both. He graced the synagogue with his presence by day, and the stars witnessed the privacy of his devotions, when in their circuit passing by, they beheld him spending whole nights in prayer to his FATHER. Matthew 14:23. But we find the church, in this account given of her, alike unsuccessful in finding *JESUS*, in seeking him both in public and in private; for she found him not. Thus the LORD sometimes will exercise the faith of his people, and, no doubt, sometimes it is to show us, that however blessed the means of grace are, still they are but means. Nothing but *JESUS* himself can satisfy a seeking soul.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 3:3

The watchmen that go about the city found me: *to whom I said*,  
Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

Very probably the watchmen here described, are meant for the ministers of the gospel of *CHRIST*; for so the LORD

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describes them as watchmen upon the walls of Zion. Isaiah 62:6. And by their being said here to have found her, I apprehend is meant, that in their ministry, or preaching, they spoke to her case and circumstances. Perhaps there is nothing more common than this, in every church and congregation where the pure gospel is preached; for here the HOLY GHOST will lead precious souls: and He, by his almighty power, makes his own blessed word effectual in the hearts of the people. The church seems to have been encouraged and comforted by the watchmen, so that she communicated her case to them, and put the earnest question; *Saw ye him, whom my soul loveth?* I might pause here, if, peradventure this Commentary were likely to fall under the eye of a minister of JESUS, just to remark how blessed the office, and how distinguished the honor of one of this description, to act in CHRIST'S name, and to resemble his tenderness in guiding souls to JESUS. How needful to know CHRIST ourselves, that when poor burdened sinners would long to know him, we may, from our heart-felt acquaintance with him, be able to hold him forth; and like the star, which ministered to the wise men from the East, not only light souls to JESUS, but go *before* them, and go *with* them to JESUS, Matthew 2:9, 10.

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 3:4

*It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.*

It is not said what answer the watchmen gave the church, or whether any; but this verse brings with it the relation of JESUS'S love in manifesting himself to her. The LORD was hastening his own gracious purpose concerning her; and now

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having by the sweet, but secret inclinations, wrought by his HOLY *SPIRIT* in her heart, to seek him privately, both by night on her bed, and by day on the public ordinances of his word; she tells us in this verse, that it was but a little space from leaving the church, before that she found him whom her soul loved; and now she determined never more to be separated from him. Thus the Ethiopian which came to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning from the temple as ignorant and uninformed as he came, but yet he found CHRIST in the desert. Acts 8:28-39. Reader! do not fail to mark the many precious instructions which arise from hence, *JESUS* hath promised his presence with his people always, even to the end of the world. Matthew 28:20. But he will teach his people at times the infinitely precious privilege of this: by showing that ordinances, though means, are not the end of religion: neither ministers, nor ordinances, nor means of grace, are in themselves anything—*JESUS* alone is the sole object to satisfy the soul; and, unless we have him, we have nothing. And when he hath hereby taught his people his preciousness; then, like the church, we shall greatly prize the invaluable mercy, and hold him fast by lively actings of faith upon his blood and righteousness, following him into his retirings, and wrestling with him in prayer, and praise, and love, and affection; until we have brought him into the chambers of the church, that blessed Jerusalem, which is the Mother of us all, which is above; to tell everyone *of him, whom our soul loveth*, and whose we are, and from whom we would never more part; but live upon him by faith here; and in glory hereafter. Reader, it will be one blessed testimony that CHRIST is dear to us, if we endeavour to recommend him to others. When JESUS

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called Matthew he made a great feast, and invited other publicans and sinners to sit down with *JESUS*. Luke 5:29.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 3:5

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please.

Here is the same charge repeated by the church, as Chapter 2:7. to which I refer.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 3:6

Who *is* this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Various are the opinions of believers by whom these words are spoken. Some suppose that they are the answer of the daughters of Jerusalem, to whom the church, in the preceding verse, gave such a charge, like persons astonished at the change wrought upon the Church, compared to what they saw of her, when, as she described herself, she was black. Chap. 1:6. Some have supposed that they are the words of *CHRIST*, beholding his church with complacency, as comely in his comeliness. And some have thought that the words are from the Gentile world, wondering at the Jewish church in coming up out of Egypt. But let the words themselves be spoken by whom they may, there can be but little question but that the church is the object spoken of, as coming from the wilderness of the world in the strength and righteousness of *CHRIST*, the goodly merchantman. And there can be no difficulty in explaining the several expressions here made use of, with an eye to the church, and of every individual believer

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of the church in the present wilderness state: for as a wilderness is a barren, inhospitable, intricate; and dangerous place; so all these characters, and many more to the same effect, strikingly set off the situation of the LORD'S people in their pilgrimage. And when a child of GOD is regenerated, hath felt the evil of sin, and is in pursuit of CHRIST, or having found him, is following him; such an one may truly be said to be coming up out of the wilderness. *The pillars of smoke*, like which the church is said to come, form no unapt representation of the bent of the heart being towards CHRIST, but yet having more smoke than flame. And *the myrrh and frankincense* with which she was *perfumed*, and the *powders of the merchant*, we may readily suppose, meant to refer to the graces and blessedness in JESUS. The influences of the HOLY GHOST are more fragrant than all the spices of the East; and when kindled into an holy flame, communicating from JESUS, send forth a blessed perfume. Reader, we shall do well, before we dismiss this verse, to enquire how far our experience bears a correspondence to it. Are there any lookers-on upon us, who from our coming up from the wilderness thus adorned with JESUS and his righteousness, are led to say, Who is this that appears so rich a monument of sovereign grace and mercy?

## SONG OF SOLOMON 3:7

Behold his bed, which *is* Solomon's; threescore valiant men *are* about it, of the valiant of Israel.

Perhaps the church is the speaker here, who calls upon everyone to behold her Solomon, her Beloved, her *Jedidiah*; and to mark some striking circumstances concerning him. That by Solomon is meant the LORD JESUS CHRIST, I have

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already endeavoured to explain both in the Preface, and in the first chapter, to which therefore I refer, And as Solomon was eminently, on many accounts, a lively type of CHRIST, it is not to be wondered at that the name is so generally adopted. Solomon, in his kingly office, in his wisdom, riches, peaceable reign, and the extensiveness of his territory, figured some very strong features of *JESUS*. The 72<sup>nd</sup> Psalm which is entitled, *A Psalm for Solomon*, hath been universally accepted, as well by Jewish writers, as by Christians, as altogether prophetic of CHRIST. *By the bed of Solomon*, some have supposed meant the church of CHRIST, or the scriptures of CHRIST; and some have taken it for CHRIST himself. And the valiant men about it, perhaps mean either the watchmen on the walls of Zion, the ministers of the gospel; or angels which are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who are heirs of salvation. Their number, though particularly mentioned, may not be intended precisely to intimate threescore and no more, agreeably to the general plan of Scripture on these points. The five wise virgins, and the five foolish virgins, in the parable, were not intended to say that there will be an equality of souls saved, and souls lost, at the last day. Neither can the one person, who had not on a wedding garment, in that other parable, be supposed to imply that there shall be but only one soul cast out at the great day of account. See Matthew 25:2. 22:11. Perhaps the threescore valiant men of Israel in point of number, are to be considered much in the same way; a certain number is put for an uncertain.

SONG OF SOLOMON 3:8

They all hold swords, *being* expert in war: every man *hath* his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

It is most probable that the sword here spoken of and which they are said *all to hold*, means the sword of the spirit, which the apostle calls *the word of GOD*, Ephesians 6:17. and which the ministers of CHRIST are expert, or ought to be expert in handling. The church calls upon CHRIST to *gird his sword upon his thigh, as the most mighty!* Psalm 45:3. And the night guard of Solomon's worthies very beautifully represents the LORD'S servants, who are supposed to be more earnest and alive at their posts in seasons of danger, and during the nights of error among the people:

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 3:9-10

King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.  
(10) He made the pillars thereof *of silver*, the bottom thereof *of gold*, the covering of it *of purple*, the midst thereof being paved *with love*, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

I would not strain the figures we meet with in this Song, beyond what they may fairly be supposed to bear; but, both the bed and the chariot of Solomon may be supposed to have reference to CHRIST'S church and people. He rests in his love; and his chariot of salvation, in which he goeth forth for the salvation of his people, is all of the choicest materials. Its being paved with love, gives us full authority to consider the whole an highly finished representation of the infinite preciousness of all that is here meant to be conveyed. Some have thought by the wood of Lebanon; an allusion is made to the cross of CHRIST, to show the everlasting durableness of the sacrifice CHRIST offered upon it. The chariot is supposed to

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mean the covenant of grace, and the blessed gospel in which the LORD *JESUS* is brought home to the hearts of his people. But whatever be the precise meaning of the whole, evidently it is of CHRIST'S making, and this plainly proves that all the work of redemption, from beginning to end, is the LORD'S. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the Author and Finisher of Faith.

SONG OF SOLOMON 3:11

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

Here is a gracious call to the church at large to go forth and behold *JESUS* as King, and crowned. *JESUS* came forth at the hall of Pilate crowned with thorns, to testify that He, and He only, was made perfect through suffering. And when *JESUS*, after his ascension, returned to glory, then was he crowned in heaven to testify his kingly power over all. And there is another coronation which takes place on the day when any and every poor sinner bends the knee of the heart to the sceptre of his grace, and crowns him for his LORD and his GOD. Then is the day of CHRIST'S espousals, and the gladness of his heart; for then Satan cast out, and the LORD *JESUS* rejoiceth in Spirit, when Satan as lightning falleth from heaven. Reader, what do you know of this coronation of our LORD *JESUS* in *your* heart? Is CHRIST formed there the hope of glory?

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! frequently in silent meditation run over the several blessed and gracious instructions which arise out of this delightful chapter, and enquire what correspondence thou

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canst find between CHRIST'S church and thy experience in the love she manifested here to her LORD. Hast thou known what it is by night on thy bed to seek JESUS? Canst thou not say, *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea with my spirit within me have I sought thee early.* It is blessed sometimes to be exercised with disappointments in order to endear the mercy, and to increase the value of it. The poor woman of Canaan would not have afforded so illustrious an instance of faith had the LORD JESUS given her an immediate answer to the first cry of her soul: and though JESUS is very frequently found of them that seek him not, and sometimes surprizeth his people with his goodness, yet, there shall be silence at the throne of grace again and again, when a child of GOD is going there with earnest importunity. But, as in the case of the church, when the LORD at length overwhelmed her with his visit of love, whenever the Redeemer comes, he comes with such a fulness of love, grace, and goodness, that the soul then holds him fast by faith, and dreads to let him go, lest darkness again should enter in upon the soul. And, Reader, will you allow me to ask, or will you put the very interesting enquiry yourself to your own heart; Are you coming up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, and perfumed with the sweet incense of JESUS'S merits and righteousness? Have you found this life what it really is, and is graciously intended to be, to all the LORD'S family, a thorny, dark, and intricate path? Have you met with fiery, flying serpents, and scorpions? A land of drought and barrenness, through which the faithful are sure to meet, with persecution, and where none of them can find rest, or wish to make it their home? If so, is JESUS the merchant selling goodly pearls precious to you? Do you know, do you prize his myrrh and

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frankincense, the sufferings of his cross, the merits of his blood, and all the blessed graces of his HOLY *SPIRIT*? This is to be coming up out of the wilderness, leaning as the church did upon her beloved. Oh! precious *JESUS*, I would say both for myself and Reader, give to us to behold thee in thy chariot, and on thy bed of salvation, which is all thine own, and nothing of our dross mixed with it. Cause us to lie down upon this everlasting bottom, which is paved with love. And while, LORD, thou art sending forth thy ministering servants, as ministering to them who are the heirs of salvation; oh! do thou come and visit us thyself, and make all thy glory to pass before us. Yes! thou dear LORD! thou art the king in Zion, the sovereign in every heart, of thy church and people. Here, LORD, upon earth would we hail thee our lawful right monarch, both by purchase and by conquest; and in heaven, we hope ere long to join that happy multitude, who are casting their crowns at thy footstool, and saying with a loud voice; *Worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.*

## CHAPTER 4

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*We have here the LORD JESUS commending the beauties and graces of his Church. He invites her to a more close and intimate communion with him, and dwells again somewhat more fully upon her loveliness. The church in return, as one overcome with the goodness of his love, very humbly ascribes all she hath to him, as the author and giver of it: and prays that she may be made meet for the presence and enjoyment of her LORD.*

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:1-5

Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. (2) Thy teeth *are* like a flock of *sheep that are even* shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none *is* barren among them. (3) Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech *is* comely: thy temples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. (4) Thy neck *is* like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. (5) Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

The general commendation which CHRIST hath here given to the opening of this Chapter, to the beauty of the Church, we have in part met with before in this Song. (See Chap. 1:15.) But here the LORD *JESUS* enters into a more particular relation of those beauties of his spouse, and with a special recommendation. It is probable from the several parts of the body here figuratively spoken of, that JESUS intended to set forth the several members of his mystical body, of which we are told by an Apostle, that *all the members of that one body being many, are one body in CHRIST*. 1 Corinthians 12:12. But at the same time there can be no question, but that JESUS is speaking of the beauty of the soul, *The hidden man of the heart*, as an Apostle calls it. For *the king's daughter is all glorious within*. Psalm 45:13. Probably by *the eyes* may be meant the ministers of the gospel, who are said, as instruments of the LORD, to *be eyes to the blind, as well as feet to the lame*. The hair may be supposed to imply both the number of CHRIST'S people and their preciousness; which are all numbered, and not one can fall to the ground unnoticed and disregarded. *The teeth*, intimate the office in showing the word, and probably to intimate the clean from the unclean, as

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in the old Jewish dispensation. In coming up from the washing and having no barrenness, implies the very great fruitfulness of CHRIST'S fold, and their purity when washed in his blood. *The lips* are very expressive of the holiness of a believer's conversation. And as grace was poured into the lips of JESUS, and the Church entreateth her LORD to kiss her with the kisses of his mouth; so it carries with it this idea; that JESUS hath thereby communicated of his fulness and grace for grace. Psalm 45:2. Song Of Solomon 1:2, John 1:16. Song Of Solomon 4:11. The *Temples* being part of the head, may probably be intended to convey the earnestness with which the soul of a believer is always supposed to be engaged, in the contemplation of her LORD. And the *neck* which connects the head with the body, and which is said to be as the tower of David with armory, may be intended to set forth the uniting grace by which souls are formed in union with CHRIST, which are stronger than a thousand bucklers, or all the shields of the mighty. The *breasts* of the Church have been variously considered; some as referring to the two Testaments, others to the law and the gospel, others to the two great Commandments, the love of GOD and the love of our neighbour: and some would have them mean the two ordinances of the gospel, baptism and the Supper of the LORD. But whether these, or any of them are intended, seems to be accompanied with too much difficulty for modern Commentators to determine. One thing however is certain, the LORD JESUS is evidently speaking with delight of his Church; and it is blessed to be viewed by him in this manner, especially when all the beauty and loveliness of the Church is considered as wholly derived from him.

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:6

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

The Church once before had expressed herself in regard to the dispersion of the shades of night, by the break of day, see chap. 2:17; and here she adds, that she will wait this much desired event, by retiring to meditation and prayer. By the mountain of myrrh, perhaps in allusion to him to whom was offered myrrh mingled with gall, may be supposed the mount of Calvary; and by the hill of frankincense may perhaps be implied the fragranciness of that incense, which JESUS as the great High Priest of his people offered up in that one offering of himself, in the bloody vesture. Some have supposed however, that these are the words of CHRIST in continuance of what went before, as if JESUS, while waiting for the great day in which he will gather all things to himself, gets him away to watch over all the concerns of his Church and people.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:7

Thou *art* all fair, my love; *there is* no spot in thee.

What a rich thought is contained in those words of JESUS concerning his Church. In his eye the Church is not only fair but spotless. So that, Reader, while, GOD'S dear children are mourning over the innumerable errors they feel in themselves, and under which they daily groan being burthened: in the view of JESUS as washed in his blood, and clothed in his righteousness, they are without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. JESUS having presented them to himself as without blame before him in love. Ephesians 5:27. Reader! how blessed the thought that JESUS and his Church, JESUS and his people, in the sight of GOD the FATHER are one. And though the followers of the LORD feel the sad consequences daily of a fallen nature, and cry out under it

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through manifold, and as they sometimes think, increasing infirmities; yet it is in JESUS they are beheld, and their whole acceptance ariseth, not from what they are in themselves, but from what they are in the beloved.

SONG OF SOLOMON 4:8

Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

I would have the Reader observe in this verse how JESUS calls his church by a new name, not before made use of in the Song, namely, his *Spouse*: perhaps in allusion to what was said before, the day of his espousals. Chap. 3:11. It is blessed to observe in this, as well as the several other tender names by which JESUS speaks to his church, how very dear she is to him: and no doubt can be entertained of it. He loved her from all eternity. And he so loved her as to give himself for her. And when we see how earnest CHRIST is that his people should be ever with him, can anything more fully set forth the love of JESUS? Oh! that every poor, distressed, fearful soul, would think of this when calling in question, or doubting, his love. Isaiah 49:14-16. The call of JESUS to come from *Lebanon*, the goodly mountain, as Moses called it, Deuteronomy 3:25, may be supposed to imply the necessity of leaving everything, however apparently goodly in itself, for JESUS. Psalm 45:10, 11. And *Amana*, *Shenir*, and *Hermon*, which some have thought the mountains about *Syria*, have certainly a spiritual sense like the former. Indeed what follows in the verse explains it. Lions and leopards could not be very numerous in those mountains, which were resorted to occasionally by travellers. But the sense is, JESUS calls his own, his spouse,

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his fair one, to leave all society, which in ungodly men is dangerous at the best, and for the most part hurtful, and to come with him in whom true joys alone are to be found. What can be more expressive of divine love! How exceedingly ought the faithful in CHRIST *JESUS* to delight in these views of the LORD.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:9

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, *my* spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

The LORD *JESUS* continues the same strain of affection in this verse as in the former, and here adds another title, that of *sister* to his beloved, to testify his relationship. Indeed the LORD CHRIST fills all. And he speaks of his endearments by reason of her beauty. Yea, his whole heart and soul seems to be going out in expressions of his love, as one perfectly overcome by his views of her. Perhaps the *one eye* *JESUS* here speaks of means the eye of faith, and love, and desire, with which redeemed souls are forever looking unto *JESUS*. They have no eye to any other. And the *one chain of the neck*, by which believers are united to their glorious head, as plainly animates the ornaments of the SPIRIT, by which their life and conversation is manifested. Solomon, speaking of these things, saith, *they shall be as an ornament of grace unto the head, and chains about the neck.* Proverbs 1:9.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:10

How fair is thy love, my sister, *my* spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

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The love of CHRIST to his Church, and the love of the Church to CHRIST in return, are the whole subject of this song. And here the LORD *JESUS* declares how precious, her love is in his sight. The Church had said of the love of *JESUS*, in the former part of this song, that it was better than wine. Song Of Solomon 1:2. And here the LORD condescends to make use of the same comparison in allusion to her's. Pause, Reader, and remark how gracious the LORD is? I would pause again and again over the passage, and ask, how is it possible that the love of a poor worthless worm, such as I am, can be at all graceful, much less are highly esteemed in *JESUS'S* sight? Surely the whole must result from the love of CHRIST as it is in himself, and by a communication imparting a fragrancy beyond that of spices.

*SONG OF SOLOMON 4:11*

Thy lips, O *my* spouse, drop *as* the honeycomb: honey and milk *are* under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon.

The dropping of the lips no doubt implies the conversation, which *JESUS* saith in sweetness surpassed even the honeycomb; for both honey and milk are in it: meaning, the graceful, edifying, conversation of a believer, and what drops from the mouth of a believer in prayer and praise at a mercy-seat. But how doth the honeycomb drop? Not by pressure, but free: not at a rate uncertain and little, but constant and unceasing. For no sooner hath the comb dropped one portion of its golden treasure, but another is immediately forming to follow. This is a most beautiful figure, by which the LORD represents his people. Honey and milk were the two great *temporal* blessings of the promised land. And, figuratively,

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such are the *spiritual* blessings of the gospel. For what so sweet or so nourishing as the divine doctrines of salvation! sweeter than honey, and more fragrant than the most spicy flowers of Lebanon.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:12

A garden inclosed *is* my sister, *my* spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

*JESUS* is still prosecuting the subject in the commendation of his love. And here he compares her, by two or three very striking similitudes She is a *garden* distinguished from the world's wide wilderness; but she is *inclosed* also, set apart with special design for the owner. The people are said *to dwell alone, and not reckoned among the nations*. Numbers 23:9. Moreover she is a *spring shut up*, and a *fountain sealed*; meaning, that from her union with CHRIST, and her interest in CHRIST, the water of life which her LORD hath given her to drink, is in her a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John 4:14. And how truly blessed is it to see and know that by the graces of the HOLY *SPIRIT* planted in the souls of the redeemed, they have eternal life abiding in them. *Because I live, (said JESUS) ye shall live also.*

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:13-14

Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, (14) Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

*JESUS* is not tired of the subject, for in both these verses he prosecutes the same theme, and here talks of the fruitfulness of his people. Under various similitudes he sets this forth. The several graces of the *SPIRIT*—their choice and divine qualities;

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with the blessed consequences, as they are brought forth to the joy of the church at large, and the delight of every individual of the church, are figuratively represented by the characters here chosen.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:15

A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Here it should seem the Church takes up the discourse, and having heard her LORD thus enlarging upon the graces, which she well knew if she enjoyed she had them all and everyone from him, she breaks out in the highest commendation of her LORD. *A fountain of gardens: a well of living waters; and streams from Lebanon*, is my loved. It is as if she had said, Am I a garden; then, LORD, it is thou that hast made me so? Am I inclosed? Yes! thy distinguishing grace hath shut me in. Am I a spring? Yes, LORD! for thou art the fountain of all the gardens; a well of living waters, for I wholly live *by* thee and *in* thee and all my refreshments are *from* thee, as the streams from Lebanon. Reader! it is blessed while we enjoy our mercies to enjoy yet more the author of them; and while we have all things *from* CHRIST, to feel the blessedness of all things *in* CHRIST. JESUS is indeed the fountain of all, the source of all, and the end of all. And like the well, and the well of living waters, in his GODHEAD, and in his mediatorial fulness, he is all in all. Oh! for grace to be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of GOD. Ephesians 3:18, 19.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 4:16

Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

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It should seem, but I do not presume to determine, that the former part of this verse is the call of JESUS to the HOLY GHOST to breathe with his divine influences upon his Church the garden; and then when this is done, and grace is in lively exercise, the Church in the latter part invites her beloved to come into his garden, which is his, and take the blessed fruits which his own HOLY *SPIRIT* had begotten. The north wind of exciting, and the south wind of warming the affections, are both graciously made use of, and the effect is as might be supposed. The habit of soul in a believer, when one with CHRIST by regeneration, becomes an actual exercise of grace when the SPIRIT excites, in going forth in the devout frames of faith, and love, and joy, and delight, upon the Person and Work of the LORD *JESUS*; and while prayers and praises go up, blessings and favours come down; and the LORD cometh into his garden, and causeth all his goodness to pass before his people. Oh! LORD! thus continually send the sweet influences of the north wind, and the south wind upon my soul, and then will my soul invite JESUS to come into his garden, and eat of his pleasant fruits.

## REFLECTIONS

AND doth my LORD indeed call me his fair one, his love, his sister, his spouse? Oh! how shall my soul contain itself, in the contemplation of such peerless grace amidst my conscious undeservings. Surely, blessed JESUS, whatever I am that can at all endear a poor sinner to my LORD, all I have, and all I am, and all I hope to have, the whole is in thee and from thee. Well may I take up the language of one of old, and say, *By the grace of GOD I am what I am.* And oh! LORD let it be said also as of him, so of me, that *the grace bestowed upon me was not in vain.*

And doth JESUS call me to go with him from Lebanon, and escape the lion's den, and the mountains of leopards? Yes, LORD *JESUS*, I would pray for grace to follow thee, whithersoever thou goest. Nothing shall separate my soul

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from the love of CHRIST. For, thou hast bought me, redeemed me, and with a price no less dear than thine own most precious blood: therefore, LORD, I am thine by every endearment, and by every tye. Oh! LORD, give me grace here also, that as I am not my own, but bought with a price, *I may glorify thee both in my body and in my spirit which are thine.*

But, precious LORD *JESUS*, as without thee I can do nothing; I pray thee be to me, *A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and as streams from Lebanon.* Come, HOLY GHOST, and be to me as the quickening source in leading to JESUS, and taking from JESUS, and showing everything to me in JESUS. And do thou, LORD, daily maintain, and support, and carry on, the life thy mercy first gave me in JESUS. Thou, LORD, art the only spiritual efficient agent in CHRIST'S garden the Church, which by breathing thy gracious influences upon my heart, can prepare that poor heart for the visits of my LORD to his servant. I would, therefore, gracious SPIRIT of all truth, intreat thy mercy upon my poor soul, that by thy grace I may invite my LORD and be prepared for my LORD, that he may daily *come into his garden:* and my soul be so quickened to receive him, that *he may eat of his pleasant fruits.* Yea, LORD! do thou knock at the door of my heart, and open it thyself; and let my LORD come in, and *let me sup with him and he with me.*

## CHAPTER 5

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*There is an immediate connection between the first verse of this Chapter, and the last of the preceding: for no sooner hath*

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*the church invited her LORD to come into his garden, than he declares himself come. The church professeth herself to be in a sleepy state, but awakened by JESUS, she breaks out into a commendation of her LORD, which runs through the whole chapter.*

## SONG OF SOLOMON 5:1

I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Reader! observe the instant answer, and the gracious answer of JESUS to the Church in these words. The moment she asked, her wishes are complied with; yea, agreeably to that promise of JESUS, *Before his people calls, he will answer.* Isaiah 65:24. For as some read the words it is as if JESUS had said, I am come into my garden: that is, I am always with you. And surely if you considered aright you would know this, by the manifestations I am forever making to you. For how else would you invite me, had I not first inclined your heart to it, by the sweet influences of my grace? And do you not know of my presence with you, by the secret intimations I give you? Are you not sensible when I answer your prayers, accept and follow up your petitions, and meet you with blessings in the refreshment you feel at, and after you have been to a throne of grace. Is not this gathering my myrrh with my spice, eating of my honey and drinking of my wine? For all the graces you are enabled to exercise on me are mine, both in my first giving and in my after calling forth into use. And when you feel a fulness of enjoyment at my house or my table; in private, or in public worship; from whence do these enjoyments arise, but from me? Do you not hear my voice in

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all, calling upon you as my friends and beloved to eat and drink abundantly? I do not detain the reader with many observations on the several things here spoken of, for this would lead into an endless subject. I fear indeed in every line I write that I am swelling this work, which at the first was begun with a view to compress within a very few pages, to a bulk by much too large. But I would trespass here, on this verse in one part of it, to offer a remark on the honey-comb, and the honey the LORD so delightfully speaks of eating. Honey is in the flower, before it is extracted and formed by the bee. So it may be said that the love and grace of JEHOVAH in redemption goodness was in his infinite mind and will towards us, before that it was brought forth from the FATHER, towards us and our nature by the LORD *JESUS CHRIST*. And as honey in the comb is there made and prepared by the bee; so *JESUS* our adorable Redeemer, our Glory-man, made, and prepared, and wrought it all out by himself, for us and our nature. And as honey in the mouth is known and enjoyed by him that eateth it; so when GOD the HOLY GHOST takes of the things of *CHRIST* and shows to us, doth he not make us eat and drink abundantly, yea, as the LORD'S beloved? Yea, more. We not only eat the honey, but of the honeycomb. We not only take the sweet things of *JESUS*, but *JESUS* himself which is sweeter far. Not only his gifts and graces, his whole redemption, but himself. Oh! precious LORD what beauties are in thy word, what endless subjects in this one verse? And what then, thou dearest LORD *JESUS*, what beauties must be in thyself, to ravish the souls of thy people with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, to all eternity?

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:2

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I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night.

We have here the description of the soul under a state of coldness and indifferency to her LORD. This is described under the image and figure of sleep; yet not a dead sleep of total insensibility; for she saith, *Her heart waketh*; and so as to hear and know the voice of her beloved, who is calling upon her and desiring admittance. But it is intended to represent that situation, which the people of GOD, every one of them by experience, know but too much of: at times a coldness to divine things, an indifferency to the cause of JESUS: and sometimes to the neglect of ordinances, and the means of grace; or if sitting under the word, a hearing as though they heard not. It is a sad state this, and sometimes the temptation to it is carried on to a length truly alarming. And as it ariseth from a body of sin of death they carry about with them, believers can never be too earnest with the LORD to be kept from it. Our indifferency under it becomes the Worst symptom of it. And no doubt, it becomes also the greatest cause of the displeasure of the LORD. And did not his grace as much exceed our deserts, as his love is greater than ours, a recovery from it could never be expected.

Yea, perhaps many a child of GOD hath had his last days clouded in consequence of it, and gone out of life without that fulness of divine light, which the exercise of lively faith upon the person of CHRIST is sure to induce. Reader! pause over it. And while looking up with earnest prayer to be kept from it, learn to get more and more insight into that science which will tend to humble the soul, and exalt JESUS that teacheth us what a mass of sin, after all our attainments in grace, we virtually are. Truly did the Apostle say, and truly may all

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regenerated souls say the same, *know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing*. Romans 7:18. How blessed is it to observe the unchangeable love of JESUS, as set forth in this sweet verse of his word. Though the church was fallen asleep, and seemingly regardless of her LORD; yet JESUS was not regardless of her. Though we fail in duty, JESUS never fails in his love. His love-calls in this verse are most tender and gracious. He stands at the door and knocketh. Revelation 3:20. And this by his word, by his servants the ministers of his gospel, by ordinances, by providences, by chastisements; in short, in numberless ways as shall best suit the blessed purposes of his grace. But in all and every one, see how tender his reproofs, how gentle his corrections. Sleepy and unworthy as his Church is, still is she *his sister, his love, his dove, his undefiled*. Oh! wonderful matchless grace! Oh! astonishingly gracious Saviour! We must not wholly pass over the several arguments the LORD JESUS makes use of, to enforce the Church to receive him. He saith, *His head is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night*. By which perhaps may be understood, that he came with a fulness of grace, and would be himself as the dew unto Israel. Hosea 14:6. Deuteronomy 32:2. And perhaps the drops of the night is intended to manifest to the Church the Redeemer's own personal sufferings, which he endured in order to bring blessings to her. The garden of Gethsemane, and the mount of Olives may well and fully explain. Psalm 22 and Psalm 69 compared with the Evangelists. Matthew 26 &c.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:3

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

If this verse affords as that it doth indeed afford, an awful example to what a degree of baseness and ingratitude our nature is capable of falling; it will serve at the same time to manifest the wonderful patience, and love, and forbearance of

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our LORD. What a beautiful representation of both is given by the Prophet. Hosea, 11:7-9.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:4

My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, and my bowels were moved for him.

See Reader! the sovereignty of grace, and behold at the same time the whole source of our mercies. All calls, all entreaties, are lost upon our poor unthinking hearts, until the LORD that calls makes willing also *in the day of his power*. But until the voice that ere long shall wake the dead, now wakes the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins; no heart will open to him, nor feet move towards him. How blessed to see the Church having her very inside turned towards CHRIST, when by his Almighty love he had opened her soul. The prophet describes a beautiful instance of this, in the case of Ephraim: Jeremiah 31:13-20. And the Evangelist another, in the case of the Prodigal. Luke 15:17-24.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:5

I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped *with myrrh*, and my fingers *with* sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

We have the Church here recovered from her sleep, and the sweet effects of grace moving in her heart towards CHRIST, are set forth in the charming figures of hands dropping, and fingers smelling with the fragrancy of myrrh; by which we are to understand that faith and love were in lively exercise to receive CHRIST, and to manifest her sense of his goodness and her unworthiness. Myrrh in scripture is frequently made

use of to resemble grace. Thus the grace of JESUS to his people is set forth: Song Of Solomon 1:13. Psalm 45:8.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:6

I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

This is a very interesting verse, and full of divine matter. The departure of JESUS from his people doth not mean a total departure, or a loss of covenant interest in CHRIST'S righteousness, or an union with his person. Neither his love nor his affection can he take away; for *having loved his own which are in the world he loveth them unto the end*. John 13:1. And his betrothing his church unto himself is forever. Hosea 2:19. But it means the hiding of his countenance, the suspension of the influences of the HOLY GHOST. And if JESUS thus withdraws, the soul of a believer will feel what the Church felt, when she expressed herself as in this verse. Reader! pause over this subject. If you know the LORD you will know also, what a blessedness it is to live always under the visits of his love; and if at any time he remits those visits, to mourn after him. My soul can derive no joy, no comfort, from the consciousness that the HOLY GHOST is with the Church always, if at the same time he is not with my soul. I still go heavily all the day if I have nothing of his quickening, upholding, and communicating grace, leading me into the love of GOD and into the patient waiting for CHRIST. Hence the cry of the Psalmist, Psalm 51:11, and again Psalm 143:7. The Church seeking CHRIST as expressed in the latter part of this verse, hath been observed upon, chap. 3:2.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:7

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The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

Some observations have been already made upon the watchmen finding the Church. Chap. 3:3. So that on that part I need not enlarge. But by wounding her; and the keepers of the walls taking away her vail from her, it may be proper to add a little by way of explaining. If the watchmen here spoken of were intended to represent the LORD'S faithful servants, perhaps by those expressions are intended to show that they did not spare sharpness of speech, but admonished her of her improper conduct, and took away all the covering of excuse. Isaiah 58:1, &c.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:8

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I *am* sick of love.

The Church had twice before in this Song given a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem. Chap. 2:7. and chap. 3:5. But here she adds a more earnest request. Tell my LORD, saith she, that I am sick of love: which is, as if she had said, oh let my LORD know how truly sorry I am for my late ungrateful conduct. Tell him I cannot rest until I know that I have his pardoning mercy and his renewing grace. Oh! tell my LORD, if he will but come unto me and draw my soul out after him, that my soul will revive as the spring. But while JESUS is absent I can find neither peace within, nor comfort without. Reader! do you know anything of these soul-searching, soul-distressing feelings? Here is nothing of the cold lifeless form of prayer. This differs widely from that lukewarm frame of spirit; which the *Laodicean* Church had, and which the

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Redeemer declared himself so much displeased with, that he rejected it with abhorrence. Revelation 3:15, 16.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:9

What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, O thou fairest among women? what *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

We have in this verse a question put to the Church by the daughters of Jerusalem. They call her the fairest among women, and by twice asking what there is in her beloved more than in another, they express both their surprize and their earnestness to know who this is. It is a blessed consideration that the Church is a perfection of beauty. The human soul as it first came out of the hands of the Almighty Creator pure and undefiled, and as it is when again washed in the blood of CHRIST after its defilements, is such an object of beauty as may well be called fair. Now the question seems to be put with much earnestness, what is there in CHRIST so superior to every other object of love, that it carries everything before it? Various are the objects of desire among men. Some to the world,—the pride, rank, opulence, grandeur of the world. Others to human learning. Some to pleasure; some to money; some to title; some to natural alliances. But CHRIST is so fair, so lovely, so supremely the chief, the only good, that the Church hath set her affection upon him, to the total exclusion of them all.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:10

My beloved *is* white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

The Church in this verse begins her answer, and had she said no more than what she saith in the commendation of JESUS, this is a final reply to all. First, she describes his double

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nature, *He is white*; alluding, most probably, to his GODHEAD, spotless, pure and holy: next to his manhood; he is *ruddy* or red. Adam was so called, in allusion to the earth, which is red; and this feature intimates the Person of CHRIST in his human nature, when shedding his blood for the sins of his people. But some have supposed, and perhaps not without reason; that the human nature of CHRIST only is intended by the expression: the perfect obedience and purity of CHRIST indicated by the *whiteness*; and the bloody hue of his sacrifice and death setting forth by the *red*: But whether either or both of these, it is sufficient to show the great sense the Church had of the glory of her LORD. But she adds also, that he is *the chiefest among ten thousand*. This is a delightful description of the LORD *JESUS*. He is the chiefest among ten thousand in the sight and choice of GOD the FATHER. For JEHOVAH saith, *I have exalted one chosen out of the people*. Psalm 89:20. He is so among all his people; for he *is fairer than the children of men*: and the language of every follower of JESUS is, *he shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved*. Psalm 47:4. Precious LORD! how lovely is it to see that thou art hath the choice of JEHOVAH, and of thy people also.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 5:11

His head *is as* the most fine gold, his locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven.

The Church now having given as before a *general* idea of her LORD, here begins to descend into *particulars*. And as JESUS in the preceding Chapter had been commending the beauty of his Church, she now holds forth in the best manner she is able, the surpassing grace and loveliness of her LORD. And first, she describes his *head*: perhaps alluding to GOD the FATHER: for the Apostle saith, *that the head of CHRIST is GOD*. 1 Corinthians 11:3. And as CHRIST in his divine nature is one with the FATHER *over all*, GOD *blessed for ever*; perhaps also

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the expression might allude to the divine nature of CHRIST, and his headship over his Church and people. And in this sense the *locks* of CHRIST may refer, in relation to the numberless hairs of the head, to the multitude of believers.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 5:12

His eyes *are* as *the eyes* of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, *and* fitly set.

The Church now describes the *eyes* of her, beloved. Blessed it is to know that *JESUS'S* eye is upon all his people, and with the love and meekness of the dove. Perhaps the influences of his HOLY *SPIRIT* may be here intended by the allusion. And as the HOLY GHOST is frequently set forth under the similitude of rivers and waters; so his gifts are said to be as by the rivers. Sweet thought here again suggested! *JESUS* never loseth sight of his people; and he will be to them as *a well of living water, and streams from Lebanon*.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 5:13

His cheeks *are* as a bed of spices, *as* sweet flowers: his lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

Two features of her beloved in description the Church joins together in this verse: the *cheeks* of CHRIST and his *lips*. Perhaps by the *former* may be meant the beauties of his Person; and by the *latter*, the blessedness of what he delivered. And to those who have seen the King in his beauty, and heard the gracious, words which proceed out of his mouth, nothing can more strikingly set forth the Person and offices of the LORD *JESUS*.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:14

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His hands *are as* gold rings set with the beryl: his belly *is as* bright ivory overlaid *with* sapphires.

The Church again unites in one view two representations more of JESUS. The *hands*, which set forth his bounty, and the *belly*, which being the tenderest part of the body, represents his wonderful condescension to his people. And in both the Church aims to show how gracious the LORD is.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:15

His legs *are as* pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance *is as* Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

The Church still prosecutes the pleasing subject, and from the *legs* to the *countenance*, points to her beloved. Perhaps the strength of CHRIST by the *former*, and his mildness by the *latter*, are intended in these expressions.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:16

His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

And having now so largely particularized, she here sums up in one the whole description: as if she had said, time would fail to enumerate all: but such is my beloved, and such my friend, that he is *altogether lovely*, there is nothing in him but what is so. In his person, his offices, in every point of view, not only to me, but to all. JEHOVAH is unceasingly beholding him with divine complacency. Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect in the Church above, centre their whole affections upon him. And the whole Church below look on no other for grace and salvation. If you therefore ask, who this is my soul loveth, and is everlastingly looking after: be it known unto you, oh! ye daughters of Jerusalem, that this is he. This is my beloved, and this is my friend. Pause, Reader! and ask your heart, whether such be your friend and your beloved also?

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## REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this beautiful chapter, until we have once more looked up to GOD the HOLY GHOST, and entreated him to show us our interest in what is here said of JESUS, and how far we can adopt a similar language concerning him. And first, let us never overlook the readiness of *JESUS* to comply with the wishes of his people in coming at their call. No sooner did the church invite her beloved to come into his garden, but we find CHRIST is come. And let us remark further, how gracious the LORD is in gathering his spices; his myrrh, and milk, and honey. Reader! be assured from hence, that every prayer of his people JESUS regards. Every sigh they utter comes up before him. As one of old said, so all may be assured: *He putteth our tears into his bottle all these things are noted in his book.* And as JESUS comes in the midst of his churches and people to gather, so doth he give unto them largely to enjoy. His language is, *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!*

Reader! are you acquainted with that state, of which the church in this part of the Song so greatly complains? Dost thou, by reason of a body of sin and death which thou carriest about with thee, groan, being burthened? Dost thou feel a heaviness not unlike the sorrow of soul which the disciples felt in the garden, and frequently dost thou feel that sad indisposition which disqualifies the soul for the sweet enjoyment of JESUS? And when at times under this dreadful deadness of affliction, thou hearest the voice of JESUS in ordinances, its providences; by rebukes, by chastisements; oh! what a decisive proof is this, in every heart that feels it, of

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the impossibility of any natural goodness in a creature, who is the subject of such infirmities? Precious JESUS! do thou by me, do thou by the Reader, and by every child of thine, follow up thy gracious calls, by opening the door of our hearts; and do thou come in, LORD, and revive thy work with the droppings of thy grace, and the fragrancy of thy SPIRIT'S influences. And in those seasons, do not withdraw, thou dear LORD, neither be thou to us as the way-faring man that turneth in to tarry but for a night. Neither let thy servants, the watchmen of thy, city, wound us; but oh! let them point our souls to thee, and lead us to JESUS that we may tell our LORD we are sick, waiting for the renewed views of his pardoning grace, and mercy, that our souls may *revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.*

Are there any that enquire after my beloved? Do you desire to know, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, who JESUS is; what, he is; what he hath wrought; what he is doing, and can, and will do; and wherefore it is that he is my beloved, my only beloved, and why is it that I am so truly anxious for his love? Oh! for grace and power to tell you of his loveliness. Everything in CHRIST is precious. He is precious in his Person. Every feature of him is lovely. He is precious in his offices, precious in his character, precious in his relations; yea, there is nothing in him but what is precious; for *he is altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand.* And what would be alarming and distressing in others, becomes lovely in him. His cross and reproaches for his sake, how trying and painful soever to flesh and blood, are on his account, not only endurable, but productive of holy joy. And JESUS is this in all that belongs to him, and in all circumstances connected with him, for as he is in himself the first fair, the first beautiful; the

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first lovely; so he communicates loveliness to all that are united to him; neither is there anything lovely or amiable but what is derived from him. Do you enquire, then, what there is in my beloved, more than in another beloved I answer; All these things and a thousand more. And will you not love him with me, and delight in him also; oh that he that is my beloved, may be your beloved; and that you may at length say with me, *This is my friend, and this is my beloved, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.*

## CHAPTER 6

### CONTENTS

*The church appears, in the opening of this Chapter, to have called forth the serious enquiry of others to seek JESUS with her. And she seems delighted to give information concerning him. CHRIST then takes up the discourse, and sets forth the loveliness of his church, and his delight in her.*

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 6:1

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?  
whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

This is a very interesting part of the Song, because it represents the serious and earnest enquiry of seeking souls after CHRIST. The persons here asking the question appear to be evidently under impressions of grace, and as the address is made to the church of JESUS, and she is called by them, *The fairest among women*; nothing can be more plain than that

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they considered the LORD *JESUS* the whole cause of her loveliness, and therefore desired to be made partakers of the same. It is one of the most delightful offices of faithful ministers of *JESUS*, when at anytime the Lord blesseth their ministry, to have questions concerning their LORD put to them, by those that are seeking him. I beg the Reader also to observe, before I dismiss the consideration of this verse, that the enquiry here made concerning *JESUS*; is not who *CHRIST* is; for that had been made before (chap. 5:9), and the answer appears to have been truly satisfactory. But having received conviction concerning the Person and work of *CHRIST*, the next enquiry of a truly awakened soul is, how shall I find him, and enjoy him to my soul's comfort?

SONG OF SOLOMON 6:2

My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

I detain the Reader, in the opening of this verse, to remark to him once more, if the remark be again necessary, that this answer of the church, to those that were seeking her LORD, carries with it the fullest and most undeniable testimony that the whole subject this Song is truly spiritual, and of a divine nature. In the loves of carnal persons there is too much jealousy to direct others to the object of love; rather doth every one forbid, than lead to an acquaintance: so that if there was no other evidence than what this part of the song contains; itself, would be enough to prove to a demonstration, that it is not the love of Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter which forms the subject of this Song, but *CHRIST* and his church. It will not be very difficult to understand what is meant by *CHRIST'S* garden and his beds of

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spices, after what hath been already observed on these subjects, (chap. 4:16.) The expression, indeed, concerning CHRIST'S garden, somewhat varies here; for the church describes her LORD as being gone *down* into his garden; by which it may be supposed is meant the garden JESUS hath in this lower world, by way of distinction to that which is above; but the whole, both above and below, is but one church; the gift of his FATHER, the purchase of his blood, and the conquest of his grace. And JESUS may be truly said to be gone down to the beds of spices, when he visits any particular souls of his with his grace; when he feeds them, or when he feeds (if it be allowed the expression) himself, in receiving the fruits of grace, which he himself hath planted by, his HOLY SPIRIT in their hearts. He gathers the lilies also, whensoever he takes home precious souls he hath redeemed to himself in glory.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:3

I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

I need not detain the Reader over this verse, having already noticed it, chap. 2:16. to which I refer; unless it be to remark once more, the delight the church takes in the conscious property she hath in JESUS, and JESUS in her. Here, indeed, the form of expression varies from the former; for in that she first calls CHRIST hers, and then she is his. But here she inverts the order, and declares herself first to be his, and then CHRIST is hers: but the alteration only serves to point out yet more strongly the mutual property in both.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:4

Thou *art* beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as *an army* with banners.

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Here JESUS takes up the discourse, and which he doth in the most gracious manner, in commendations of his love. He saith that she is beautiful as *Tirzah*. There was a city in the tribe of Manasseh called *Tirzah*; Joshua, 12:6. 24. And as Judea is said to have been *the glory of all lands*, no doubt that *Tirzah* was a pleasant place. But some have thought that it is not the name of a place intended by the expression, but that she is lovely in his eyes, comely from the comeliness he had put upon her. And if this be the sense of it, how delightful ought it to be to a child of GOD, to consider, however poor, and low, and despised we are in our own eyes, and in the eyes of the world, yet, JESUS declares his people beautiful as *Tirzah*. But CHRIST doth not rest here. The church is also comely as Jerusalem. This city, is said in scripture, to be *the joy of the whole earth*. Psalm 48:2. And if the church of JESUS be thus lovely upon earth, amidst all the spots and infirmities of its inhabitants; what must it be in the Jerusalem which is above? Read the beloved Apostle's description of it; and while reading, connect with it, in recollection that every individual child of GOD forms a part in it. Revelation 21:2-4. There is another description CHRIST gives of his church in this verse, and that is, that she is *terrible as an army with banners*. And is it not so? How often hath it been known that vice hath been put out of countenance by the singular zeal of some faithful servant of the LORD? How often have the constancy and firmness of the saints made tyrants tremble? Acts 24:25. Hebrews 11:33-35. And yet more and much more important, how often have the faithful overcome the LORD himself by the prevalency of faith and prayer? See Genesis 32:24-28. Exodus 32:11-14. Joshua 7:6-9.

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:5

Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

Some have translated these words, *Turn thine eyes to me*, and they say it means the call of *JESUS* to his church to be always looking to him. Isaiah 45:22. And, indeed, there is but too much reason for the perpetual call of *JESUS* to the church to this effect: but the more general opinion is that *CHRIST* expresseth himself as is here said, intimating that such is his love of his church, that when her faith is in lively actings, it compels him to comply with her request. Thus in the case of Lot: *Haste thee; escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither*. Genesis 19:21, 22. 32:26. And in the case of the woman of Canaan, Matthew 15:28.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:6-7

Thy teeth *are* as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and *there is* not one barren among them. (7) As a piece of a pomegranate *are* thy temples within thy locks.

These verses, as well as the latter part of the former verse, have been already noticed; chap. 4:1-3. I only add to what was there offered, what a blessed view it gives us of the *LORD JESUS*, that he should not only condescend to describe his church by such similitudes, but also to find pleasure in repeating them.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:8-9

There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. (9) My dove, my undefiled *is but* one; she *is* the *only* one of her mother, she *is* the choice *one* of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; *yea*, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

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In these verses we have still further proof of CHRIST'S love to his church, and the distinguishing nature of it. It is, as if the LORD had said, Though there be among men, and the great ones of the earth, those who have concubines and wives without number; yet, my beloved is but one, and the only one of my love; and so fair, so lovely, so undefiled, that even those who know not me, shall be obliged at length to confess that she is blessed. Reader! at the great day of GOD we are told that this shall take place. They shall see and confess; and, although in this life, who so despised, and set at nought as the followers of *JESUS*; yet, at the final audit, *every eye shall see him, and all nations shall wail because of him.* Revelation 1:7.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:10

Who *is* she *that* looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, *and* terrible as *an army* with banners?

It should seem that this verse is introduced here in accommodation of the church of CHRIST, by some looker-on; perhaps the daughters of Jerusalem: and the description is uncommonly striking and beautiful. If we consider the church in the day-dawn of revelation, amidst the darkness of the whole world around, it might be called the looking forth as the morning. And if, from the days of the Patriarchs, to the giving of the law; and if through that whole dispensation, to the coming of the gospel, it only resembled the pale borrowed light of the moon. And in this view of the subject, the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed GOD, will then correspond to what is said of the church being *clear as the sun*, when *JESUS*, the Sun of righteousness, arose with healing in his wings. But if we consider the verse as referring to the church under the full

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manifestations of grace by the LORD *JESUS* CHRIST, then, in the instance of every individual believer, their experience in divine things is *as the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:11

I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, *and* to see whether the vine flourished, *and* the pomegranates budded.

Some refer these words to the church in seeking after CHRIST; but there seems a more orderly agreement with all that is before to accept them as the words of *JESUS*. *It is* his gracious office to notice the state of grace in the souls of his people. And by the frequent account the LORD gives of himself doing so in this Song, it may be intended to remind his people how very constant his eye is upon them. Hagar had a sweet sense of this. Genesis 16:13, 14.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 6:12

Or ever I was aware, my soul made me *like* the chariots of Amminadib.

And JEHOVAH speaks and the church thus conscious of the presence of her Lord visiting his garden, felt that blessed but sudden effect that her soul became as the chariots of Amminadib, perhaps the swiftest ever known. But some have rendered the passage as the words of *JESUS*. That GOD is overcome by the earnest cries of his people; and, indeed, speaking after the manner of men, this is evident, from passages in scripture already quoted in this chapter. And, in addition to these, the Reader will find a beautiful illustration to the same amount; Hosea 11:8-9. And also another in

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Jeremiah 31:20. The chariots here spoken of, if the words be accepted in this latter sense, will be the chariots of my willing people; that is their faith, love, and all the other graces implanted by JESUS in the soul, and thus called forth by him into exercise. Ammi, meaning my people, and Nadib, implying their willingness.

SONG OF SOLOMON 6:13

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.

The church is in this verse called upon, most probably by the daughters of Jerusalem, to return. But it doth not so immediately appear what the church is called upon to return to; some, therefore, have accepted the call as the words of CHRIST; and in this sense the words are certainly much more plain and obvious; for then the object of the return, that we may look upon thee, will be that all the Persons of the GOD-HEAD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, may behold the fair beauty of the church, robed in the apparel of her Husband. I do not presume to determine the exact sense of the passage, or to which they refer. But, when the church is called *Shulamite*, it should seem it means a woman of Salem, or Jerusalem; for the word is the same. And as the bride of *JESUS*, she is the *Shulamite* indeed. *Solomon*, as the name of a man, is precisely the same as *Shulamite* for a woman. Now as the LORD *JESUS*, in one scripture, is called the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and in another passage of the same prophet, the church is so called, all this seems to throw a light upon the subject, in explaining why the church is called Shulamite. Jeremiah 23:6 chap. 33:16. The answer of the church is a

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most beautiful proof of grace, and her humbleness of soul. What will ye see, saith the church, but as a company of two armies, or as the margin of the Bible hath it, of Mahanaim, *two hosts*, such as the patriarch Jacob noticed, Genesis 32:1, 2. The conflict between grace and nature is very aptly represented by two armies, and in a warfare that ends not but with death. Blessed *JESUS*, it is well that it ends then; and everlasting praises be to thy name the victory is not doubtful; for *thy people are more than conquerors, through thy grace making them so*. Romans 8:37-39.

## REFLECTIONS

Here Reader, let us pause; and before we close the chapter, take into one view, some at least of the many blessed things contained in it for our instruction. Are we earnest in our enquiries for *JESUS*? Do we now seek after him from a knowledge of him, and a conviction of our need of him, and our utter ruin without him? Then let us learn from hence, where we are to seek *CHRIST*, and the earnestness with which we should enquire after him. There is a generation that seek the *LORD*, and of whom he saith, he will not be sought in vain. And very blessed it is to have this assurance from the *LORD* himself; while in a day of much heresy the cry is, *Lo! here is CHRIST, or lo, he is there!* Reader! let us not be discouraged with these things. A real love for *CHRIST*, and the going forth of real desires after *CHRIST*; both are of *JESUS'S* own giving: and the grace he gives, he will perfect. And if, as the church speaks, *JESUS* is gone down into his garden, his church; let us in ordinances, and in all the several means of grace there, seek him, where his name is as ointment poured forth, and

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where his glory and his salvation are the chief and only object regarded; and we shall find that, ere we are aware, our souls will be made like the chariot of Amminadib. And oh for grace, like the church, to arrive at that blessedness of assurance founded in the FATHER'S love, the Redeemer's grace, and the SPIRIT'S fellowship, that each may say for himself as the church: *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*

Precious *JESUS!* is thy church indeed lovely and beautiful as *Tirzah?* is she comely as *Jerusalem;* and in thy strength terrible as *an army with banners?* Surely then, blessed LORD, the whole is derived from thee! What grace, what endowment, what ornament can our poor polluted nature have but in, and from thee. In thy light, LORD, we shalt see light; and in thy strength we are strong: but without thee we are nothing. Cause thy redeemed to come up *as a flock of sheep from the washing, and let there be not one barren among them.*

I praise thee, my blessed LORD and Saviour, for this account of thy church, that she is but one and undefiled; and the choice one of her that bare her; and oh! for grace to bear about with me this precious mark of unity. One, LORD, with thee, and one, with thy people: one faith, one hope, one baptism; and all thy redeemed shall be found in one spirit, even as *we are called in one hope of our calling.* And although, thou glorious Head of thy body the church, all thy redeemed here below are like the *Shulamite,* always in the conflict as of two armies; yet already in thy strength we have overcome. *Thanks be to GOD who giveth us the victory, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST!* And therefore now we would begin the Song, until in the full assembly of the church above

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we come to sing with a louder, fuller, sweeter strain: *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto GOD and his FATHER, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONTENTS

*Here is the same subject prosecuted through the greater part of this chapter as the former, namely, the beauty of the church as in the eyes of her Husband. Towards the close of it, the church humbly professeth her hope and faith in JESUS.*

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 7:1-5

How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs *are* like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. (2) Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, *which* wanteth not liquor: thy belly *is like* an heap of wheat set about with lilies. (3) Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes *that are* twins. (4) Thy neck *is* as a tower of ivory; thine eyes *like* the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose *is* as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus. (5) Thine head upon thee *is* like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king *is* held in the galleries.

This chapter opens with an address of CHRIST to his Church, which is replete with the same warm expressions of love; for there is no change in CHRIST. *Having loved his own which are in the world, he loveth them to the end.* John 13:1. Here is a new name, or title, by which the LORD is pleased to distinguish her, for he calls her, *O Prince's daughter*: perhaps in allusion to what scripture hath said of the church of CHRIST at large,

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and of all believers in particular. Thus in one of the Psalms the church is called *the King's daughter*. Psalm 45:10-16. And moreover, the church, and every individual of the church, is such being children of GOD by adoption and by grace. John 1:12, 13. And indeed, when CHRIST condescended to marry our nature, he made that nature royal. Isaiah 54:5. I will not detain the Reader with following up every description which CHRIST here gives his church, for it would lead into too extensive a subject. Some of the things here said in this, and the following verses concerning the Church's beauty, have been said before; see verse 3, compared with chap. 4:5: but it is somewhat remarkable that the church should have commended CHRIST under *ten* several particulars, and that the LORD *JESUS* should have thought proper in celebrating the beauty of his church, to have taken exactly the same number of heads to dwell upon. Some of these features are very plain and expressive, and cannot be mistaken, if construed agreeably to the general analogy of scripture. By the *feet* of the church, no doubt, intended the ministers of the gospel of CHRIST, whose feet on the mountains are said to be *beautiful in their publishing peace*. Isaiah 52:7. And the *head*, like Carmel, intimating how high, in consequence, of the church's union with CHRIST, she is exalted. *He is the head of his body the church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all*. Ephesians 1:23. By the King being held in the galleries, seems to imply how closely allied *JESUS* is to his church; and that when the church lays hold of CHRIST in the galleries of ordinances, or his promises; or, in short, in any of the covenant-engagements, the church may, and by his grace, by virtue of her interest in his blood and righteousness, will detain him. Genesis 32:26.

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 7:6-9

How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! (7) This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters *of grapes*. (8) I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; (9) And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth *down* sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

We have in these verses the gracious LORD still taking delight in the beauties and graces of his church. Under several very interesting similitudes these things are said by him. And it is impossible to take into consideration these united views of *JESUS'S* love, and the church's undeserving, without being struck with astonishment at the contemplation of the unsearchable riches of his grace! The prophet Zephaniah hath a beautiful passage much to the same amount, as is expressed in one of these verses, of CHRIST'S resting in his love, and in his delights, Zephaniah 3:17. If what naturalists say of the palm-tree be correct, the figure *JESUS* useth of this tree in making a comparative statement to the church, is uncommonly beautiful and striking. And as the palm trees were very common in *Judea*, there should seem to be no doubt of the correctness of their account. It is said that the palm tree differs from other trees in this striking particularity; that it doth not live by its roots, but its head. Whether this be so, or not, I cannot determine: but certain it is, the church of CHRIST hath CHRIST for her head, as well as her root. In fruitfulness the church resembles the palm-tree, and in height, and verdure, for it is an ever-green. It is exceedingly prolific, and so is the church. And what so lofty, so exalted, as the church of CHRIST. Most elegantly, as well as true, doth the Psalmist speak of GOD'S people in allusion to this tree, when it is said by him, *That the righteous shall flourish like*

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*the palm tree, he shall grow, like the cedar in Lebanon.* Psalm 92:12. And sure I am that if it be true, as it is said, the palm tree flourisheth the more it is trodden under; nothing can be more descriptive of CHRIST'S church, for in all ages the more it hath been persecuted, the more glorious it hath risen. And hence, those now in glory; who have come out of great tribulation, are clothed with white robes, and have palms in their hands: Revelation 7:9. I must not wholly overlook what the Redeemer hath said in these verses, of the blessed effects which he himself here setteth forth, of his granting the church his presence. He goeth with her by his grace he taketh hold of her, and thereby causeth all his gifts and mercies to be received by her, that, like the best wine, it is swallowed with delight; so that it hath an infinite and divine effect; causing even the sleeping soul and the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, to speak. Oh! how blessed is it to the church, and to every believer of the church, to know and enjoy CHRIST. Well might the church cry out, *Thy love is better than wine.* Song Of Solomon 1:2.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 7:10

I *am* my beloved's, and his desire *is* toward me.

Here we have, once again, the church rejoicing; in the consciousness that she is the property of *JESUS*. And here she adds a delightful consideration to that consciousness, that the desire of her LORD is toward her. And indeed, of all subjects in redemption, this, which is one of the highest, is the plainest, and most evident. Had not CHRIST desired the church, never would he have given himself for her; had he not desired her, never would he have bought her with so vast a price; neither would he have endured the cross, and despised the shame,

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but for his everlasting glory, and a zeal to his FATHER's honor in her salvation. And, indeed, in the gift of the FATHER of the church to CHRIST, we are told that JEHOVAH granted him *his heart's desire, and would not withhold the request of his lips*. Psalm 21:2. Reader! how blessed is it to see this, and to trace it in the history of the church at large! And oh how blessed, when you and I can trace the same in the history of our own souls!

## SONG OF SOLOMON 7:11-12

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. (12) Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, *whether* the tender grape appear, *and* the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

The church is following up the sweet truth she had delivered in the foregoing verse, with putting forth in these an invitation to CHRIST. *JESUS* had before invited her to arise, and go with him. Song Of Solomon 2:10, &c. And the church now in return invites her LORD. By the *field*, some have supposed is meant the scriptures, concerning which, if so, the sense of the church's invitation of CHRIST to go forth in the study of the word with her, is, that without his gracious instruction by his HOLY *SPIRIT*, she could not read them profitably. By lodging in *the villages*, hath been thought, is intended the inviting CHRIST to the private communion and fellowship of saints. And by getting up early to the vineyards, is meant the public congregation of the faithful. And the motives, or intentions, immediately expressed by the church, seem without difficulty to give countenance to this interpretation of the passage. The church saith, her wishes for CHRIST to accompany her into the

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fields, and to lodge in the villages, and get up early to the vineyards, is, to see how *the vine flourished*, and whether *the tender grape* did appear; meaning the state of *JESUS'S* family, amidst the various ages, characters, and diversities the LORD had appointed among them. And there, in the word, in sweet private communion, and in public worship, will I hope (saith the church,) to tell my LORD how much and how greatly I love him. Reader, let you and I copy after the church in this most lovely employment. Wherever we are, however engaged in the church or in the house, in the field or in the city, at home or abroad, let us invite the LORD *JESUS* to be ever with us, Oh! LORD, if thou wilt but condescend to make one in our midst, surely I may then promise as the church did: *There will I give thee my loves.*

## SONG OF SOLOMON 7:13

The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates *are* all manner of pleasant *fruits*, new and old, *which* I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

The *mandrakes* we read of in the early ages of the church, it should seem was an highly desired fruit. With the present of some Leah purchased the company of her husband from Rachel: see Genesis 30:14, 15. But of what property or quality I stay not to enquire, but as the church here professeth to her LORD, that they gave a smell, and that with these she had also laid up for him all manner of pleasant fruits, we may gather from the whole how ardently she longed for sweet communion with *JESUS*, and what blessedness she was hoping for, from his spiritual company. But what was, and is, and ever must be, during a life of grace, most pleasant to the LORD *JESUS*, are the fruits of his own most HOLY *SPIRIT*. These

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are the mandrakes, the lovely flowers of *JESUS*; for they are his by original gift, and by his purchased redemption. He hath planted them by sovereign grace at our gates. Oh LORD! how blessed is it to have them, even the fruits of faith and love, with all the graces of thy HOLY *SPIRIT*. Come then, LORD, I would say for myself and Reader, let us go forth, blessed *JESUS*; and do thou lodge with us, and grant us to lodge with thee. All, LORD, is thine, and of thine own do we give thee.

### REFLECTIONS

BLESSED and all-lovely LORD *JESUS*! is it possible that thy church can be so fair in thine eyes, as that her very feet are beautiful to her LORD? Surely, LORD, it is thou that must have made her so; for when thou camest from heaven to seek and save thy people, thou didst find the whole nature of man sunk and degraded by sin and uncleanness. But now thou hast washed thy church in thy blood and adorned her with thy spotless garment of righteousness, she is indeed *the king's daughter, all glorious within*. And seeing then, that it is in thee, and by thee, and from thee, that all the beauties and loveliness of thy church are derived; methinks I would hold thee in the galleries of thy grace, and plead and wrestle with my GOD and Saviour, with an earnestness not to be resisted by my LORD; but like the FATHER of the seed of Jacob, tell thee, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*.

And doth my LORD regard the supplication of his poor petitioner? Doth *JESUS* indeed say to me, as to the church of old, that he will go up to the palm-tree, and that he will take hold of the boughs thereof? Doth *JESUS* say, that he will give me the best wine, that shall go down sweetly, causing the lips

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of those that are asleep to speak. Oh! thou, gracious condescending LORD! if thou wilt thus pour out of the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, thy love will be better to me than wine, for by it my poor dead soul, under all her dying circumstances, will revive; and I shall go forth and speak of thy love, thy truth and righteousness. While *JESUS* is with me and blessing me, I shall feel such an enlargement of heart, that my mouth will spread abroad thy name, and make mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. And surely, LORD, I may hope this, I may look for these sweet visits of thy love, for thou hast taken me into the nearest covenant-connections with thee, for I am thine, and thy desire is towards me. Yes! Precious, precious LORD! thy desire hath been towards thy people from everlasting. And what it was *from* everlasting so must it be *to* everlasting. Thou hast all along desired the salvation of all the FATHER hath given thee. Thou hast waited to be gracious. Thou hast longed for the hour of redemption appointed for every individual soul for whom thou hast died. Thou art now continually desiring to manifest thyself to them. And, LORD, I am fully persuaded that the desire of thy soul will not be fully satisfied, until thou hast brought all, and every one of them unto thyself in glory. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of that day, when thou shalt have brought home thy whole church, that where thou art, there they shall be also.

Come, LORD, then I beseech thee, for thou art my beloved, come with me into the fields of thy holy word, and let us lodge together in the villages of the saints, and get up to the vineyards of thy churches; for *the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah is thy*

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*pleasant plant.* All must flourish in thee, O LORD, which are branches in thee; both grapes and pomegranates, young believers and old saints, will put forth their graces, when excited by thy quickening and reviving influence. There, LORD, doth my soul desire to tell thee how exceedingly I love thee, and how ardently I long after thee. O! that the *mandrakes* may be perfumed with the fragrancy of thy incense, and all the fruits of the SPIRIT may be in such lively exercise in my soul, that I may show forth thy praises, and manifest thy glory to all around.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONTENTS

*This beautiful Song is now drawing to a close, and the Church repeats her earnest desires for increasing knowledge of, and communion with her LORD. In the body of this Chapter, it is hard to distinguish between the expressions of CHRIST and those of his Church, in which are contained the vehement pantings for fellowship. Towards the close, the Church puts up a request for the speedy call of the Gentiles, and finisheth the whole in earnest prayer for her Beloved to hasten his coming, and sum up his whole purposes of redemption in glory.*

#### SONG OF SOLOMON 8:1

O that thou *wert* as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! *when* I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.

The Church in this verse is still prosecuting the same pleasing subject, that she dwelt on in the former chapter; but, willing to enjoy CHRIST in every relationship, wherein he hath condescended to put himself, she here reminds him that he is her brother, as well as her husband. Reader! it is blessed to know and enjoy *JESUS*, in all his names, offices, characters, and relations; for he fills all. And as we are told that he is not ashamed to call his people brethren; surely everyone should delight to make use of the relationship, and call him brother. CHRIST is the brother of his Church, from taking our nature upon him, in being the seed of the woman after the flesh; *for it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren*: Genesis 3:15. Hebrews 11:12. Matthew 12:50. Perhaps by the wish which the Church expresseth in this verse, is meant to convey the longing of Old Testament saints for the incarnation of the LORD *JESUS*. O that thou wert as my brother; that is, *Oh! that the salvation were given unto Israel out of Zion!* And as CHRIST and his Church are one, so one mother, even Jerusalem is, as the Apostle saith, *the mother of us all*. Galatians 4:26. By *sucking the breasts*, very plainly means the enjoyment of the same ordinances. Hence *JESUS*, when on earth, graced the synagogue with his divine presence. Luke 4:16, &c. The *kisses*, mean the exercises of faith, love, repentance, and all those graces which *JESUS*, by his HOLY SPIRIT, plants in the souls of his people, and which, by his influences, he again brings forth into action, upon his person, blood, and righteousness. Hence, therefore, saith the Church, when I humbly offer these things unto my brother, my LORD, I shall not be despised. No! *JESUS* despiseth not *the day of small things*. Zechariah 4:10. He doth not *break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*. Matthew 12:20.

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 8:2

I would lead thee, *and* bring thee into my mother's house, *who* would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

And then, saith the Church, (still following up the same subject of her address to her brother and her LORD,) I would assume the freedom wherewith the LORD makes his people free, and lead thee into my mother's house, and cause thee to drink of my poor offering. Reader, here is a beautiful verse, well worthy the closest attention. We meet in scripture with numberless passages of the LORD'S leading his people, and very earnest prayers that he would fulfill his promises in doing so; but here it is the Church leading her LORD. See Deuteronomy 32:12. Psalm 32:8. Psalm 43:3. But I humbly conceive that this scripture is designed to teach a believer in *JESUS*, what powerful effects are in faith, when the LORD gives out large supplies of this blessed principle. Remember the state the Church was now in. She was looking to *JESUS* as a brother. And what may we not hope to do with a brother such as *JESUS*; one purposely born for adversity, and that loveth at all times, and sticketh closer than a brother? Proverbs 17:17. And, Reader, do not forget also what *JESUS* himself hath said; *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.* John 15:17. Oh! the condescension of our adorable LORD! Then, blessed LORD, may a believer hope, that thus living in thee, and thou in him, a poor sinner may lead *JESUS* into his closet, into his retirement, and there pour out his soul before him, an offering more precious to *JESUS* than all the spiced wine of the juice of the pomegranate.

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 8:3-4

His left hand *should be* under my head, and his right hand should embrace me. (4) I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, until he please.

These have been already noticed, therefore I refer to them. Chap. 2:6, 7. Chap. 3:5.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 8:5

Who *is* this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth *that* bare thee.

The former part of this verse also hath been noticed; Chap. 3:6. But there is an addition here, of a most interesting nature, which saith, that while the Church is coming up out of the wilderness, she is *leaning upon her beloved*; meaning, that believing souls lay their whole stress of salvation upon *JESUS*. They have not an atom of their own, but hang upon him, cleave to him, rest upon him. And this is in perfect agreement to the whole doctrine of faith. See those scriptures; Isaiah 22:24. Proverbs 3:5. Psalm 71:15, 16. Philipians 3:8, 9. It should seem that *CHRIST* is the speaker of that after part of this verse, *I raised thee up under the apple tree*, and intimating the power of his blessed *SPIRIT*, in the conversion and new birth of the souls of his redeemed. But the words may be read as the words of the Church. For when by faith *JESUS* is raised up to a believer's view, and in the Church the soul of the redeemed beholds *CHRIST* in his incarnation, sufferings, and death: there is no impropriety of speech, as the language of faith, thus to speak of the Redeemer. John 3:14, 15.

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:6

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Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath a* most vehement flame.

In whatever sense we accept the words of this most precious verse, the meditation on them cannot but be sweet, if God the HOLY GHOST, who is the author of them, should open them and bring them home to the soul. For then we may say with the prophet, *Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.* Jeremiah 15:16. Reader! let us first accept them as the words of the Church, which should seem to be the most probable of the two. Now when a soul, like the Church, desires to be set as a seal upon CHRIST'S heart, what a delightful thought is it of being so near to *JESUS*; always, not only in his sight, and, as the High Priest, bearing the names of Israel on his breast-plate, she might be in a constant memorial before him; but still nearer than this, even in his heart, and upon his arm; to live always with him, and upon him, and never, never to be a moment separated from him. What an ardency of faith is this? And the reason she assigns is as beautiful as interesting. Her love is strong as death; yea, stronger; for death kills all, destroys all connections, all relations, all ties; but death cannot separate the Church from *JESUS*. Romans 8:38, 39. And her jealousy lest she should lose her LORD, like the grave, which for cruelty would destroy anything, and everything that arose in the way to oppose it; for the coals in her soul of love was burning with a flame that would consume all that came in its way. Reader! where shall we look, in the present day, for faith and love so ardent and so lively! And if we accept the passage in this verse as the words of *JESUS*, we are only lost in greater amazement still at the love of CHRIST, which

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passeth knowledge! Set me, saith CHRIST, as a seal upon thine heart. *JESUS* desires the first place in the affections of his people. Indeed, unless this be given him we give him nothing. It is with all the heart, and all the soul, if we love him at all, that that love is to be manifested. And if CHRIST be formed in our heart, the hope of glory, there will be all the suitable correspondence. Hence the apostle Barnabas exhorted the believers at *Antioch*, *that with full purpose of heart they would cleave unto the LORD*. Acts 11:23. And what that is, will not be far to gather. In the soul which is cleaving unto the LORD, and setting *JESUS* as the seal there, CHRIST will be uppermost in the affection. The soul will undertake nothing but in his strength, and design nothing but for his glory. And the most blessed testimonies, that the soul is really thus setting *JESUS* for a seal, will be found in the life and conversation, by the affections being weaned from all things here below, and a growing connection forming more and more, with those that are above. Reader! is it so with you? Precious *JESUS*! thy love hath been strong as death indeed, for the accomplishment of these purposes. And oh! that thy jealousy, for the suitable return of the affections of thy people, may provoke all the souls of thy redeemed to a holy jealousy for thine honour, that we may love thee, who hath so earnestly first loved us!

*SONG OF SOLOMON 8:7*

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

Here is the same obscurity in this verse, as in the former, whether the words are principally applicable to CHRIST or to

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his Church. If we consider the Church as thus expressing her affection, every believer ought to be enabled to adopt the sentiment contained in them. For as some blessed martyrs in times past have waded not only through waters and floods under the persecutions of the ungodly, but through blood, to testify their love to *JESUS*; so ought believers in every age. Neither the malice of enemies, nor the slights of friends, the unkindness of relations, and the sneers of the world; the infidelity of men, nor the rage of devils; since none of these can separate from the love of *CHRIST*; surely none of them ought to have influence to lessen in our hearts that love. But as it is not to be bought with money, so ought every child of *GOD* to prize it above all things. They should despise everything the world holds dear, in order to keep alive the immortal spark, not to be extinguished by the floods or waters of immortal hatred. But if we read the verse with an eye to *CHRIST*, the subject contained in it riseth in glory. Such indeed was the love of *CHRIST* to his Church, that neither the view of his *FATHER*'s burning anger against sin, nor all the sufferings he had to sustain in his own sacred person, when doing away the evil of sin by the sacrifice of himself, could for one moment make his holy soul remit his love to his redeemed. Yea, if possible, more deeply wounding still to his tender heart, not all the baseness and ingratitude of his redeemed, could extinguish the holy flame of his love. Reader! pause over this subject, and contemplate well the wondrous contents of it, and then say, Is not the love of *CHRIST* in the heights and depths, in the breadths and lengths of it, a love of *GOD*, which passeth knowledge?

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:8-10

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We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? (9) If she *be* a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she *be* a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar. (10) I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

It should seem that these verses are the wishes of the Jewish Church for the call of the Gentile. For the term sister implies as much. And as GOD the FATHER gave his dear SON, for a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of his people Israel; so the faithful who saw as much of the mind of JEHOVAH in this particular, as to enter into the apprehension of the subject, might be supposed under the HOLY GHOST, to be praying for its accomplishment. Isaiah 49:6. 60:1-3, &c.

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:11-12

Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand *pieces* of silver. (12) My vineyard, which *is* mine, *is* before me: thou, O Solomon, *must have* a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

The best comment perhaps on this verse is what the LORD *JESUS* himself hath given, Matthew 21:83, &c. That the Church is CHRIST'S vineyard, that he hath servants in all ages ministering, and working in its Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Pastors; that his is the revenue, and to him will be all the fruit of it; and that finally, he who hath now his eye constantly upon it, will come to make a reckoning: all these momentous concerns are read to us in every part of scripture.

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## SONG OF SOLOMON 8:13

Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear *it*.

These are the words of CHRIST to his Church, in which he calls her the inhabitress of the gardens, his Churches; and it is a love-call of the LORD, that as she is heard by her companions, and is frequently speaking of him, and concerning him, he desires that she will speak to him also. Reader! it is blessed to speak *of* CHRIST, but infinitely more so to speak *to* CHRIST. Communion with the saints is like heaven below; but communion with the LORD of the saints is like heaven above! Reader! do not overlook the tenderness of *JESUS* in thus seeking fellowship with his people.

## SONG OF SOLOMON 8:14

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

With these words the song is closed. *JESUS* finisheth his divine part, in the verse before, and here the Church echoes to her LORD in this affectionate answer. We had a similar request, chap. 2:17; and the repetition here only serves to show, with what ardency so blessed an event was desired. Such was the longing of Old Testament saints for the LORD'S first coming, in substance of our flesh; and such should be the earnest desire of New Testament believers, that *JESUS* would hasten his second coming! And, Reader, if your views and mine of the LORD *JESUS*, in his glorious person, and in the infinite importance of his salvation, correspond to these sentiments of the Church, in all ages, then shall we find our souls going forth, in the same earnest cry of faith; *Make haste my*

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*beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

## REFLECTIONS

READER! here let us take to ourselves the sweet instruction the Church teacheth, in the opening of this Chapter, and while she is so passionately looking to her LORD, as her Brother, and desiring to kiss him without being ashamed or despised; let you and I delight to call him our Brother also, and to be convinced, that as a Brother, he feels interested in all that concerns our salvation. And oh! for grace and faith in such full actings upon his glorious Person, that we may constrain him to come with us to the Church our Mother, and there cause him to drink of our spiced wine, even the blessed fruits and effects of his own grace in our hearts. Surely *JESUS* will embrace us, and take us into his arms; neither shall any disturb the hallowed season of enjoyment with him, while he is pleased to impart the manifestations of his love. And, Reader, shall we not be among the happy number, that are coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon our Beloved, hanging upon him, and feasting our souls with beholding his beauty, and living upon his fulness? Yea, surely *JESUS* will raise us up from under the apple tree of this world's good; will bring us out of all the deadness of nature, and the dead frames of the heart, and bring us into his Church, the Church of the living GOD.

Blessed LORD *JESUS*! dost thou really desire that such poor creatures as we are, should set thee as a seal upon our hearts, and upon our arm? And is thy love so ardent, and yet so condescending, that thou declarest it to be strong as

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death, and as jealous as the grave, and doth it burn towards us, as coals of fire? Oh LORD! for grace, ever to keep this desire of thine in remembrance, and to carry it about with us, whithersoever we go; delighting our souls with the very thought that our poor sealing to the love of *JESUS* is had in remembrance, and valued by our LORD. And do thou, oh thou most gracious and compassionate Redeemer, do thou set thy people as a signet on thy right hand, and wear our names, worthless as they are in themselves, but highly honourable as noticed and owned by thee, wear them in thine heart, and bear them in, as the High Priest of thy people, before the throne, that as thine, we may be sealed in the presence of our God, unto the day of redemption. Oh! for a heart to have thee, and to live to thee, and to praise thee, that nothing could damp or abate thy love to thy people. Neither the agonies in the garden, nor the cross, neither the justice of divine wrath against sin, nor the powers of hell, no, nor the forsaking of thy disciples at thy death, nor the continued slights of all thy disciples through the whole of thy life, even until now, hath abated, or can abate thy love for one moment from thy redeemed; but, as thou hast from the beginning loved thy people, that are in the world, *thou lovest them unto the end*. Oh, that the LORD would add one mercy more to this unmerited mercy, and as no waters nor floods can quench thy love, so the LORD would not suffer any, or all, the torrents of sin and death to quench ours. LORD, we pray thee to keep our poor souls *in the love of GOD, and in the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST*.

Hail! holy LORD! FATHER, SON, and eternal SPIRIT! we bend before thy throne with thanksgivings and praise for all the

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wonders of redemption by *JESUS CHRIST!* Hasten, almighty GOD, the call of thy people. Let the *little sister* of CHRIST'S Church, even the Gentile Church, be filled with the breasts of consolation, and may our elder Brother, the Jewish Church, be called home by grace. Oh! for that glorious hour, when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall be completed, and all Israel shall be saved. When the Deliverer shall arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob!* In the blessed hope of this assurance may thy people live from day to day, and may the cry of faith be continually going up for the accomplishment of it, from all the redeemed of the LORD. And while *JESUS* is calling upon his Church to hear his voice, and saying, *Surely I come quickly*, oh! may every faithful heart make sweet responses to their LORD, and send up the earnest prayer, *Even so! come, LORD JESUS. Amen.*

# THE PROPHET

# *ISAIAH*

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE here enter on a part of the Word of GOD, very different in manner, from all that we have before gone over, through the sacred writings; though directed, in common with all the rest, to one and the same object; namely, *to make the Church of GOD wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS.*

The scripture prophecies form a most important part in the oracles of divine truth. *Prophecy*, we are told, *came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST.* And we may very safely conclude, that as they *spake* so they *wrote*. For he who gave a door of utterance to his servants, gave also the pen of a ready writer; that by both, they might minister in his church, and carry with them the witness of the SPIRIT, whose they were, and to whom they belonged in the service of the sanctuary.

In the Old Testament Dispensation, we find the spirit of prophecy, manifesting the divine will from the earliest period. In that memorable, and never to be forgotten promise, which

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folds in its bosom the whole of redemption, and which opened immediately on the fall, the first dawn of prophecy appeared. For when it was said, that *the seed of the women should bruise the serpent's head*; and this promise delivered by the LORD himself; every succeeding revelation tended to unfold, illustrate, and confirm this leading truth. And *as the SPIRIT of CHRIST* (which an apostle, in after ages, commissioned by the same almighty SPIRIT, tells us,) *was in the holy men of old*, directing their minds into all truth; so the great scope and tendency of all the prophecies they delivered was uniformly pointing to those two great branches of all revelation, namely, *the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow*. So that through all the Bible; this was the burden of prophecy. Everything delivered in a spirit of prophecy, pointed to JESUS. He, and he alone, was *the horn of salvation, raised up by JEHOVAH in the house of his servant David*. And of him, and to him, all referred, *which GOD spoke by the mouth of all his holy prophets which have been since the world began*.

Concerning the prophet *Isaiah* from whose inspired pen we derive the blessed prophecy now before us; the preface at the opening of the first chapter, give us all the information, that we are interested to know, in respect to him. His name is somewhat remarkable: *Isaiah* which signifies, *the salvation of the LORD*. And it becomes the more so, from the peculiar scope and tendency of his writings, being so much in the strain of the gospel, in reference to salvation. Hence some have not scrupled to call him *the Evangelical Prophet*; and his book of prophecy, *a fifth gospel*. I stay not to inquire as to the exact period of his ministry, having already done this in a general way, at the beginning of my Commentary, under the

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title of *The Order of the Books of Scripture*. To this therefore I refer; only just, observing, in addition to what is there set down, that it formed an interesting era in the church, being designed to prepare the minds of the people, for the approaching captivity of the church in Babylon, which took place somewhat about 200 years after.

I take occasion once more to beg the Reader, as I have uniformly done, on the entrance upon every book of the sacred Scripture; that he will in spirit, and in heart, join with my poor prayers at a mercy-seat, that both writer and Reader may be under His blessed teaching, who taught the prophet; that while we receive these divine oracles, as the word of GOD, and consider that *the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy*, we may all along keep in view Him, *to whom give all the prophets witness*; and never lose sight of the one grand object and design of all their, and every other servant of the LORD'S commission; that *through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONTENTS

*The Prophet opens his vision with complaints. Both Judah and Jerusalem are reproved for their sins, and affectionately entreated to return to the LORD.*

#### **ISAIAH 1:1**

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

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We have in this first verse, both the *subject* and the *time* in which it was delivered; together with the name and family of the writer. All which were proper for an introduction; by way of authority, for the cordial reception of what was written, by the church. But what I beg the reader yet more particularly to remark, is the title of this book. It is called a vision, intimating the special revelation by which the prophet was favoured and commissioned for the delivery of it. And, by consequence, how highly it ought to be regarded. The apostle Paul, in after ages, considered what he said upon divine things as of this kind, when passing by all self importance, he cried out, *I will come to visions and revelations of the LORD*, 2 Corinthians 12:1. Judah and Jerusalem, are the people concerned in this vision; that is the church of GOD. And consequently in the present day of the gospel, both Jew and Gentile, brought as they now are into one fold, have an interest in all that is preached by the prophet in this vision, Galatians 3:28, 29. I only detain the Reader with one observation more, on this introductory verse of the prophet, just to remark, that Isaiah must have ministered in the church, not less than *fifty years*; as the Reader will himself find, if he calculates the different periods, from the reign of Uziah to Hezekiah. And under what discouragement this highly favoured servant of the LORD ministered, may in some measure be conceived, from the account we have of the idolatrous practices, at that time more or less prevailing, of both kings and people, 2 Kings 16:3, 4.

### **ISAIAH 1:2-3**

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. (3) The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

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The prophet hath followed Moses, the man of God, in his sermon, in calling upon the several parts of the inanimate creation to listen to his discourse, Deuteronomy 32:1. There is a vast beauty, as well as force in this manner of preaching. If men will not hear, the heavens will: yea, the very stones of the earth might well cry out in astonishment at man's obduracy. Even the poor beasts of labour, the ox, and the ass, which is dull to a proverb, are possessed of some kind of knowledge, to discern the hand that feeds and corrects them; but Israel, whom God had distinguished beyond all people, were senseless both of his mercies, and of his judgments! How tenderly elsewhere the LORD speaks of this! Hosea 11:1 to 9.

### **ISAIAH 1:4-9**

Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. (5) Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. (6) From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. (7) Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers. (8) And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. (9) Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

How affecting are these verses! It is as if God paused over the state of his church. Their sin, like an epidemic disease, was universal. It did not break out in one or two instances of transgression; but the whole body became virtually all sin.

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They are laden with it.—And where should they be unladen, but upon CHRIST, the almighty burden bearer?—Reader! do not fail to remark, in the very opening of the prophecy, how in the view of universal corruption, the HOLY GHOST is preaching CHRIST? And, Reader, do not fail to connect with this view also, another sweet gospel truth; namely, how the LORD, in such deplorable times, had preserved to himself *a remnant according to the election of grace*. Sodom's history was well known, and Abraham's intercession on that occasion could not have been forgotten. When therefore we hear it said, *Except the LORD had left a very small remnant*, how blessed is it to trace the LORD'S hand, and to give to the LORD all the glory! Genesis 18:20-33. Romans 9:29. Then read Romans 11:5, and bless GOD for distinguishing mercy! Precious JESUS! to whom but to thee shall the glorious cause be ascribed! Oh how blessed to mark *the little flock of thy kingdom*, Luke 12:32.

### **ISAIAH 1:10-20**

Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. (11) To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. (12) When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? (13) Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting. (14) Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*. (15) And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. (16) Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; (17) Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

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(18) Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (19) If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: (20) But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

I make no break in this address of the prophet. The whole forms but one sermon, and a most striking one it is. I beg the reader to remark with me the very pointed terms made use of by the man of GOD. He calls them by the name of *the men of Sodom and Gomorrah*. Perhaps to intimate, that their place and people merited equal judgment. And had the LORD done so, there would have been no injustice on the part of GOD. Reader! let us pause over this thought, and not too hastily dismiss the solemn consideration from both our minds. As a nation, how awful do we stand, in the crying and abounding sins of our guilty land! And are we not visited as they? To what shall we ascribe it? Oh! the unknown treasures of grace in covenant love! Precious, precious JESUS! who shall calculate the infinite value of thine atoning blood; which speaks more for thy people, than all their sins against them? Reader, mark what is said in those verses concerning the inefficacy of sacrifices! And do not fail to connect with it, how and in what terms they are spoken of. The LORD calls them *your* sacrifices. Yes, JEHOVAH hath an eye only to one sacrifice, and that one of his own appointing. Reader! it is the sweetest and most precious of all thoughts; that while you and I are looking up to GOD in CHRIST for acceptance, by virtue of that one offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once for all, whereby *he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; we are looking up by the express appointment and authority of GOD our FATHER,

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in his own way, for salvation. See those Scriptures, Hebrews 5:1-6. 10:1-14.

### **ISAIAH 1:21-23**

How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. (22) Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: (23) Thy princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

Under these figures of speech, are represented the sad fall of our nature. It forms in language a beautiful, though in reality, an awful account. But, Reader, painful as it is to know, yet it is profitable, in order to lead the heart to JESUS. This is among the methods which the HOLY GHOST is pleased to adopt, in bringing the soul to GOD in CHRIST. He first convinces of sin, and then of righteousness. I think that those parts of scripture are eminently blessed, which bring with them proofs of his divine teaching; and that, it is one and the same in both Testaments of GOD'S word. John 16:7-11.

### **ISAIAH 1:24-31**

Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: (25) And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: (26) And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. (27) Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. (28) And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed. (29) For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. (30) For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. (31) And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker

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of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench *them*.

How very blessed is it to behold divine grace triumphing over human transgression: and the LORD who alone can reform, graciously exercising his love in a way of reformation over his people. And, Reader, do observe that when the LORD comes forth to correct his people, it is at the same time to take vengeance of their enemies. When the LORD JESUS speaks *of the year of his redeemed being come*, he connects with *it the day also of vengeance in his heart*, Isaiah 63:4. Reader! may it be your happiness and mine to know the LORD JESUS in his grace; and we shall know him also in the destruction of our enemies. May JESUS root out those inbred, indwelling sins of our nature, the greatest and most dangerous foes we have to contend with; that in the cleansing of his church and people, we may know ourselves included; when he will redeem *Zion with judgment, and her converts with righteousness*.

## REFLECTIONS

My soul, suffer not a portion of this blessed chapter to be overlooked, nor fancy the prophet's commission in the delivery of it to have ceased with the men of Judah and Jerusalem; Alas! every age and every period of the church, hath carried with it the same marks, more or less, of corruption, and to everyone, the expostulation of a gracious GOD is but too applicable: *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!*

Blessed SPIRIT of truth! Do thou, LORD, in grace, and love, and compassion, exercise thy kind office, with my poor soul, as

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the glorifier of CHRIST JESUS! By thy word, and by thy grace in my heart, give me to see, and feel, and know, that, like Israel, *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint*. Let me never seek justification by the deeds of the law, or presume to think myself clean in thy sight! Plead, LORD, in my heart the injured cause of my GOD, and of his CHRIST; and by such saving discoveries as thou art making to thy church, by thy blessed word, both of human corruption, and the necessity of divine cleansing; make me to know that in JESUS, and his great salvation alone, it can be accomplished; that my sins, *which are as scarlet, shall be white as snow; and though red as crimson, shall be as the wool*.

And oh! the praises due to a covenant GOD in CHRIST, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the rich discovery! Blessed, forever blessed be JEHOVAH, in having brought sinners acquainted with the cause of our ruin, and the only source of our relief in JESUS. LORD! help me to seize all the gracious improvements thy mercy hath designed, from the rich salvation by JESUS. And since by his precious blood and righteousness, thou hast opened a way for *purely purging away our dross, and taking away all our sin*; bring, LORD, the souls of thy redeemed, through this gracious process of thy mercy, and let thy people be again called *the city of righteousness, the faithful city!*

## CHAPTER 2

### CONTENTS

*We have in this chapter, strong, though distant views given of the coming of CHRIST. In the prospect, the LORD is set forth as both glorious and solemn to the people.*

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**ISAIAH 2:1**

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

The man of GOD, takes a similar text to what he had used in his former sermon, with only this difference, that what he had termed a *vision* in the last discourse, he calls the *word* in the present; but the audience are the same, Judah and Jerusalem, the church of GOD, is the congregation.

**ISAIAH 2:2-4**

And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (3) And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (4) And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The prophet *Micah* had *a* similar commission in his day to deliver, and he executed it almost in the same words: see Micah 4:1-5. There are several very blessed promises delivered by both the LORD'S servants, all which had a gracious eye to the prosperity of Zion, in the latter day dispensation; and in the person and salvation of the LORD JESUS, hath been in part fulfilled, and is perhaps now, and will be more and more fulfilling on the earth. *The mountain of the LORD'S house*, means Zion; or perhaps more immediately CHRIST himself, on whom Zion is founded. JESUS is the foundation-stone JEHOVAH hath laid in Zion, Isaiah 28:16,

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compared with 1 Peter 2:6-8. This church of JESUS, and in JESUS, is *to be established*; meaning its durableness and permanency. *For the gates of hell shall never prevail against it*, Matthew 16:18. Reader! do not forget, that every true believer in JESUS, is this very day, in himself, a living testimony to this blessed truth. So that what was predicted, so many years before CHRIST came in substance of our flesh; and what hath remained for near *two thousand years* since CHRIST finished the establishment of his church, and returned to glory, becomes a precious evidence to comfort the people of GOD now. But what I particularly beg the Reader to keep an eye upon, and to rejoice in the confirmation of, is that part of the promise, that *all nations shall flow unto it*. Sweet thought! JESUS *is the desire of all nations*; because poor awakened sinners in all nations, find their want of him. Hence here is a promise, folded up in this blessed prophecy, that all nations, the Gentile as well as the Jew, shall flow unto CHRIST, *They shall come that are ready to perish*, when the great trumpet is blown. And their certainty of coming is secured; for it was one of the covenant promises of GOD the FATHER to GOD the SON; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psalm 110:3. But we must not stop here, in our view of these delightful verses. The *many* that resolve to go up to the house of the LORD, are said to unite others to come with them. Yes! the soul truly awakened to the knowledge and enjoyment of JESUS, will never love to eat his morsel alone. He knows that there is enough in JESUS for all; and therefore he longs for all to partake. He doth not say, Do you go, for I have found him gracious; but, *Let us go together*. Reader, do mark with me, the blessedness of a gospel walk, and life, and conversation. Never did Zion languish more than now, for the

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want of these quickening of each other to her societies. Oh! that there was more zeal for the interests of CHRIST'S church, among CHRIST'S people. And, Reader, take one short observation more, upon these verses, and observe with me, with what confidence it is spoken, that the LORD *will teach of his ways, and give grace to walk in his paths*. Surely by attending upon ordinances, these things are found. The LORD *will be found of them that seek him*, and by waiting upon the LORD *the people shall renew their strength*, Isaiah 40:31. Psalm 27:7. And let not the Reader think I trespass, if I add, the blessings of the gospel church, will be, as here stated: war and bloodshed would cease, if the spirit of the gospel were truly followed. Alas! what cause of sorrow is it, that so many nations and individuals, take the name of CHRIST, which are foes to the spirit of CHRIST. Oh that they would lay it to heart: *if any man have not the spirit of CHRIST*, call himself what he may, *he is none of his*, Romans 8:9.

### **ISAIAH 2:5-9**

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD. (6) Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. (7) Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither *is there any* end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither *is there any* end of their chariots: (8) Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: (9) And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.

Here the prophet takes occasion to call upon the Jewish church, from the zeal of the Gentile: and since the heathen is so forward to go up to the house of the LORD, how much

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more ought the LORD'S own people to be alive to this service? Reader! it were devoutly to be prayed for, that both Jew and Gentile were mutually striving for the faith of the gospel. But alas! holy have *both sinned, and come short of GOD'S glory!* If GOD'S ancient people, the Jews, have forsaken the LORD, what shall we say more in favor of the Gentile church? But the pursuits of silver and gold, *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;* these sweep away the time, the heart, and affections, and leave men satisfied with *the form*, while destitute *of the power of godliness.*

### **ISAIAH 2:10-21**

Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. (11) The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. (12) For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low: (13) And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, *that are* high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, (14) And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills *that are* lifted up, (15) And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, (16) And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. (17) And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. (18) And the idols he shall utterly abolish. (19) And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (20) In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one* for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; (21) To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

This Portion of the chapter opens in a very solemn manner. Whether the prophet means the visitations of GOD in the day of calamity of this world; or refers to the day of judgment for another; in both cases it is solemn. See Revelation 6:12-17. But is there not a spiritual sense of the passage, alluding to the day, when GOD by his HOLY SPIRIT, awakens conviction in the heart? Never surely doth the soul lie lower in the dust before GOD, than when a sense of sin, and the fear of the wrath to come, first breaks in from the SPIRIT'S awakening in the soul. Then pleasant pictures and high mountains, both the cedars of Lebanon, and the oaks of Basilan, are as nothing: the sinner wants to flee if possible from himself; and nothing can comfort the soul under the apprehension of GOD'S wrath against sin, until CHRIST is revealed in all the suitableness of the Saviour, and *formed in the heart the hope of glory*.

**ISAIAH 2:22**

Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

What a beautiful and striking close is made in this verse to all that went before. If man be nothing, yea worse than nothing, so full of terror, and so exposed to fear, who would put any confidence in him? His life is but a vapour: his breath is in his nostrils. Cease, cease from him! Look unto JESUS.

**REFLECTIONS**

READER! look at the beauty and loveliness of the gospel church! Behold how, ages before it was established, the prophet set it forth. And see now how exactly the church of JESUS comes up to his description. In its great and almighty

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Author and Founder, behold how it is, and hath been established. And though in the present day, Zion seemeth, and doth indeed languish: yet CHRIST hath never been, nor ever will be, without a seed serving him, and a church where his name is blessed.

Ought not we to go up to this mountain of the LORD'S house? Should not everyone be truly anxious to say with the church of old: *Our feet shall stand in thy gate, O Jerusalem?* Precious LORD JESUS! Do thou incline our souls to seek thee, our hearts to love thee, and our best affections to be fixed upon thee. And will thou not, O LORD, *teach us of thy ways, and cause us to walk in thy paths?* Reader! let us not close this sweet chapter, before we have first learned from it, under divine teaching, rightly to value man's nothingness, and the LORD'S excellency. Precious JESUS! I would lie low in the dust before thee: convinced that I am nothing, and that I can merit nothing, mine eyes shall be up unto thee, LORD, for all I need, and for all I can require, for grace in this life, and glory in that which is to come. LORD, I would cease from man: I would cease from self: I would cease from everything in which might be supposed confidence. I pray thee, dear LORD, to give me confidence in thee. Oh for grace to sing that song, and feel its saving power on my heart: *The LORD is my strength and my song, and thou art become my salvation!*

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTENTS

*The subject appears to be continued through this chapter, which engaged the prophet's attention in the former. The*

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*people are reprov'd their transgressions, and the consequent displeasure of the LORD spoken of.*

**ISAIAH 3:1**

For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,

The prophet opens this chapter by pointing to the consequence of sin. The bread and the water, the common supplies of life, shall be taken from the people: and what tends to aggravate this distress is that the hand of the LORD is seen in it: and they shall know that it is the LORD'S punishment. There is somewhat truly awful in this! Afflictions of every kind to our poor fallen nature, come heavy; but if they come with a special commission from the LORD, that the LORD hath sent them; they have a tenfold bitterness in them. I beg the Reader to mark with me, the special feeling, in this verse. The first name of the LORD is in small letters, signifying the *ADONAI*, one of the well-known names of CHRIST, in his office-characters, as Mediator; the *stay* and *support* of his redeemed. The *second* name of the LORD is in capital letters, the well-known incommunicable name of JEHOVAH. Blessed JESUS! how delightful is the consideration, under all the transgressions of thy people, that the bread of life, and the water of life are not taken away. Reader, I charge it upon your heart and my own, ever to keep in remembrance, that CHRIST, our FATHER'S first and best gift, is never taken away. JESUS is given to the church, to have and to hold forever. *Thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift.*

**ISAIAH 3:2-9**

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The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, (3) The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. (4) And I will give children *to be* their princes, and babes shall rule over them. (5) And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. (6) When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, *saying*, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and *let* this ruin *be* under thy hand: (7) In that day shall he swear, *saying*, I will not be an healer; for in my house *is* neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people. (8) For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings *are* against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. (9) The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide *it* not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

The prophet plainly shows by these verses, that the sin is universal. All ranks and all orders of the people are involved in the same sin, and consequently the same punishment. It is a melancholy state of the church, in all ages, when sin like a disease, runs through all: and it may be said, *Like priest like people*. In such a state, men will look to anything, yea to nothing, for countenance; and having forsaken the Rock of ages, would take confidence in the reeds of Egypt. Blessed JESUS! give me to see, in the darkest hour, that thou alone canst be a defense for thy people.

### **ISAIAH 3:10-11**

Say ye to the righteous, that *it shall be well with him*: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. (11) Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be ill with him*: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

How sweet and precious doth the former of these verses come in, after the preceding relation! And how bitter and

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alarming the latter! Reader, depend upon it, such will be the striking distinction in that day which shall come, and which shall burn as an oven, Malachi 4:1, 2. Both in public and private visitations, the people of GOD are secure. It must be well with the justified soul in CHRIST. So Paul hath said under the HOLY GHOST, and so the LORD'S people know. Romans 8:33, 34. Malachi 3:17, 18.

### **ISAIAH 3:12-15**

*As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. (13) The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. (14) The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. (15) What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.*

Reader! do not fail to observe, both indeed in this place, and through the word of GOD at large, that amidst all the backslidings of Israel, the LORD still keeps up the remembrance of their relationship. The name is not lost; *As for MY people*, saith the LORD. And how doth the LORD expostulate with their enemies that cause them to stray: *what mean ye, that ye beat my people?* Precious LORD JESUS! and dost thou not plead with all our enemies in this way? And wilt thou not punish and confound them for the deliverance of thy people? That is a sweet scripture to this amount. Proverbs 22:23.

### **ISAIAH 3:16-24**

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing *as* they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: (17) Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. (18) In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet*, and *their*

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cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon, (19) The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, (20) The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, (21) The rings, and nose jewels, (22) The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, (23) The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. (24) And it shall come to pass, *that* instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; *and* burning instead of beauty.

What a sad portrait is here drawn by the prophet, of the daughters of Zion. Alas! how unsuitable to Zion's daughters, who are supposed to be women professing godliness. Reader! is not the present day very similar to what is here said, of wantonness of conduct, and looseness of dress, among our women? *Tell it not in Gath!* Indeed, indeed, it is a sad reproach. How ought parents, in religious families, to restrain everything in their children, which hath a tendency to inflame the passions, and corrupt the heart. But let me throw a veil over the subject. I would recommend the apostle's sweet advice on this point to our females, 1 Peter 3:1-4.

### **ISAIAH 3:25-26**

Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. (26)  
And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she *being* desolate shall sit upon the ground.

The chapter ends, as it began, and as one might reasonably suppose would be the close; if sin reigns, sorrow must follow: for *the wages of sin is death*. Blessed be GOD, who hath taken occasion, from the misery of our nature, to magnify the riches of his grace, and where *sin hath abounded that grace should much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, so*

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*might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Romans 5:20, 21.*

## REFLECTIONS

READER, while these humbling views of Israel's transgressions are before us, let us bring home the affecting subject to our own hearts, and we shall find cause to cry out with the apostle: *Are we better than they? No! in no wise; for the scripture hath concluded all under sin.* We all partake in one common fallen nature, which in no instance, either in Jew or Gentile is free from sin. Reader, it is profitable at the reading of every chapter, and upon every renewed view of the subject, to have this in remembrance. May GOD the HOLY GHOST, give us both to see and to know, and to have grace to make such improving reflections upon all we read concerning sin, that our own hearts may be affected in the consciousness of our own transgressions, while reading of the transgressions of others, and in the general punishment, when the LORD of Hosts doth at any time take away *the stay and the staff*; our bread and our water; not of the necessaries of life only, in the bread that perisheth in using, but of the spiritual life, without which, we perish forever: may we *hear the rod; and who hath appointed it!* Blessed LORD! let all thy chastisements be sanctified, and lead our hearts to thee, and not from thee; for thou art the LORD our GOD, amidst all our rebellions and all our backslidings.

And, LORD, in all thy dispensations, such as this chapter sets forth to thine Israel, still manifest thyself to us, as thou didst to them, that thou art the GOD of Israel, and hatest putting away. And though the departure from our GOD is general, in

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which *the mighty man* and *the man of war*, *the child*, and *the ancient*, are all alike involved in the transgression; and though *the brother of the house of our Father after nature*, cannot heal, neither clothe, nor be our ruler; yet, precious JESUS, thou art a *brother born for adversity*: therefore be *thou, our ruler*, and let all our ruin be brought under thy hand, and we shall be saved.

And will the LORD give grace to *the daughters of Zion* of the present hour, that while reading, in the conduct of those of *the ancient house of Israel*, the immodest conduct which became so offensive in the eyes of the LORD, they may have grace to make use of an apparel, suited to the humble followers of the blessed JESUS. LORD! give everyone among those, who name the name of JESUS, to study a modesty of dress suited to the christian profession, and may they be adorned as *the King's daughter, all glorious within*. Oh LORD! do thou clothe our souls with thy robe of righteousness, and we shall be then but little concerned how our sinful bodies are adorned: but *having, food and raiment, be content*. LORD, do thou enable us all *to put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind: And do thou put on us the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness*.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONTENTS

*This is a most blessed, though short chapter; containing in its bosom some precious views, and precious promises concerning JESUS, and the blessedness of his salvation,*

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*amidst the sins, and sorrows; and distresses, which arise out of the fallen state of our nature.*

**ISAIAH 4:1**

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

The day here spoken of, is, no doubt, meant to refer to the gospel day. And the beauty of what is here said, will be very striking, if we spiritually consider it. By the law of Moses, if a man married more wives than one, he was obliged to keep the first in food and raiment, Exodus 21:10. But the indulgence of corrupt passions always did, and always will bring with it punishment. What our blessed LORD said, concerning the putting away of a wife, may be equally applied to the taking more than one. It is for the hardness of men's hearts, such things are produced, Matthew 19:7, 8. But, dropping the consideration of the subject, as referring to natural causes, we shall have a lovely view of this verse, if we read it in a spiritual sense. JESUS is the husband of his church, which he calls his fair one, his spouse, his beloved! And, as the church at large is made up of innumerable souls, what is here spoken of *seven* women, means a certain number, put for an indefinite number, to intimate many. Now in that day of gospel grace, when JESUS and his great salvation are revealed to the soul, every poor awakened sinner that hears and knows *the joyful sound*, shall come to lay hold of JESUS, praying to be called by his name. The eating their own bread, and wearing their own apparel, is in allusion to the law of Moses, before referred to. And precious souls, in their first coming to CHRIST, are all tinged with an idea of their doing somewhat to recommend them. Hence the first question, of

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the jailor at Philippi: *what must I do to be saved?* Acts 16:30. Longer acquaintance with themselves, and with the LORD JESUS, humbles the soul with such confidences. It is blessed to perceive JESUS in this sweet scripture. I need not add how effectually and fully the reproaches of sinners are taken off, when brought into a state of oneness and union with CHRIST; when married to him, and he to them. Oh! the blessedness of calling him *the LORD our righteousness*; and living under him as the husband, *the Ishi* of his people, clothed with his justifying garment of complete salvation. See Jeremiah 23:6. Hosea 2:16-20. Jeremiah 3:14. Isaiah 54:5, &c.

#### **ISAIAH 4:2**

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

The HOLY GHOST is still harping upon that blessed string, the gospel day, and comforting the church with the view of it. JESUS is *the righteous branch*, which JEHOVAH declared he would raise up in Zion. And as JESUS shall be glorious in every eye of his people, so his people which are the fruits and effects of his great salvation, shall be lovely in him, and to him also. See those scriptures, Zechariah 3:8. 6:12, 13. Isaiah 11:1. Jeremiah 23:5, 6, and 33:15, 16. John 15:5.

#### **ISAIAH 4:3**

And it shall come to pass, *that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *even* every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

How truly blessed and gracious is it, to see the provision the LORD hath made for the recovery of sinners. Here the HOLY GHOST speaks not only of the blessings of redemption to the

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church *at large*, but to every individual redeemed soul in *particular*. He that is left, and *every* one that is written. Yes, JESUS saith, *All that the FATHER hath given me, shall come to me*, John 6:37. And it was for this express purpose JESUS said, that *the FATHER gave him power over all flesh; that he should give eternal life to as many as the FATHER had given him*, John 17:2. Reader, are you questioning whether you are among the written in the LAMB'S book of life? Revelation 13:8. Answer the inquiry by the tokens here given. A new and spiritual life is given to them in Jerusalem, the holy city, the church of the LORD JESUS. They are *called* with an holy calling, *not according to their works, but according to his own purpose, and grace given in CHRIST JESUS, before the world began*, 2 Timothy 1:9. And *as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed*, Acts 13:48. Now then see by these infallible testimonies, whether *your calling and election is sure*, For *as many as are led by the spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD*: And hence, in being *saved* and *called* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but his grace; and *in believing, having life in his name*: surely these become unquestionable evidences, that God hath chosen believers *in him before the foundation of the world, and that they should be holy and without blame before him in love*, 2 Peter 1:10. Romans 8:14. Ephesians 1:4.

#### **ISAIAH 4:4**

When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

Here we have the blessed process of grace, by which the LORD will accomplish the divine purposes of his love, in redeeming the souls of his people. The daughters of Zion are

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here spoken of, as a representation of the whole church of JESUS. So the church is named, Psalm 45:10, 11. This church is considered in her pollutions, such as she was when CHRIST came to redeem her, Ezekiel 16:3-6. But when, in gospel days, JESUS is come, and the fountain in his blood is opened *to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, for sin, and for uncleanness, then the filth of Zion shall be washed away, Zechariah 13:1. 1 John 1:1-7. But how is this to be done? By *the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning; meaning*, that GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his seven-fold gifts, and by his gracious work on the heart, will glorify JESUS, in taking of the things of CHRIST, and showing their suitableness to the poor sinner. Is the sinner's heart hardened? The HOLY GHOST will be to him *a spirit of judgment*; convincing, converting, enlightening, teaching him to feel his want of JESUS, and leading him to JESUS. Are his affections cold, and in himself not disposed to seek after salvation? The HOLY GHOST will be to him a spirit of burning; to warm, yea, fire his very soul, in longings for CHRIST, that his sins may be done away, and both his filth and his blood he purged, and purified from all uncleanness. Oh! the wonderful process of grace, when GOD the HOLY GHOST layeth *judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*, Isaiah 28:17.

### **ISAIAH 4:5-6**

And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be* a defence. (6) And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

How very lovely the chapter ends, as well as it began. The church of CHRIST, which is married to CHRIST, and brought to call JESUS her husband, when washed from all her uncleanness, made comely from his comeliness, which he hath put upon her; and become holy in his holiness, shall now be protected from all dangers arising from without, and made blessed in all glory and Comfort within. JESUS himself will dwell in her, and be both her glory and defense; both her sun and shield. And this, not only in Zion at large, the whole church, which is CHRIST'S body, but every individual, which forms one to constitute and make up the whole. Upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, every single follower of the LORD shall be thus blessed, protected, and made both happy and glorious in JESUS. And the LORD makes use of his ancient plan of manifesting himself, as he did to Israel, in the wilderness. As *the pillar of cloud*, and *the pillar of fire*, in the camp of Israel, indicated the LORD'S presence with his people, so the LORD here alludes to those symbols, that he will be with them now. Reader, blessed and glorious as those tokens, of the LORD'S being in the midst of Israel, were in the church in the wilderness; fancy not that their advantages were equal to ours. The word of GOD'S grace, and the covenant-engagements of JEHOVAH, render all outward signs unnecessary. That single promise of our JESUS, confirmed to the heart, as it is, by the HOLY GHOST, sums up every other in one. *Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world*, Matthew 28:20. Oh! thou dear EMMANUEL! GOD with us! GOD in our nature! Thy presence, and the union, and oneness of thy people with thee, makes everything blessed! Thou art indeed all we need: *a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land!* Isaiah 32:2.

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## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! how can I read the first verse of this chapter, without instantly having my mind directed unto thee, as the husband of thy church and people? Thou hast indeed taken away our reproach, in having called us by thy name, and granted us grace to call him our LORD. But, dearest LORD! I cannot say as the Jewish worshipper, I will eat my own bread, and wear my own apparel. No, thou rich and bountiful bridegroom; I am in poverty and wretchedness too deep to do that. Thou art to me both the bread of life, and the garment of salvation; and therefore, LORD, both feed me and clothe me, and be to me all I need; for *thou art good and gracious to all that call upon thee*. And surely, LORD, in this day of gospel-grace, thou, blessed BRANCH, wilt be most beautiful and glorious in every eye, both of thy FATHER and thy people; and all that are engrafted in thee, and upon thee, will bring forth fruit, that shall be excellent and comely.

And oh! ye saints of my GOD! hail every one of you who are the written among the living in Jerusalem. Ye shall be called holy, in the holiness of JESUS. And he that hath provided, and opened a fountain for all cleansing, will wash away all filth from the daughters of Zion. Yea, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, will GOD the HOLY GHOST accomplish it, and manifest thereby, that it is *not by might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the LORD*.

LORD, do as thou hast said: Create upon families, and houses, and churches, and people of thy redeemed, both glory and defense. Yea, blessed JESUS! be thou thyself our glory and our defense, the HOLY ONE of Israel in the midst of us. For then shall we be in grace here, and glory hereafter, *the redeemed of the LORD, who dwell safely!*

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## CHAPTER 5

### CONTENTS

*Under the beautiful similitude of a vine, and vineyard, the LORD speaketh of his church. By reproof, and by entreaty, the LORD reasoneth with Israel on the sad subject of the church's disobedience, and setteth forth the LORD'S patience and long-suffering.*

#### **ISAIAH 5:1**

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

Is not this GOD the FATHER, speaking to GOD the SON, as Mediator and Head of the church, upon the subject of his people? Surely it is the FATHER which hath given to his dear SON the church, and the church to his SON; and therefore it is here very properly called *his* vineyard. Do not fail, my soul, to remark, in the opening of this chapter, how the FATHER speaks *of* JESUS, and *to* JESUS. He is the only beloved of the FATHER, full of grace and truth. My soul, will it not prove, what of things thou must wish to have fully proved, that one heart and one soul, in this sense, distinguish GOD'S affection and thine; if GOD'S beloved be thy beloved, and GOD'S dear SON be thy dear Saviour?

#### **ISAIAH 5:2**

And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

Observe how GOD speaks of the church, and the blessedness of it. *First* its situation, in a very fruitful hill: *secondly*, its

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security from enemies of every kind, it is walled around: *thirdly*, the soil in which it was placed, all the stones being gathered out of it: and *lastly*, the choiceness of the vine. Reader, think of the grace, love, mercy, and favor of all the persons of the GODHEAD, towards our poor ruined nature, which are here set forth, under these several images! The *wine-press* and *the tower* built in it, are so many farther proofs of divine love; intimating the ordinances and institutions the LORD hath set up from age to age in his church. Oh! think what an awful state that soul, that church is in; which instead of bringing forth the sweet fruits of the SPIRIT, bringeth forth only the corruptions of unrenewed nature, which *like the wild gourd*, in the prophet's pottage, *produceth death*, 2 Kings 4:39, 40.

### **ISAIAH 5:3-4**

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. (4) What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

May we not suppose, that somewhat like this appeal, will be among the judgments at the last day? And then it will be found, that the soul that is Christless now, will be speechless then.

### **ISAIAH 5:5-7**

And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: (6) And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. (7) For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant

plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Was not this awful judgment actually inflicted, when Israel became unchurched at the siege of Jerusalem? That it is more than a parable, this passage fully explains. And, therefore, there is no period in the history of Israel like that, which took place, agreeably to our LORD'S own prediction, by the army of Titus Vespasian, Luke 21:5-11. How pathetically did the prophet mourn over the event of the Babylonish captivity, under the same similitude, Psalm 80:8-16. And, Reader, mark the concluding verses of the same Psalm and take notice how the church calls upon the LORD, to look to JESUS for the recovery of his church and people. Surely there is much gospel in that Psalm.

### **ISAIAH 5:8**

Woe unto them that join house to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

Here is a solemn woe denounced against carnal pursuits; and yet who feels restrained by it? My soul, you need not look abroad into the world, for examples of the unprofitableness of sin: in thyself thou mayest but too often find the sad wild grapes, which grow upon this thorn hedge of a worldly planting. Alas! what disappointment and bitterness spring out every desire that is not formed in JESUS, and sanctified by him.

### **ISAIAH 5:9-10**

In mine ears *said* the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, *even* great and fair, without inhabitant. (10) Yea, ten

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acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

The prophet speaks with confidence, concerning the issue of worldly minded men in their pursuits, because the LORD said it, and so plain, as when a man whispers in the ear of another. It is a general intimation that nothing of the kind shall prosper. Their houses shall be uninhabited, and their product nothing; yea, in measure shall they fail. Ten acres of vineyard, which; when fruitful, might be supposed to yield many hogsheads of wine, shall give out but one *bath*, which makes about *eight gallons*; and in their seeds an *omen*, which is in quantity *a bushel*, shall yield but an *ephah*, that is the tenth part of a gallon. Such hath ever been, and will be more or less, the disappointments of the carnal.

### **ISAIAH 5:11-15**

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine inflame them! (12) And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands. (13) Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because *they have* no knowledge: and their honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. (14) Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. (15) And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:

How striking are these expressions! wine and dancing, revelling and music, rioting and sensuality, bring on their own punishments. Hell and the grave yawn to receive those who kill themselves by intemperance. Both poor and rich, in their different means of gratification, fall under the same sins, and

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are alike cut off in their transgression. Here is an awful picture of a fallen state. Alas! every age produceth but the same. See a similar representation, Amos, 6:1-7.

### **ISAIAH 5:16-17**

But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. (17) Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

Here is a sweet break to the sad account, which, like some herbage to the traveler over a desert, comes in to our relief in these verses. JESUS will be exalted in the hearts of his redeemed, in the worst of times. And the fold of his flock shall be satisfied with his goodness. Reader, this may be everyday seen in the midst of the world's pursuit. The church of CHRIST is fed, supported, and refreshed; let sinners, among the carnal, prosecute their evil courses as they please. While the dinner parties; and the midnight revellings of the world, are going on; the people of GOD have their prayer-meetings, and their public ordinances also. Malachi 3:16.

### **ISAIAH 5:18-25**

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: (19) That say, Let him make speed, *and* hasten his work, that we may see *it*: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know *it*! (20) Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (21) Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (22) Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: (23) Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! (24) Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, *so* their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall

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go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. (25) Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses *were* torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

Here are accounts of still increasing wickedness, and woes of still increasing misery. Reader, in the present CHRIST despising generation, doth not the prophet's representation suit, as though written for the very purpose? Is there not one and the same family feature? Alas how fallen is our nature: how general, yea, universal, the taint of evil? Is it to be wondered at, that sorrows abound, where sin so much abounds? Let the Reader, if by grace happily preserved from such daring impiety, not overlook, nor forget, to what cause to ascribe it. 1 Corinthians 4:7.

### **ISAIAH 5:26-30**

And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly: (27) None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: (28) Whose arrows *are* sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind: (29) Their roaring *shall be* like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry *it* away safe, and none shall deliver *it*. (30) And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if *one* look unto the land, behold darkness *and* sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

Methinks I would read these verses with a twofold aspect. GOD had said by the prophet, in a preceding chapter; *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him;* while to the

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wicked, *it shall be ill with him*, chap. 3:10, 11. And may we not make application of what is here said, in both senses? The LORD will lift up an ensign for his people, in the same moment that he will lift up an ensign for destruction to his enemies. And when JESUS, the glorious ensign of his people's redemption comes, it is both for vengeance and for salvation. See chap. 11:10. and chap. 63:4.

## REFLECTIONS

READER, let us mark from the perusal of this chapter, the two great leading points contained in it; the grace, and mercy, and loving-kindness of the LORD; and the fallen, corrupt, and wretched state of man. Both views are here presented to us: and both open to very solemn and improving subjects.

How exactly answering to the love of GOD to his people, is the description the prophet hath given of the church, under the similitude of a vine. Calling, his people out of Egypt, forming them into a church, and planting them in Canaan; casting out the nations before them, and watering them continually with his blessing: these things are strongly shadowed forth under the images of planting, gathering out the stones, making a fence, and causing the clouds, and the rain, and the sun, to shed their influences.—Reader, look at JESUS, *that plant of renown!* Behold in the wonders of redemption, what GOD hath wrought. And then take a view of what hath followed in all generations of the church: when the LORD looked that *his vineyard should bring forth grapes, wherefore brought it forth wild grapes.*

Reader, it will be your wisdom and mine, while contemplating in this chapter the riches of grace, in the LORD'S forbearance and long suffering to his people, to look into our own history, and behold what correspondence we can find there, with what is here said of GOD'S ancient people. Oh for grace to

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make such improvements from the whole, as to see that all our mercies are in JESUS. It is for him, and his righteousness, his atoning blood and salvation, that the world continues. But for his gracious interposition, the whole earth would have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. LORD! visit thy church, thy vineyard, thy people. Oh take unto thee, LORD JESUS, thy great name, and as thou hast wrought out salvation *for us*, so work salvation *in us*. Behold the purchase of thy blood, and for thine own sake turn to thy people a pure language, that they may all call upon thee with one consent. *Turn us again, O LORD GOD of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

## CHAPTER 6

### CONTENTS

*The prophet in this chapter is soaring very high in visions and revelations of the LORD. Here is much of JEHOVAH'S grace, in the glories of the Redeemer's person and kingdom, in this Chapter. The prophet gives the date of it also.*

#### **ISAIAH 6:1**

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Wherefore the prophet was so particular as to put down the precise time, when the LORD favoured him with this glorious vision, which he relates in this chapter, is not said; but from the strong impressions it made upon his mind, it was indeed impossible, that he himself should ever forget it. Jacob at Bethel, and Moses at Horeb, where the visions of GOD began with them, could neither of them ever lose the remembrance

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of the time or place to all eternity. Reader, you and I have our spots, our Bethels of remembrance also, I hope. They are sweet things in the believer's recollection. The year that Uzziah died, was memorable, 2 Chronicles 26:21-23. But what we are most highly interested to observe, in the relation of this vision of the prophet, is the intention of it, and for what purpose the account of it is handed down in all ages to the church. This is the grand point for us to attend to, that what Isaiah hath here recorded, under the SPIRIT of the LORD, we may take home to ourselves, and by the lively exercises of faith, behold our interest in it. May GOD the HOLY GHOST thus unfold its glories to our hearts. He tells us, that in this vision, he saw the LORD, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Now, Reader, I pray you to turn to that blessed chapter of John the Evangelist, where the HOLY GHOST hath decidedly explained the relation of the prophet, and made application of it to the person and glories of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the Mediator and Head of his people; *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him*, John 12:41. Hence the LORD, whom the prophet saw, was the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in his mediatorial glory. And this serves at once to unfold, and explain to us a thousand things of the highest moment to our joy and comfort, to have right apprehensions concerning, for it throws a light upon all those other scriptures, where the visible appearance of the LORD is spoken of, and which from other scriptures compared with them, we otherwise could not explain. As for example, it is said, Exodus 33:11, *that the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend*. So again, Exodus 24:9, 10, *Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, went up into the mount: and they saw the GOD of*

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*Israel!* Yet in all the parts of scripture, we find one uniform account given, of the impossibility of seeing JEHOVAH's face, and live, Exodus 33:20. 1 Timothy 6:16. How are these scriptures to be reconciled? The Evangelist John hath done it in a single verse: *No man hath seen GOD at any time: the only begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him,* John 1:18. Hence nothing can be more plain, than that all the manifestations GOD hath been graciously pleased to make of himself in all ages of the church, hath been in the person of his dear SON, as the GOD-MAN Mediator, both before his incarnation and after; as the SON of GOD was, (as he himself saith) *set up from everlasting* in this glorious character, as the Head of his Church, so his glory in that character, was frequently manifested to the Church, and to special servants in the church. What a blessed thought to the Church, and to the people. *The LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,* which Isaiah saw, was JESUS. Hence, Reader, what unanswerable testimonies are found in this one scripture, to the GODHEAD of your LORD. Surely it never can be questioned whether he be possessed of all divine attributes, that was thus seen upon a throne in heaven. Surely none, if they thought aright, would doubt the sovereignty and eternity of his nature and essence, who thus sat on a throne, as if to intimate both his power, and glory, and government, and dominion. And how blessedly are those sweet words of our LORD JESUS explained by this very scripture: *what and if ye shall see the SON of man ascend up where he was before?* John 6:62. So again: *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the SON of man which is in heaven,* John 3:13. Blessed JESUS, we thank and adore thee for these gracious manifestations of thyself. Oh let

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the train of thy graces fill our souls, as the train of thy glory filled the temple, Revelation 5:6. 3:21.

### **ISAIAH 6:2-4**

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

From the light thrown upon this blessed vision, in the other parts of scripture, as before shown, and all evidently, and plainly directed to prove that it is the person of CHRIST, who manifested himself to the prophet; we shall now be the better able to enter into an apprehension of all that follows; that is, as far at least as our capacities are enabled to go in the subject; and I hope that both writer and reader, will find cause to adore JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of person, in and through the only medium by which we can approach to adore him, even this glorious GOD-MAN Mediator, for such gracious and saving discoveries of himself. The *seraphim*, which are here said to have stood above, Paul calls the cherubim of glory: consequently they are not angels, Hebrews 9:15. A reference to other scriptures, will, I think, prove that they cannot mean angels. The first account we have of a subject like this in Isaiah's vision is Genesis 3:24, where cherubim and a flaming sword, are said to have been placed at the east of the garden of Eden. In Leviticus 1 Isaiah 6:2, JEHOVAH saith, I will appear in the cloud on the mercy-seat. In the prophecy of Ezekiel, chap. 1 the vision he saw of the glory of the LORD, was under the similitude *of four living creatures*. And as an explanation of this astonishing vision, John the beloved apostle, in the view of heaven opened, which he was favoured with, saw four beasts *in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne*, Revelation 4:6. Now angels are nowhere said in scripture to be in the midst of the throne. What those seraphim in Isaiah's vision are, I do not

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presume to say: but I humbly conceive, from the frequent mention made in scripture of them, and especially as having the face of a man joined in the representation, and this from the very opening of the word of GOD, at the garden of Eden, to the close of it in the Revelation; that it is intended to set forth the divine glory: and at the same time to show that the only access to JEHOVAH for fallen man, is in and through the person, glory and grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The word itself, *Seraphim*, which is plural, means *Burners*. And this will not be found unsuitable to the idea, that they represent the glory of the LORD, *in* and through a Mediator; for the HOLY GHOST hath by the apostle, declared, that *our* GOD *is* a *consuming fire*, Hebrews 12:29. And the hymn sung, which Isaiah heard, I humbly conceive, was not sung by the seraphim, but the heavenly host; similar to that song, which John heard, of redemption. They that sung it were neither the beasts nor the elders: for JESUS *took not upon him the nature of angels*. The song of redemption could only be sung by the redeemed from among men. See the words of the song itself, Revelation 5:9, 10. Respecting the *wings* of the seraphim, it is worthy remark, that nothing is said of their form. If upon the supposition that they themselves are designed as symbols of GOD in CHRIST, there will be no difficulty in the apprehension concerning those wings. The LORD is veiled to his people in covering; and swiftness to fly to their help and salvation; and yet, in the dispensations of his providence, his path is hidden: these may be easily understood as emblematically represented. Concerning the infinite holiness of JEHOVAH, which the hymn celebrated, every part of scripture concurs in the testimony. And in nothing more, than by the wonders of redemption. GOD never took a more decided method to impress his creatures with a due sense of the holiness of his nature, than by the death of CHRIST. In that one act, a greater display was made of the holiness of JEHOVAH, than if all creation had been offered up in sacrifice. It spake in the loudest voice, that rather than the LORD'S holiness shall be tarnished, the holy

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child JESUS shall die. The effect wrought in heaven, by *the voice of him that cried*, may serve to show the infinite awfulness of the divine presence, even in mercies. Reader, think what a solemn thing it must be to have to do with GOD, even when GOD is coming forth to bless. Oh the tremendous state of unregenerated sinners, when the LORD comes forth to judgment!

### **ISAIAH 6:5**

Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Here we see, even in GOD'S own servant, what trembling is induced in a near apprehension of GOD'S presence. Men may think lightly of sin, who never felt the galling chain of it; and some poor unawakened sinners, who have never ascertained what righteousness is, by the divine standard, may fancy much of themselves, and of their own righteousness; but when a soul hath once seen GOD in CHRIST by faith, and JESUS expiating sin by no less a sacrifice than himself, then all self-complacency and self-righteousness fall to the ground. Reader, I pray you look at *Isaiah* in this view of him, and hear his confession; then turn to observe *Job's* account of himself, Job 42:5, 6; and then hearken to the LORD'S testimony of him, Job 1:8; then look at *David*, the man after GOD'S own heart, Psalm 51:1-5; hearken also to *Paul's* relation, Romans 7:18, to the end: and if such views do not humble your soul to the very dust of the earth, depend upon it, it is because the HOLY GHOST hath never convinced you of *sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment* John 16:8-11.

### **ISAIAH 6:6-7**

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: (7) And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

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Reader! do remark with me, the infinite grace of the LORD! see how, amidst all the sanctities of heaven, the case of a poor sinner upon earth was taken notice of, and provided for. Depend upon it, the LORD is continually so doing for all his people. By one of the seraphim flying to Isaiah and performing this act of grace, I confess that I am but the more strengthened in my belief, that the seraphim were representations of JEHOVAH in CHRIST. It is the office of the HOLY GHOST to take of the things of JESUS, and show them unto the people. The altar can mean no other than JESUS. And it is the blood of JESUS which alone cleanseth from all sin. But while I thus express my views of the passage, I desire to do it with the lowest reverence. I only humbly inquire if it may not be so? Very, very far from speaking decidedly upon it. LORD, take away the iniquity both of my lips and pen, as thou didst in mercy, remove the prophet's guilt!

### **ISAIAH 6:8**

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

Here, if I mistake not, the subject takes a different turn. Isaiah in the former part, relates what he had seen and heard in a special relation to himself, and the Church, to whom he ministered: but here he relates what he was witness to, in relation to a higher mission than that of any among the sons of men. He begins it with an *also*, as if to disconnect what went before from what now follows: *Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Let the Reader consult those scriptures, where a consultation is as it were set forth between the persons of the GODHEAD, and then may the LORD enable him to determine for himself, (for far be it from me to determine for him) whether this be not a similar instance. Thus at creation, Genesis 1:26. So again at the destruction of Babel, Genesis 11:5-7. And why may we not suppose that this vision which the prophet Isaiah was favoured with, was a

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representation given to the Church, through him, of the conference at redemption? And if this be the case, it is JESUS, and not Isaiah who gives the answer, *here am I, send me*, see Psalm 40:7-10. Reader, pray consult those sweet scriptures, they will amply reward your attention; and may the almighty Author of them himself explain them! Isaiah 42:1-8; then 50:5-9.

### **ISAIAH 6:9-10**

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. (10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Reader, pray attend to these verses: for so important are they considered in the gospel-church, that no less than six times are they taken notice of, and referred to, in the after-writings of the scriptures. All the Evangelists quote them, and they are again spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, and by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans. See in proof, Matthew 13:14. Mark, 4:12. Luke 8:10. John 12:39. 40. Acts 28:26, 27. and Romans 11:8. And what awful confirmations have we of their truth, both in the word of GOD, and the experience of men in all ages! Even when JESUS himself; *who spake as never man spake*, was the preacher!

### **ISAIAH 6:11-12**

Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, (12) And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

Here the prophet, as if struck with what he had seen and heard, puts in a question, and a solemn one it is: "How long shall it be that the enemy of souls shall triumph, and fallen man remain under the ruins of his apostacy?" Hear what JESUS himself saith as mediator on this subject, Isaiah 49:4. And

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how have his servants in all ages complained, Jeremiah 20:9. John heard also the anxious question of the martyrs, much to the same amount, Revelation 6:9, 10.

### **ISAIAH 6:13**

But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it* shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance *is* in them, when they cast *their leaves*: so the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

Oh what a verse of blessedness, what a promise full of JESUS and his glory, is here! O for grace to behold, and to enjoy JESUS in it! The Jewish nation could not be destroyed, because CHRIST, after the flesh, was to spring out of the stock of Abraham: and on his account the nation should be saved. It is, saith the LORD, but as a tenth, but as a remnant; nevertheless, in that tenth, in that remnant, there is the holy seed. JESUS is the substance contained in all, as the teil tree, or the oak, in the acorn of which, from the first creation, all the subsequent oaks are folded up. Precious thought! In JESUS, from everlasting to everlasting, all his seed, his people, his children were deposited, and will be brought forth from age to age, until the last is completed. Reader, was there ever a more blessed close to a most blessed chapter? O for grace to bless the eternal SPIRIT for such a revelation! Now, LORD we see why it is, that sinners are preserved amidst all their undeservings. There is one that standeth by and looketh on, and while to our eye there is nothing to be seen, but, like the withered blighted branch of the vine, everything is unpromising, and dead, and lifeless; yet there is in it *a tenth*; yea, JESUS is in it; *Destroy it not*, he saith, *for a blessing is in it*. So, saith JEHOVAH, in his rich mercy and free grace, *so will I do for my servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all*, Isaiah 45:8.

## REFLECTIONS

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MY soul, close not the book: for the same LORD, the same *ADONAI*, yea thy JESUS is still upon his throne, as he was in the days of the prophet, and thou by grace, through faith, as he by open vision, mayest draw nigh and behold him; for he calls upon thee, and upon all poor, needy, perishing sinners, like thyself, to come hither and behold the glory which he had with his FATHER before all worlds. And do not forget that thy Redeemer's throne is a throne of grace as well as glory, on which JESUS sits to receive his poor, and to give out of his fulness. And, for thy great encouragement, do not forget also, that while thou art benefited by his grace, JESUS will be glorified in giving out to thy necessities; yea, GOD thy FATHER will be glorified in JESUS, whenever a poor sinner is made blessed and happy in JESUS. Come then, my soul, to his throne, and let GOD be glorified in his SON, and JESUS be glorified in thy salvation; in thy finding *grace to help in every time of need*.

And behold, my soul, the glorious *seraphim* above the throne, and round about the throne, and let their appearance comfort and encourage thee! Yea, let thy hymn go forth in the language of heaven: for surely never would the heavenly song have been handed down to earth, if it had not been meant that the redeemed upon earth, from among men, might learn and sing it. Cry aloud my soul, with holy joy, and say, *Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*.

But while thou art singing with a new-strung heart of redemption, the song of heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect; forget not, O my soul, that thou art still a man of unclean lips, and that thou dwellest in the midst of a

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people of unclean lips. Yes, precious JESUS, I would not only remember this, but through all eternity, never, never lose sight of it. Heaven itself will be more heaven to my soul in the view, that from the brink of hell it was JESUS brought me. Thy love, thy grace, thy pity, thy compassion, blessed LORD, is now the sole cause of my song of grace, and will be my everlasting song of glory to all eternity. Oh for the continual cleansing from off thine altar, LORD JESUS! let the live coal be daily, hourly administered to purge mine iniquity, and to make me clean in thy blood.

And O, my gracious GOD, grant me, grant thy Church, thy people favor, that it may not be said, to the ministry of thy holy word *Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.* Oh LORD! give to him that writes, and to him that reads, the hearing, the seeing, the understanding, the believing heart; that we may both enter into the full enjoyment of this blessed vision, *to the acknowledgment of the mystery of GOD, and of the FATHER, and of CHRIST; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* LORD! let it be found in our souls experience, and to our souls joy, that there is in us, as in the teil tree and the oak, that glorious substance, *the holy seed*, even JESUS, in all his merits, blood, and righteousness, for the salvation of our souls! May this be found our portion, in the love and mercy of GOD our FATHER; the grace, blood, and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST; and the fellowship and communion of the HOLY GHOST! Amen.

## CHAPTER 7

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*Part of this chapter is historical, and part prophetical. The distress of Jerusalem gives occasion to introduce a*

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*memorable prophecy concerning CHRIST. The chapter closes with threatenings.*

### **ISAIAH 7:1-2**

And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. (2) And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

If the Reader will consult the corresponding scripture, in the history of the kings of Judah and Israel, he will find that a considerable time had elapsed between the vision in the preceding chapter, and the opening of this. It is not said, what year of Ahaz's reign it was when those kings came up against Jerusalem. But it could not have been less than sixteen or seventeen years after *Uzziah* died: for the whole reign of Jotham is passed over, and that continued sixteen years. See 2 Kings 16, and 2 Chronicles 28. The character of Ahaz is so largely given in those scriptures, that I refer the Reader to what is said of him, and his impiety, in these places.

### **ISAIAH 7:3-9**

Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; (4) And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. (5) Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, (6) Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of Tabeal: (7) Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. (8) For the head of Syria *is*

Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. (9) And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

I beg the Reader to remark with me, the LORD'S tender mercy to his people. Surely in this history, as in a thousand others, the Apostle's words are fulfilled: *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*; Romans 5:20. We hear nothing of Ahaz sending to Isaiah or himself calling upon the LORD; but it is the LORD sending to Ahaz. Grace must first be given, or there will be no moving of the heart to the LORD. Reader! do remark the command of GOD to the prophet, to take his son with him, when he sent him to meet Ahaz. The LORD sent the prophet, notwithstanding Ahaz's undeserving, with a message of comfort; and perhaps the child's being with him, was intended as a sign; for his name seems to have been significant of it. *Shear-jashub* implies, *a remnant to return*. In the Old Testament Scripture, the LORD'S servants were remarkable for giving names to their children, according to the times, or special mercies received, by way of memorial. And no doubt, as oft as they looked upon them, it brought the pleasing circumstance afresh to recollection, and called forth new praise. It were to be wished, that New Testament saints would adopt the same plan: they would find the LORD'S blessing upon it. Faith, in honouring GOD, will find GOD honouring the exercise of it. If the Reader would wish to see instances, I refer him to those scriptures, Genesis 28:19. 1 Samuel 1:20. Psalm 70. in the title. It is not said what effect the prophet's message produced on the king's mind; but by what follows, we are led to admire and adore the LORD'S grace

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in bearing with sinners, who slight his renewed mercies. Reader! do not fail to remark from it, how, in all ages, sin and its hardening effects abound!

### **ISAIAH 7:10-15**

Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, (11) Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. (12) But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. (13) And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? (14) Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (15) Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

Reader! do not forget again, in the perusal of this most blessed scripture, to observe how the LORD takes occasion from man's unworthiness to magnify the riches of his grace. So, indeed, the LORD hath done from the beginning. The fall of Adam made way for the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Oh! what wonders are found in the subject of redeeming grace! How blessed is it to see GOD'S graciousness! The LORD had sent his servant, the prophet, on a message to Ahaz, to comfort him, notwithstanding his transgressions, in the prospect of his enemies coming up against his kingdom; and though it doth not appear, that it had any effect upon the mind of Ahaz; yet the LORD will speak to him again; and, if possible, in a yet more endearing manner, bids him ask a sign, which might become the proof of divine faithfulness. But the king is deaf to all entreaty. Alas! what creatures we are, when void of grace; how lost and insensible, even to the goodness and long-suffering of GOD! But though Ahaz slights the LORD, the LORD will not slight his people; the sign shall not be lost to the Church, for it is a most blessed one! And though

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the king despised it, there were, no doubt, many of GOD'S hidden ones to whom it proved, as the LORD designed it, a gracious support against the rapidly approaching afflictions of the church. Since Ahaz will not ask a sign, JEHOVAH will give the house of David a sign unasked: yea, the LORD himself will give both the sign, and the blessing veiled under the sign, from his own free, unmerited, unsought for goodness. Behold then the astonishing sign! *A virgin shall conceive*, without the use of the natural means of propagation; *a son shall be born*, without the intervention of a human father; and this wonderful child shall be called by a name significant of his nature, as GOD and man in one person, even IMMANUEL! And though so distinguished from all others, yet in the common circumstances of life he shall be as others are; *butter and honey shall he eat*; that is, he should be subject to all the natural wants, and infirmities of manhood, sin only excepted. Now all these marks and characters were signs indeed, which when fulfilled in one and the same person, left no question remaining as to whom the prophecy referred: and as they never were, nor ever could be fulfilled in any other but the LORD JESUS CHRIST; how blessed is it to trace the love of GOD, thus watching over the church, and thus opening to the church's view the coming of her LORD, at an age so distant and remote, as that in which the prophet Isaiah lived. I only detain the Reader, to remark with me, the grace of GOD in the sweet discoveries made of JESUS, from age to age: how, by gradual means, from the first dawn of revelation, down to the very moment of CHRIST'S coming, the LORD unfolded the wonders of his person and character, like the light of the morning, shining more and more unto a perfect day! To Adam it was said, that the Redeemer should be *of the seed of the*

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woman; to Abraham, of his house and family; to Jacob, the tribe of which he should spring; in the time of David, many of his offices, in his *prophetical, priestly, and kingly* character, were foretold; and now in the days of the prophets, other features were given: *Isaiah* in this place declares, that he should be born of a *virgin*; *Micah* is commissioned to tell the *place* of his birth; Daniel the time: and thus the LORD prepared the church, by little and little, to have clear conceptions both of his person and character, that every soul, might be on the look-out to hail and welcome. the coming Saviour!

### **ISAIAH 7:16**

For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

I have separated this verse from the whole passage going before from an idea, (though I presume not to say I am right) that it is not connected with what is said concerning CHRIST, but as a sign to Isaiah concerning himself, and the events then pending in the church. Some have translated the words, "For before *this* child," that is, his own child, *Shear-jashub*, whom the LORD had commanded the prophet to take with him to Ahaz, "before *this* child was grown up," the land thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." And in confirmation of this as an history, it is remarkable, that about three years after this preaching of Isaiah to Ahaz, as we read, 2 Kings 15:30, Hoshea killed Pekah the son of Remaliah, and, 2 Kings 16:9, the king of Assyria slew Rezin: It should seem, therefore, that it was to those events this verse referred, and not to CHRIST, with whom it should seem it had no connection.

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**ISAIAH 7:17-25**

The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; *even* the king of Assyria. (18) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall hiss for the fly that *is* in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria. (19) And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes. (20) In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, *namely*, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard. (21) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; (22) And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk *that* they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land. (23) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall *even* be for briers and thorns. (24) With arrows and with bows shall *men* come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns. (25) And *on* all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

After the LORD had given the unspeakably blessed promise, concerning the coming of CHRIST, that his people in those degenerate times might have comfort, he proceeds to his solemn threatenings: and most solemn and awful indeed they are. Ahaz, in his impiety, had been looking to Assyria for help; and to purchase it, had robbed the house of the LORD of the silver and gold, 2 Kings 16:8. The LORD therefore tells him, that this very king shall be the instrument of his ruin. And whereas he feared the weapons of men, the LORD will make even the *flies* of Egypt, and the *bee* of Assyria, those little feeble insects, the instruments of his misery. Reader! think what a state of ruin the sinner is brought to, whose very

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comforts turn to sorrows; and in the things wherein he chiefly proposed to himself happiness; the bitterness of all his afflictions abound! Oh! for grace to read these things with a spiritual improvement, that we may learn how dreadful it must be to have GOD for our foe, who can convert our very blessings into curses, and make that which was intended for good, be unto us an occasion of falling. The ruin by reason of sin, in the representation made in the close of the chapter, of *sharing the land* of inhabitants, that briars and thorns come up; the brood of cattle restrained, and all the tokens of want and misery take place; if read spiritually, may serve to show how the mind is exposed and laid open to every evil, where CHRIST is not. *Let Ephraim alone, he is joined to his idols;* if the LORD saith thus of church or people, there needs no more to the most finished misery. LORD! I would say for myself and Reader, *Oh! take not away thine HOLY SPIRIT from us!* Hosea 4:17. Psalm 51:11.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass over every lesser consideration, to attend to that blessed and most important prophecy, contained in this chapter, concerning the incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Though Ahaz refused to hear, and would not ask a sign of the LORD, let you and I receive this blessed sign, so graciously given to the church, and on our bended knees, read and adore GOD in CHRIST, for so rich and precious a scripture. And now that we have lived to see the whole fulfilled, yea more than fulfilled, in a thousand additional mercies, which the SON of GOD hath brought with him, and with which he hath beautified and comforted his church; oh!

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for grace to meditate in the same, night and day; and to read both the prophecy and the accomplishment of it, under the SPIRIT'S teaching, until all the blissful consequences included in it be incorporated in our hearts, and we discover and enjoy our interest in all that belongs to our JESUS and his great salvation!

Oh! thou dear LORD of thy church and people! Didst thou, the glorious Ancient of days, condescend to become the babe of Bethlehem? Didst thou, blessed JESUS, vouchsafe to be born for me, and rather than the poorest of thy family should perish, wouldest become man, and not abhor the virgin's womb? Oh! the preciousness of that name, that glorious gracious name IMMANUEL, which is more fragrant than ointment poured forth! Never may I lose sight of it; never may I go abroad, or remain at home, without bearing it about with me: it tells me, my JESUS is GOD! Surely then he *can* save me; surely he *will* save me! The work of redemption was not too great for him. Yea, it gives efficacy to all he did, and all he suffered. For now I see by it, that all he did, and all he suffered, were the acts of GOD, mighty to save. And sure I am, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him. GOD my Saviour will carry on, and complete, all that remains to be done concerning me; how then shall I perish, or come short of his glory? Oh! thou glorious IMMANUEL! blessed JESUS! give me to hail thee forever by this endeared name. And moreover, as my Redeemer is IMMANUEL, GOD *with us*; so is he IMMANUEL, GOD *in our nature*! Oh what so near or so dear as JESUS, who is *bone of my bone, and flesh of my, flesh*? LORD, I pass by all the affinities of life, in comparison of thee: for thou fittest all, and art nearer than all. And oh! how

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delightful the thought! that while my soul finds such rapture in the consciousness of the relation: JESUS will not deny his poor relation, but condescends to own him. Yea, he commands that I should be told, *he is not ashamed to call his people, brethren?* Precious, precious JESUS! And be thou adored, my LORD, for such a sign, in such a prophecy, given to the church, by thy servant, *Thanks be to God! for his unspeakable gift.*

## CHAPTER 8

### CONTENTS

*The prophet is in this chapter opening a subject, concerning the future troubles of Israel and Judah, by reason of their sins, and in a spirit of prophecy pointing out the destruction of both kingdoms, which should be accomplished. But the loving-kindness and grace of God mingles great promises of mercy, in the midst of judgment; and all in allusion to CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 8:1-4**

Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz. (2) And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. (3) And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz. (4) For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

The prophet is commanded to commit to writing what he had to deliver. We have reason to bless GOD for this appointment, by which scripture records have been handed down to us. We

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find several prophets speaking of it, Jeremiah 36:2, 28. Hosea 8:12; and he that seems to have represented the Prince of the prophets, is said to have had a *writer's inkhorn by his side*, to mark his people, Ezekiel 9:2. Precious JESUS! may it be found, that thou hast written my name *in thy book of life*; Luke 10:20. No doubt, this scripture record of Isaiah was very weighty; for the LORD gave a name to it, and commanded the prophet to call his son by the same name, *Maher-shalhash-baz*; which in the nearest sense of the words signifies, a *making speed to the spoil*; like one that hastens to lay hold of his prey in battle. And thus doubled *as* it were to the prophet's mind, Isaiah was taught himself the certainty that the LORD would accomplish what he had pronounced. His child should never be named without bringing with him a fresh memorandum. Concerning those witnesses he took with him, to record what he had written at the LORD'S command in the roll, the Prophet calls them *faithful witnesses*; by which presume he meant, men *in office*, who could not afterwards depart from what they had subscribed their hands to; for one of those men, *Uriah* the priest, as we read 2 Kings 16:10-16, proved very *unfaithful* to the LORD, in setting up an altar after the pattern of the idolatrous altar which Ahaz brought from Damascus. But probably this act of Uriah was after this prophecy of Isaiah. The same scripture gives an account of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, 2 Kings 16:9.

### **ISAIAH 8:5-8**

The LORD spake also unto me again, saying, (6) Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; (7) Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, *even* the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: (8) And

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he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach *even* to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

In these verses the prophet is led to speak of great things, reaching far and near. Under the figure of waters and rivers, kingdoms and empires are represented. The waters of *Shiloah* which are said to go softly, mean the LORD'S tender dealings with his people; but sinners are looking to an arm of flesh; great names among men, like *Rezin* and *Remaliah's son*, are what they are seeking after. Hence, saith the LORD, by those very persons shall Judah's punishment come. And this was fulfilled, when, as we read in the writings of this same prophet Isaiah chap. 36 & 37. Sennacherib besieged Judah. See the corresponding history, 2 Kings 18 & 19. But what I more particularly beg the Reader to remark with me, is, that part of this scripture, which hath a reference to CHRIST. The prophet keeping his eye, as it were, upon the map of the Holy Land, where the LORD JESUS, in after-ages, should set up his standard, beholds, in the mean time, the ravages of the Assyrian army, which the LORD would permit to come up over it, for the punishment of his people; and rapt into future times, he beholds, with the eye of faith, the glorious events to be accomplished by JESUS, and cries out, "The enemy will pass through Judah; yea, *he shall fill thy land, O IMMANUEL!*" Reader! pause over this sweet scripture, for it is most sweet; conceive how full of CHRIST'S glory, must have been Isaiah's mind! He knew that this was the very sacred spot of the whole earth, where, in the fulness of time, JESUS would be born, and accomplish salvation by his blood and righteousness. And therefore, while under the full influence of the spirit of prophecy, he saw, and was delivering to the then

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church, the prediction of the ruin and overthrow the enemies of Judah and Israel would accomplish, by the LORD's appointment, as the punishment of their sins; yet the Prophet's mind, looking beyond those times, to the days of CHRIST, breaks out in the midst with an address to JESUS; it is as if he had said; "So great, so overwhelming will be the LORD'S judgments, by the hands of enemies, over his own beloved land and people, that I see thy Zion, O IMMANUEL, thy beloved Jerusalem, covered over even to the neck, by the stretching of his wings!" Reader! look at the subject also in a spiritual sense; and behold how the whole nature of man, as well as his land, hath been overrun by the great enemy of souls; and then think of the mercies wrought by our IMMANUEL, in having bound the strong man armed, even Satan, when subduing our nature, and bringing forth our souls from his captivity! Luke 11:21, 22.

### **ISAIAH 8:9-10**

Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. (10) Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God *is* with us.

Here are blessed encouragements given to GOD'S people, in the midst of impending judgments. It is as if the prophet had said; "The LORD'S punishment of Judah, as a nation, is inevitable; it shall come; all attempts to alter his purpose, will be vain. Look therefore neither to young nor old, to counsel nor strength, for all will fail; but repose in the LORD. GOD is with us: He whose name is IMMANUEL, will come in due time. And in the mean season, as he is to be born of a virgin, and from among his people; *the holy seed*, shall be the substance

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thereof," chap. 6:13. Reader! let you and I always take comfort, in the worst of times; and under the darkest dispensations, in the recollection of this. If JESUS be with us, there is a blessing in it, though our state be as the withered grape, Isaiah 65:8. Say, as the wife of *Manoah*: *If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have accepted CHRIST at our hands*; Judges, 13:23. Precious LORD JESUS! it is thou that art *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof*, Jeremiah 14:8.

### **ISAIAH 8:11-16**

For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, (12) Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them to whom this people shall say*, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. (13) Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be your fear*, and *let him be your dread*. (14) And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (15) And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. (16) Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

I pray the Reader to observe with me, the tender care of GOD over his people, in times of general calamity. In these verses, the Prophet is commissioned to comfort the LORD'S mourners; and a precious word of comfort he gives. The LORD speaking to the prophet with a strong hand, intimates the strong impression made on the prophet's mind, by what the LORD said. As if he had said, "Tell my people, in the midst of those sinners, not to fear the general tidings of evil, neither shall they seek to form alliances with any: but let them sanctify me in their hearts, and make me their fear and their confidence; and they shall find that the fear of GOD will drive out the fear

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of man, as the fire of the sun will put out the fire of the hearth; or as the ocean will swallow up all rivers." Oh! that GOD'S people, in all ages, were to adopt the same divine plan. But I beg the Reader not to overlook, in these verses, besides this general direction, another special mercy marked: I mean in the features of Him, who is promised as a sanctuary. The very characters by which he is here revealed most fully point him out: He who is to be for a *sanctuary* to his people, is to be to others, for a *stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence*. Now who can hesitate a moment to discover the LORD JESUS in these distinguishing characters? If there were any doubt on this subject, the scriptures of the New Testament would fully explain it: *Simeon* was commissioned by the HOLY GHOST to tell *Mary*, that JESUS was set *for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which should be spoken against*. Luke 2:34; the Apostle Paul calls JESUS expressly by this name, *a stumbling-stone and rock of offence*, Romans 9:33; Peter speaks to the same amount, and both in reference to this very prophecy, and to another to the same purport in Isaiah: compare Isaiah 28:16, with 1 Pet. 2:6-8. Yea, JESUS himself makes reference to the same, in his conversation with the Jews; and as Isaiah saith in this passage, that *many among the people of Judah shall stumble and fall, and be broken*; so CHRIST explains how by falling or stumbling on this stone, viz. himself, which GOD the FATHER had laid in Zion, Matthew 21:42-44. And, Reader, mark what the Prophet saith at the close of this paragraph, at the LORD'S command, *to bind up the testimony, and seal the law among his disciples* what can be more gracious, on the part of GOD; or what more blessed to do, on the part of the believer? Oh! LORD, help me to have recourse to thy blessed word at all

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times, for the unalterable testimony of thy truth; and in the experience of it in my own soul, to set to it my poor seal also, *that GOD is true*; John 3:33.

**ISAIAH 8:17**

And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

It should seem that this is the prophet's own testimony and his own resolution, in the calamitous times coming upon the church. In the prospect of the coming Saviour, under all apparently frowning providences, he will still look for smiling mercy.

**ISAIAH 8:18**

Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

We have authority from the HOLY GHOST, to make application of these words to the person of the LORD JESUS. Some have thought that, as the two sons of the prophet Isaiah *Shear-jashub* and *Mahershalal-hash-baz*, are particularly noticed by the LORD in Isaiah's ministry, the prophet also speaks of them in this verse; at least, they say, the prophet may be supposed to speak of them, as well as of CHRIST. But would not this be sadly to debase the subject, and enervate the scriptures, in mingling anything, or any person with the LORD JESUS CHRIST? I take occasion to remark, once for all, in this place, that, according to my poor humble view of divine things, men putting several constructions on passages of this kind, as partly referring to CHRIST, and partly referring to themselves, or those around them, is not following the steps of the HOLY

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GHOST. It is to JESUS, the one glorious object and head of his church, all scripture points, and it is in JESUS the whole centres. We must, in the present instance, refer the whole of this passage to the LORD JESUS, since the HOLY GHOST, by his servant the Apostle, hath decidedly said as much. See Hebrews 2:13. And so again, in one of the Psalms, the sacred writer, under the spirit of prophecy, thus introduceth the LORD CHRIST, saying, *I am as a wonder unto many*; Psalm 71:7. And hence a light is thrown over that scripture also of the prophet, to prove that what was said of Joshua the high-priest, refers not to Joshua, but to CHRIST; Zechariah 3:8.

### **ISAIAH 8:19-22**

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? (20) To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them. (21) And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. (22) And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and *they shall be* driven to darkness.

I do not think it needful to detain the Reader with long observations on this part of the chapter. The advice here given is to the same amount as the former; the LORD utterly condemns all seeking, but to himself. In all ages men are prone to look to anything and everything, for help and counsel, in their distress, rather than to GOD. Hence the wickedness of fortune-tellers and necromancers, and the like. The LORD hath manifested his displeasure against all of this kind. And it is only to be lamented, in a land professing the

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gospel of CHRIST, that there should be found a single person daring enough to take up so infamous a business, or a single person weak enough to make use of it. The words of this passage are an unanswerable reply, and refutation to all: *should not a people seek unto their GOD?* To be sure they should: for who but the LORD can teach his people to profit? Who but GOD can be their help in time of need?

## REFLECTIONS

How truly blessed and profitable it is to watch the LORD'S care over his people! Though in times of general wickedness, the LORD visits a nation and a kingdom; yet will he take care of his chosen in the general overthrow. If men will look unto an arm of flesh, that arm shall be their confusion. But if his people do but sanctify the LORD GOD in their hearts, then he will be for a sanctuary; and when he sends troubles and visitations on the earth, yet like a Father to his children, who seeth a storm approaching, he brings them into the house and shuts the door after him, and thus secures them from the danger; so the LORD saith, *Come my people, enter thou into the chambers of my providence and the covenant of my love, and shut, thy doors about thee, until the indignation be overpast.* Oh! the love of GOD in CHRIST to his people!

Precious JESUS! I must not close my meditation on this Chapter, until that I have first bent the knee of my soul in thanks to thee, thou dear LORD, that here, as in other portions of thy blessed word, I discover, that thou who art to me the Rock of ages, and the rock of my salvation, hast been, in all ages, to the unbeliever, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock offense.* LORD! how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto

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me, and not unto the world? How is it that thy humiliating state, thy life of sorrow, and death of shame, should appear to me so lovely, while it becomes so offensive to others? Surely it is grace makes all the difference. I should have fallen on this stone and been broken, as well as thousands have done, hadst thou not kept me from it! Yea, LORD, there was a time when I saw no beauty in thee, to desire thee: and art thou now the altogether lovely, the fairest among ten thousand! To thee, LORD, be all the praise! I bless thee, my adorable Redeemer, for that sweet scripture thou hast said, and left upon record: *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me!*

## CHAPTER 9

### CONTENTS

*Here is another blessed prophecy, full of the LORD JESUS, and of gospel mercies, folded up in him. The prophet speaks of the joy of GOD'S people, when, in the midst of darkness, the light of CHRIST'S coming shall break in upon them. The chapter closeth with threatened judgments to the despisers of his word.*

#### **ISAIAH 9:1**

Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her* by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

The opening of this chapter is a continuation of the same subject as the former. The Church was there said to be in

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darkness. And certainly before the coming of CHRIST, the darkness was uncommonly great: for from the last prophecy delivered by *Malachi* to the hour in which *Zechariah* ministered at the altar of incense, there had been no open visions a period of near 350 years; Luke 1:8 to 11.

**ISAIAH 9:2**

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

This blessed account was fulfilled, when the LORD JESUS, preceded by his herald, John the Baptist, manifested himself to Israel. The gospel is full of it. Matthew 4:12-16.

**ISAIAH 9:3-5**

Thou hast multiplied the nation, *and* not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, *and* as *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil. (4) For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. (5) For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire.

The joy here spoken of, is not that carnal joy, which men of the world are seeking after; but the spiritual joy of grace in the heart: and the similitude of harvest-men and warriors is uncommonly beautiful. The husbandman soweth in hope; the soldier warfares in the same: but *the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*. The seed sown must pass under a long and anxious process; and the warrior must go through a long and painful campaign, before he can cry, Victory! But the joy of both is great, when the end hath crowned the action. Such is the joy of the spiritual. When the LORD hath broken the yoke of sin and Satan, those foes, more

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tremendous than all the host of *Midian*, and brought the soul out of prison, and the prison-house; and when this battle of the warrior, hath been accomplished by the blood of CHRIST and the fuel of the SPIRIT's fire; oh! the joy of the soul in CHRIST JESUS! The Prophet is here, under the spirit of prophecy, speaking of those things as already accomplished, when as yet CHRIST, the sole author and finisher of them, is not come. But this is among the features of prophecy: for what shall assuredly come to pass, is in the divine mind as if already completed. Hence CHRIST, who was to come in the fulness of time, is called *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Revelation 13:8.

### **ISAIAH 9:6-7**

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of *his* 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.

Now comes in that blessed prophecy which hath refreshed the Church, and will, as long as time shall be, continue to refresh the Church, in all ages; and which, when compared with the accomplishment, as far as hath been completed in the person and work of the LORD JESUS, and which faith is looking forward to the full completion of, forms one of the most blessed of all subjects, to call up our love, and contemplation, and praise, during a whole life of grace, until faith be swallowed up in glory. *Unto us*, the Church; a *child is born*; JESUS, in assuming our nature, takes it up from infancy: *for it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren*. And he not only

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came of his own free voluntary will, at the call of GOD his FATHER; but He that called him to the service of Mediator, gave him as, his Son, unto the people. These are united views (and most blessed views they are, when seen together) blended in one, of CHRIST, the Redeemer of his people. His own free-will offering became essentially necessary, to give value and efficacy to all he wrought and suffered. And the authority of JEHOVAH, in the appointment became equally necessary for faith to act upon, when pleading the efficacy of his merits, and propitiation before GOD. The Prophet having thus introduced him, now gives some of his adorable names, which, like the beautiful constellation of the heavens, becomes a cluster of glories all in one, to point out the infinite loveliness and greatness of his person, and his transcendent excellencies in all his offices, characters, and relations. It would take a volume of itself, to set forth the LORD JESUS under the several names the prophet hath here distinguished him by; and these are but a few of the numberless precious names, in which the scriptures reveal CHRIST, by which his people know him, and make use of him as their daily necessities and his glory require. His name shall be called *Wonderful*, saith the Prophet. But who is able to show, to what extent it is so? The wonders of his person, as GOD and as man, and as both, forming, one CHRIST; the wonders of his essence, nature, and perfections; the wonders of his offices, characters, and relations; the wonders of his incarnation, birth, life, ministry, labours, death, resurrection, ascension, and all the great events he is carrying on now in glory: the wonders of the redemption he hath wrought, is now accomplishing, and will accomplish; the wonders of his love, grace, mercy, and fellowship, in all its heights, and depths,

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and breadths and lengths; the wonders of his saving grace, in the hearts of men, and in thy heart, my soul, to thee; the greatest wonder of any, that after so much grace, and mercy, and thy repeated rebellions, the spark is not extinguished, the smoking flax is not put out, nor the bruised reed broken; which all hell is forever trying to accomplish, and thine own unworthy and unbelieving heart too often joining in the confederacy to bring to pass! Is not his name wonderful? And doth not his grace to thee make thee a wonder to thyself, in consequence of it? Oh! thou wonderful LORD! thou unerring, faithful, kind, tender counsellor, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* Oh! thou *mighty* GOD! thou all-sufficient JESUS! to see the purchase of thy blood, and thy FATHER'S gift completed and made effectual! Oh! thou *everlasting* FATHER! in all things everlasting, in love, in provision; in care, in security a blessed eternity of all relations in one art thou, to thy people. And surely thou art *the Prince of peace*, for thou hast made our peace by the blood of thy cross, and hast commanded peace forever Oh! for grace to know thy name, and by every name to put our trust in thee: *in thy name to rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness to make our boast!* Surely every thing in thy kingdom must correspond to the greatness of thy name. It must be an increasing kingdom, a righteous kingdom, a peaceable kingdom, a glorious kingdom, yea, an everlasting kingdom, that shall have no end. Thy FATHER'S zeal will take effectual care of this: for thou layest out all for thy FATHER'S glory; and the whole purposes of salvation are that GOD in all things may be glorified through JESUS CHRIST. Oh! for grace to bless a covenant GOD in CHRIST, for all these wonders of redemption,

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and now begin the song, which will never end in eternity:  
*Salvation to GOD and the LAMB!*

### **ISAIAH 9:8-12**

The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel. (9) And all the people shall know, *even* Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, (10) The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change *them into* cedars. (11) Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; (12) The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

What is here said, though it may have a peculiar reference to the state of the Church in the days of the prophet, is not so limited, but that it hath respect to the Church in all ages. The LORD hath sent his word, his redemption, unto his people, and it hath lighted unto the ends of the earth. But, alas! even to the present hour, *who hath believed over report, may every* servant of the gospel exclaim, and say, *and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* Neither judgments nor mercies, neither prosperous nor humbling providences, though accompanying the LORD'S word, will procure reverence to the LORD'S commands. If the LORD smites in one dispensation, the proud unhumbed heart will seek comfort from another; and though the LORD throw down the building sin hath erected, yet sin will rear another. Hence the Prophet cries out, and every gracious looker-on joins in the same confession, "This is the sad cause, why judgments continue, the LORD'S anger is not removed, but his hand is stretched out still!"

### **ISAIAH 9:13-17**

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For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. (14) Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. (15) The ancient and honourable, he *is* the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he *is* the tail. (16) For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err; and *they that are* led of them *are* destroyed. (17) Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one *is* an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

Here is the sad cause of the Prophet's lamentation, and a miserable close he makes indeed of the sorrowful subject, at every termination: for the thing explains itself. The LORD corrects in mercy; but men regard it not. The LORD humbles his people, in their houses and families; in their offices and rank; in their connections and relations; but it is all the same. Though the lofty be brought down, and the ancient and honourable be made low; though death enter in at their windows, and their young men be cut off, and distress follow the fatherless and widows; the judgments do not reclaim; *no man repenteth him of his wickedness, saying what have I done?* JESUS and his salvation are not sought after, nor regarded. *They refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely!* Hence the prophet closeth this paragraph as the former, and takes up the same woeful lamentation.

### **ISAIAH 9:18-21**

For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up *like* the lifting up of smoke. (19) Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother. (20) And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on

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the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm: (21) Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: *and* they together *shall be* against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

If the Reader will compare this chapter in the several parts of it, with the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of Leviticus, he will find a solemn explanation given of what is here said, and mark the progression of divine visitations in both. Everything manifests, that when the LORD smites, it is to reform: and when the calamities the LORD sends, (as here marked,) are brought to the highest pitch when men, like an army besieged and without provision, are reduced to the extremity of eating the flesh of their own arm: if these awful visitations be unaccompanied with grace; depend upon it, if the LORD cease to correct, judgments are at hand. Hence the Prophet again repeats, as the running lamentation of each distressing view of the subject, "These are the sad causes of the LORD'S just anger," *For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts!*

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! behold in Israel's history, the real history of all men by nature; and the one universal cause of the LORD'S controversy with the sons of men. *All have sinned, and come short of GOD'S glory:* And think, my soul, what a mercy it is, that the LORD doth correct. But for this, there would be no hope of a reform. One of the most tremendous scriptures, is that, which the LORD proclaims concerning the incorrigible, when giving them up to fulfil the measure of their iniquities: *So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy*

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*shall depart from thee.* LORD! I would say for myself, and for every poor sinner like myself, give us not up *to eat the fruit of our own devices.* It is better to suffer now, than to perish forever. But oh! accompany thy corrections with thy grace; and cause thy children *to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

Precious JESUS! how blessed is it, under such circumstances, to look at those sweet promises, which are given in this chapter concerning thee, and thy great salvation, by whom alone all deliverances are wrought. Had it not been for thee, thou gracious glorious LORD! though the LORD'S anger had been stretched out to all eternity, not a soul could have found the possibility of returning to him. His justice must have burned to the lowest hell: neither could it have been satisfied forever, Hail! thou almighty Deliverer of thy people! we welcome thy coming in the name of the LORD! Blessed for ever be the joyful sound, that *unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given!* Oh! the unspeakable felicity, that *the government is upon thy shoulder;* and that *all power is thine, in heaven and in earth.* Give then, thou dearest LORD, to thy people, to know thee, by every endearing name and in every glorious character. Be thou to me, to each, to all, our wonderful Counselor, our mighty GOD, our everlasting FATHER, our Prince of Peace! And since in ourselves, and in all our circumstances, we are nothing, can do nothing, and by reason of sin are worse than nothing; oh, LORD, do thou carry on thy work with power in our souls; and of *the increase of thy government and peace let there be no end.* Let it be ever growing, and still to grow. Give an increase of grace, in every heart of thy redeemed upon earth. And even when thou shalt

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have brought home thy ransomed from earth to heaven, and the whole work and glory of redemption is then fully manifested to be thine; yet, blessed JESUS, even then, when thou shalt have delivered up the kingdom of thy mediatorial power, and JEHOVAH in his threefold character of person is glorified in the salvation of the Church; then, then, thou adorable Redeemer, thou wilt still, be the glorious Head, and cause, and source; of all the blessedness of thy Church and people; and every new gift of felicity they enjoy, they will enjoy in thee, and from thee, and with thee, and it will be JESUS, and his church, to be glorious and going on in glory, forever and forever, Oh! the wonders and blessedness of salvation in CHRIST!

## CHAPTER 10

### CONTENTS

*The Prophet is here denouncing punishment in the LORD'S name, to the proud oppressors of his people. In the midst of which there are several sweet breakings-out of that great salvation by JESUS, from whence alone the people of GOD can find deliverance or comfort.*

#### **ISAIAH 10:1-4**

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed; (2) To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and *that* they may rob the fatherless! (3) And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation *which* shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory? (4) Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the

slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

Amidst general sins, with which both the people of GOD, and the oppressors of the LORD'S people, are said to abound, the Prophet is pointing to some special instances of the kind, which marked the higher order, magistrates and rulers. Against which, the LORD particularly sets his face, assures them that there will be a day of account, and therefore puts the question home to their own consciences. Reader, do not fail to remark how the HOLY GHOST, in all ages, is carrying on his preparatory work in the heart, by pleading with the sinner on account of his sin, to plead with him of his want of JESUS.

### **ISAIAH 10:5-15**

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. (6) I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. (7) Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but *it is* in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. (8) For he saith, *Are* not my princes altogether kings? (9) *Is* not Calno as Carchemish? *is* not Hamath as Arpad? *is* not Samaria as Damascus? (10) As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; (11) Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? (12) Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. (13) For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man*: (14) And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs *that are* left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. (15) Shall the axe boast itself

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against him that heweth therewith? *or* shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake *itself* against them that lift it up, *or* as if the staff should lift up *itself*, as if it were no wood.

I pray the Reader to remark with me, how the LORD taketh to himself the whole of the destruction of Judah. If the Assyrian destroy the kingdom, it is because the LORD hath commissioned and appointed it. It is the LORD that sends Assyria against an hypocritical people, even his own people; and what the Assyrian doth, is because the LORD hath ordained it. Let the Reader turn to the 36<sup>th</sup> chapter of this prophecy, and behold the fulfillment of what is here foretold. And while he reads the proud boasting of the Assyrian captain, in his master's name, let him recollect what is here said by the LORD concerning him. It is always blessed to trace effects to their causes. And this comparative view will be very profitable, under divine teaching, to the Reader's mind; for he will see by the sequel of the history, that though the LORD made the Assyrian his instrument, it was but as his rod to correct, and not to destroy. The LORD saith in this passage, that when he hath performed his whole work upon his Church and people, then shall come the punishment of Assyria, by whom he accomplisheth his purpose; and like as a father who corrects his child, when finished, throws the rod away, so shall the axe, that boasteth itself against him that heweth with it, be no more. If the Pleader will read the close of the 37<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah from the 21<sup>st</sup> verse to the end, he will see the accomplishment of what the LORD hath here said.

### **ISAIAH 10:16-19**

Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like

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the burning of a fire. (17) And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day; (18) And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth. (19) And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

In these verses, if I mistake not, the LORD is pointing to the cause of his mercy to his people, in delivering them from Assyria. It is not for their righteousness, for the parallel scripture saith, the LORD doeth it for his own sake, and for his servant David's sake, chap. 37:35. What is this but GOD's grace, in his own covenant-engagements, which he will fulfil, for his own glorious name's sake, and with an eye to the salvation by David his Holy One, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Hence therefore, when the pride and fatness of his own hypocritical people are brought down, and a leanness of soul is induced, and all their fancied glory done away; as was the case when king Hezekiah desired the Prophet to lift up a cry for the remnant that was left; then was the loftiness of man brought down, and the LORD of hosts alone exalted, in that day. See chap. 37:1-4. 2:11.

### **ISAIAH 10:20-23**

And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. (21) The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. (22) For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *yet* a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. (23) For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

Reader! how blessed is it to discover, here and there, through all the sacred writings, the outlines of JESUS? It hath the same

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effect as to a thirsty traveler going over some hot burning sands on a sultry day, when he finds a cooling stream; so when to the spiritual Reader quest of JESUS; going over the account of Israel's sins, and their enemies triumphs in consequence, their salvation by JESUS is brought into the view, oh! how doth it refresh the soul! How very blessed to this amount is this portion! Here is the gospel-day first spoken of, and then the gracious consequences of it. There is still a remnant in the worst of times, and they shall escape. The Apostle was commissioned by the HOLY GHOST to preach from this text, and to leave his sermon in print for the Church's comfort; and a blessed sermon it is. GOD had promised to Abraham that in blessing he would bless him, and in multiplying he would multiply his seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore. Well, saith the Apostle, as the Patriarch was promised it, and as the Prophet predicted it, so is it come to pass. Reader, turn to the scriptures, and satisfy yourself on this great point. See Genesis 22:15-18. Behold CHRIST and his Church here gloriously set forth? Then read once more what the Prophet hath said in these four verses: and then turn to Romans 9:27, to the end, for a beautiful explanation of the whole. There is one circumstance more to be attended to, in these verses, that I would not wish the Reader to overlook, and that is, that of the remnant here spoken of, it is said, they shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the LORD, the HOLY ONE of Israel, in truth. And what can more plainly speak the blessed effects of grace upon the heart, than when precious souls of GOD'S redeemed are gathered off from all false refuges of lies, all self-confidences, all self-righteousness; and are brought to stay themselves wholly upon Him, whose

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name, by way of striking emphasis, is called the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS? Oh! the preciousness of seeing CHRIST so pointed out, so fully and sweetly preached by the prophet, and of being taught by the SPIRIT thus to know him, and to rejoice in him, and to stay our souls upon him! Jeremiah 23:6. 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31. The last verse in this portion is as awful as the former verses are gracious and consolatory. And what doth it declare, but what every other portion in the word of GOD both declares and confirms: *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him!* Isaiah 3:10, 11. Acts 3:23.

### **ISAIAH 10:24-34**

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. (25) For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction. (26) And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and *as* his rod *was* upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. (27) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. (28) He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: (29) They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. (30) Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. (31) Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. (32) As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand *against* the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. (33) Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature *shall be* hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. (34) And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

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I do not think it necessary to swell the page of my Commentary, by making particular observations on this passage. What might be said here, may be said, and hath been indeed said often, and one general remark will suit all. The Reader wilt observe, that what is here said by a gracious LORD, is continually said by him to comfort his people, under their exercises and sufferings. Their own backslidings correct them, and their own transgressions bring the rods of Assyrians upon them. But though corrected, it is but in measure; though cast down, they are not cast off; though persecuted, yet not forsaken. In JESUS they are taken into covenant with GOD, and therefore there is still one invariable, unceasing love of GOD to their persons, while to their sins, the LORD manifests displeasure. Reader! look over this portion in the chapter with this view, and it will be blessed. Oh! the felicity of perceiving JESUS in all; whose rich salvation runs through all. Blessed, forever blessed be GOD, for JESUS CHRIST!

## REFLECTIONS

READER! hath it ever struck you, when at anytime perusing the judgments of GOD upon a guilty land, as set forth in this chapter, how awful the state of those must be, whom the LORD appoints for the correction of his people? Like the Assyrian here spoken of, all of this description are only commissioned to correct, not to destroy. They are by the LORD's bridle in their jaws, but the kindest ministers for good and not evil. And had the children of GOD but light enough during the dark hour, to see the limits of their chain, how different would be their views of GOD's people, and of the divine love in sending them. Howbeit, they mean not so,

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neither do their hearts think so, for their wish is to destroy: but JESUS appoints, overlooks, regulates, restrains, and brings about his blessed purposes, in all. How sweet the thought!

My soul! bless thy LORD for this most precious scripture! The remnant of Israel is still on the earth. It is in the midst of many people, as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass! See to it, my soul, that thou hast the gracious marks here set down: *They stay no more upon him that smote them.* They look not for salvation from an arm of flesh. Thy false confidences, and false supports have too often, my soul, like the reeds of Egypt, pierced thee through with many sorrows. Surely thou art looking no more to the works of thine hands, not saying to them, Ye are my god; for in JESUS alone the fatherless findeth mercy! See to it, that thou art now finally, fully, and completely returned, among the remnant of Jacob, unto Jacob's mighty GOD, and staying thyself in truth upon the LORD, the HOLY ONE of Israel. Oh! for grace to call heaven and earth to witness, that He, and He only is JEHOVAH'S CHRIST, is thy CHRIST; and the FATHER'S chosen, thy chosen: so shalt thou never be confounded nor ashamed, world without end.

## CHAPTER 11

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*This Chapter is in part a prophecy concerning CHRIST. It contains an account of his stock, and the features of his person; the wonders of his redemption, in the call of the Gentiles; and the restoration of the Jews.*

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**ISAIAH 11:1**

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

The HOLY GHOST had before sent a message to the church by the Prophet, to tell them that the wonderful Person, the Messiah they had been so long taught to expect, should be born of a virgin, with some leading marks of his character; but now the Prophet is commissioned to tell the church, that he should spring from the stock of David. And to manifest his humbleness, he is to come but as a small rod from a stem; and from Jesse he is rather said to arise than from David, Jesse's son. For Jesse lived and died in obscurity. The Prophet adds that he shall be a branch, a *Netzer*, so is the word, which though in the events of his coming, he would be beautiful and glorious, yet, in the view of many, but as the despised Nazarene. Oh! how truly lovely is every account of JESUS! Reader, consult those scriptures, Revelation 22:16. Matthew 2:23. Revelation 5:5. Isaiah 4:2. Acts 13:22, 23.

**ISAIAH 11:2**

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

What a blessed confirmation of the truth of this prophecy, and of the person of CHRIST, was the descent of the HOLY GHOST, at the river Jordan! John the Baptist was before instructed by this very thing how he should know CHRIST. See Matthew 3:16. John 1:29-34. And, Reader, do remark farther, how delightful the Prophet's expression is, that the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH should rest upon him. For the SPIRIT was not given to our CHRIST by measure, as to his servants. Do not overlook

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this, but consult those sweet scriptures, which unfold and confirm it, Isaiah 61:1. with Luke 4:18. John 3:34. I stay not to enlarge upon the several qualifications of our LORD in his office-character, by the sevenfold gifts of the SPIRIT here enumerated; it will be sufficient to remark that the human nature of CHRIST was anointed with super-eminent grace, and a fulness to fit him for the great work of redemption, JEHOVAH called him to perform, and engaged to qualify him for. Psalm 45:6, 7. Colossians 1:14. 2:9.

### **ISAIAH 11:3-4**

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: (4) But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

In the Hebrew the *quick understanding* seems more particularly to apply to the sense of *smelling*; intimating that the perception of CHRIST should be peculiarly so, and totally different from all others. Let the Reader look into the gospel, and mark the numberless instances in the ministry of JESUS, in his discerning the thoughts of the heart: John 2:24, 25. Revelation 2:23. And what a lovely testimony the Prophet adds of this, when saying, that he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes: to show that he forms not his standard of decision by what men say, or by the outward appearance of things, as earthly judges do, and indeed can do no other. But his judgment shall be, because he readeth the heart. How sweet the thought, to his poor, and to his meek in the earth! Think of it, I beseech you, ye that are poor and exercised;

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and let this precious view of your JESUS always bring comfort with it!

**ISAIAH 11:5**

And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

I beg the Reader to say, if it be not so, whether these divine perfections of our LORD were not introduced here in order that his people might behold in them their perfect security? And as a man's girdle goeth round the whole loins, and may be laid hold of behind or before; so the figure is beautifully chosen, to teach a poor trembling believer, who fears to come before the face of the LORD by reason of any renewed transgression; or if, in return to his prayer, the LORD seemeth to turn the back and not the face; in either case, and in every case, he is commanded by faith to lay hold of the girdle of CHRIST'S loins, encircled as it is with righteousness and faithfulness. Isaiah 51:8. Psalm 89:27 to 35.

**ISAIAH 11:6-9**

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. (7) And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. (8) And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. (9) They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Spiritual blessings are promised, under figurative expressions. Such are the blessed effects introduced into the circumstances of mankind by the gospel of CHRIST, that, like the beasts of the forest tamed and brought under order, the

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passions of our fallen nature shall be regulated and restrained. *A little child* shall lead them; that is, the LORD's people shall be so much under the blessed influence of grace in the heart, that they will need nothing of human learning to guide them. And was not this prophecy fulfilled in the days of the gospel, when Mary became the first preacher of the resurrection? Angels brought the tidings to the women; and they, and not the apostles, first spread it abroad.

### **ISAIAH 11:10-16**

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. (11) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. (12) And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (13) The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. (14) But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. (15) And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make *men* go over dryshod. (16) And there shall be 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.

How blessed is the account here given of the Gentile church. To this same root of Jesse, meaning CHRIST, shall the Gentiles seek. And that we might not lose sight of our elder brethren, the Jews, the LORD here promiseth to lay his hand the second

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time, to recover them. The interests of both shall be interwoven, and ultimately bound up together. So very powerfully will the LORD work in the accomplishment, that all the seven streams of the *Nile*, yea, if *Jordan* or *Euphrates* were in the way; all should be dried up, and *cease* to flow, rather than the streams of that river, even the gospel, which maketh glad the city of GOD, should have the tide of its blessings stopped; by which salvation is made known, and rendered effectual to the LORD'S people. Think, Reader, what overwhelming blessings flow in, with JESUS, upon the soul? If the Red Sea dried up to open a passage to Israel, how shall not the redeemed go over dryshod, to whom JESUS hath opened a *new and living way by his blood*? Exodus 14:29.

## REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS JESUS! was the prophet commissioned to bring the Church acquainted with thy nature, according to the flesh? Didst thou indeed come forth as rod out of the stem of Jesse, and as branch out of his roots? Then art thou of my own nature; bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. Oh! thou Plant of renown! its thy person, work, righteousness, in the whole of thy redemption, thou art the LORD our GOD; thou; even thou, hast wrought our salvation for us, and salvation in us: surely, blessed JESUS, thou art all thy people need, and all they can enjoy, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity! Oh! for a portion of that SPIRIT which rested upon thee, and which thou impartest to thy people, *according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST*! For this will induce all those blessed effects of thy gracious gospel, when the corrupt passions of men shall be brought under the sweet influences of grace and

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nothing shall then hurt or destroy, in all thine holy mountain!, Blessed LORD! hasten thy glorious purposes concerning thy kingdom! Oh! when shall the hour dawn upon a sinful, dark, and degenerate world, when the LORD will set his hand the second time, to recover the remnant of his people? When wilt the time come, that men shall break their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks? Hasten, blessed LORD, the triumphs of thy kingdom! Cut short thy work, in righteousness, thou that art mighty to save: and let that precious promise be fulfilled; when Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land. Oh! LORD of hosts, bless, as thou hast said, saying; *Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of mine hands, and Israel, mine inheritance?*

## CHAPTER 12

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*A gospel song of the triumphs of CHRIST, and the church's triumphs in him: suited for all ages, for the whole of CHRIST'S body, in one collected mass, and for each individual.*

#### **ISAIAH 12:1**

And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

Reader! do not forget, that the day uniformly spoken of is the gospel day; the day of JESUS, and his salvation. And therefore, in every heart made blessed in that day by regeneration, a view of past sin, deserving GOD'S just anger, and a conscious

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sense of redemption by the LORD JESUS, puts a new song in the mouth, and holy joy in the heart. Such was the joy of *Zaccheas*, when JESUS declared to him, *This day is salvation come to this house!* Luke 19:9.

**ISAIAH 12:2**

Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation.

Reader! take especial notice of what the hymn expresseth; namely, that the LORD GOD is the sinner's salvation. It is not enough to say, or sing, that the LORD hath brought us to salvation, but that he himself is our salvation; not that we have salvation from him, but salvation in him. He himself is the whole of it. Reader! observe the twofold name upon this occasion; JAH, and JEHOVAH. I do not presume to say as much, but may it not, with reverence, be asked, Is it not to intimate the whole persons of the GODHEAD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, as GOD, and JESUS JEHOVAH as Mediator? And how can any child of GOD who sings this song with the Spirit, and the understanding also, say otherwise, than *I will trust and not be afraid? What* can they have to fear, who have JEHOVAH in his threefold character of person for their salvation?

**ISAIAH 12:3**

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

There is a great beauty in some of our old Bibles, which express this phrase of drawing water, as if it were out of *the wells of the Saviour*. Everything of grace is fetched by faith from CHRIST, and is in CHRIST. Ordinances are nothing without JESUS; and it is CHRIST himself; and not means of grace, however pure they are in themselves, that are the fountain and well of the soul. Hence the Church sings: *A fountain of*

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*gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon* is my beloved! Song Of Solomon 4:15. Hence also, JESUS to the Samaritan woman, said, that the water he gave, should be in his people, a *well of living water, springing up into everlasting life!* John 4:14.

### **ISAIAH 12:4-5**

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. (5) Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth.

Here the whole Church is supposed as engaged in this hymn of praise. In the former part, it was the song of one: *I* will praise thee. In this, it is, Praise *ye* the Lord. And they are not only praising JEHOVAH in songs of redemption themselves, but stirring up all others to the same devout and becoming exercises. Everything forms motives to praise JEHOVAH's glory in himself; JEHOVAH's glory in giving grace to his people; all, and every view of him, in the excellent things he hath done, demands the tribute of thanksgiving: and *this is known in all the earth!* Reader! think how wretched must that soul be, and how much the harp of melody in his own heart must be out of tune, that can find no cause in himself and his own experience to join the chorus!

### **ISAIAH 12:6**

Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

This is a beautiful close to this rapturous gospel song. And let the Reader observe that expression, which tells the cause for which such shoutings of holy joy are to go forth; because *great is the HOLY ONE of Israel in the midst of his people.* Not only great, and glorious, is JEHOVAH in *himself*; but great, and gracious also, in *them*. This is the blessed and additional

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cause of joy. And some have observed, and very properly too is the observation made, that as the word which is translated *inhabitant*, might have been rendered *inhabitress*; meaning the Church, and the females of Zion; here is a call upon both sexes, as well as all ranks and orders, to join in the chorus, as the Psalmist in one of the Hallelujah Psalms, expresseth it: *Let both young men and maidens; old men and children, let all praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is excellent; and his glory is above the earth and heaven*, Psalm 148:12, 13.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! how art thou tuned in heart to sing this sweet song of the Church, and to join thy feeble note in the hymn of salvation, with all the LORD'S redeemed ones? Surely none can be more conscious than thou art, that out of CHRIST, JEHOVAH'S anger must forever burn against the sin and rebellion of thy nature; and if the LORD'S anger be turned away, and he comforteth thee; is not this in JESUS, and by JESUS, and for the alone sake of JESUS? And canst thou not, my soul, look up, and say with the Church, both above and below, *Behold, God is my salvation?* For is not JESUS the almighty deliverer, by his blood and righteousness, from sin and sorrow, to holiness and joy? Is it not his holy hand, and his glorious arm, that hath gotten himself the victory? Did not GOD the FATHER graciously devise it; and GOD the SON purchase it; and GOD the HOLY GHOST make application of it to thy wants and circumstances? And conscious of thy personal interest in it, wilt thou not shout aloud, and, say; *Behold, God is my salvation I will trust*

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*and not be afraid, for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation!*

And wilt thou not then, my soul, continually be drawing water from, the wells of salvation? JESUS himself is the well, even the well of living water, of which whosoever drinketh, shall live for ever. And he, is an open well, a fountain not sealed to all his redeemed. Here life is found for quickening sinners, and for maintaining the life given to the languishing and dying frames of his saints. LORD! to these wells of salvation, even to thyself, blessed JESUS, would I pray for grace, daily, hourly to come; that by the wells of thy word, and in ordinances, by the influence of thine HOLY SPIRIT, my soul may be like a watered garden from day to day, whose waters fail not: that JESUS may keep alive the grace he hath given, revive it when decayed, refresh it when languishing, and preserve it and perfect it unto life eternal. Oh! for grace thus to come, and to call others to come, and that the fathers unto the children, may declare his truth. Hither, ye poor, thirsty, famishing sinners, hither come to JESUS, the well of salvation, and draw no longer from the pools of your own righteousness! In JESUS alone the thirst of the soul finds satisfaction; *and whosoever drinketh of him shall never thirst, but JESUS will be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 13

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*We have a prophecy concerning the destruction of Babylon; and the LORD, for the comfort of the Church, causeth his*

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*servant to make it known, and the powers by whom he would accomplish it, even the Medes and Persians.*

**ISAIAH 13:1**

The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

I pray the Reader to remark, with me, at the opening of this chapter, that from this part of the prophet's writings, a new subject seems to open: the prophet begins, what he calls *burdens*. Hence we have, in several successive chapters after this burden of *Babylon*, the burden of *Moab*, and the burden of *Damascus*, and the burden of *Egypt*, and the like. But the history of those nations is no farther entered into, than as they minister to the Church, either in persecuting the Church, or becoming instruments to her prosperity, according to the sovereign will and appointment of GOD. Although *none of them thought so: neither did their heart intend it:* yet to this little handful of people, this Church, this portion of the LORD JESUS, they all ministered; and every monarchy of the earth rose, or fell, as should bring about the LORD'S purposes concerning Zion. I would beg the Reader to keep this in view while reading the history of men and nations; yea, even in modern times, as well as in the ages that are past, he will find, that for the salvation and preservation of GOD'S Israel, all the nations of the earth are formed; and that they are moved about and directed to this one purpose only. Here the LORD begins with Babylon, in the threatened desolations which should overtake that nation. The things predicted were not to be accomplished for more than a hundred years; and during that time, the LORD'S Israel was to go into captivity in Babylon, and seventy years were to be accomplished upon them. But in the mean time, the LORD will comfort his people

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with his promises. Reader! mark this! Is it not most blessed, and most gracious in the LORD, if, when at any time he is about to correct them for their transgressions, he pours in his consolations before? Do you know anything of this kind in your own exercises?

### **ISAIAH 13:2-10**

Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. (3) I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, *even* them that rejoice in my highness. (4) The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. (5) They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, *even* the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. (6) Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. (7) Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: (8) And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces *shall be as* flames. (9) Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. (10) For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

In the figurative language of prophecy, the LORD describes the destruction of Babylon. The army that shall come against Babylon, the LORD calls his sanctified ones, and his mighty ones. By *sanctified*, we must not, as we are very apt to do, suppose is meant GOD'S *holy* ones; but only such as the LORD hath set apart, and appointed to this service. The word *sanctified*, doth not always mean holy. The army by which, as the LORD'S instruments, the LORD would destroy Babylon, were

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no more holy than the Babylon to be destroyed. Babylon was now, by the LORD'S appointment, to take his people into captivity, and afflict them. But Babylon, after that is over, shall be accounted with, and be herself ruined. Hence therefore, the LORD sends by whom he will send, and when he is pleased to correct his whole Church, or any one individual of that Church, the rod the LORD corrects with, shall, when he hath finished the correction, be thrown away. Reader! mark this observation for present times, as well as those that are past, for it will be found uniformly true. If the Reader will compare what is said in this chapter, with what the LORD hath said in another part of Isaiah's prophecy, he will find a beautiful and striking correspondence. See Isaiah 45:1-4.

**ISAIAH 13:11-12**

And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. (12) I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

I know that I am singular in my views of this sweet portion, which comes in between what went before, and what follows after these verses: at least I have never seen the writings of any Commentator, who doth not apply these verses, as the former, to the subject of Babylon's destruction; as if from the greatness of the slaughter which would take place in the fall of Babylon, men would become so scarce, as that one only would be more precious than gold. But, with all humble submission, I would say, that I cannot help reading these two verses as in parentheses; as if in the midst of judgment, the LORD remembered mercy; and while speaking of the dreadful punishment which should take place for sin, the LORD pointed

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to his dear SON, as the one only source from whence a whole world of evil should find mercy. Surely, it is from JESUS alone, and by his gracious interposition, that the earth stands. And therefore, why may not the LORD be supposed to be saying by these verses; when I have punished, and am punishing the world, for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and have caused the arrogancy of the proud to cease; then shall my people look unto Him whom they have pierced, and mourn; and then shall the Man, CHRIST, *my fellow*, be more precious than fine gold: even this one identical Man, the LORD our righteousness, than the golden wedge of Ophir. Reader, remember, I do not presume to say that such is the interpretation of the passage: but if I err, may the LORD forgive my error: I confess that the very thought refresheth my soul. And the passage, seen in this point of view, in the midst of Babylon's burden, is not unlike some sweet herbage, or some cooling stream, found in the midst of the desert, where all around is a heath, or a dreary prospect.

### **ISAIAH 13:13-18**

Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. (14) And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land. (15) Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined *unto them* shall fall by the sword. (16) Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. (17) Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and *as for* gold, they shall not delight in it. (18) *Their* bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

In these verses we have a continuation of the subject concerning the destruction of Babylon, with the effects to be wrought by it on all the people. And, what is very observable, so hardened against all impressions of mercy shall be the enemies of Babylon, that, contrary to the usage of armies, this army shall totally disregard plunder. They are not fighting for silver nor gold: they are the LORD'S instruments of destruction; and as such, their minds are all instinctively directed to the accomplishment of this one purpose. Probably in answer to the prayers of his people, who cried to him under the oppression of Babylon. Let the Reader consult to this purpose those scriptures, and then judge: Lamentations 4:21, 22. Psalm 137 throughout.

### **ISAIAH 13:19-22**

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. (20) It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. (21) But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. (22) And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces: and her time *is* near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

I pray the Reader to read this prophecy very attentively, and mark well the awful destruction threatened. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in a day; and Babylon in a night. In the same moment when Belshazzar was rioting, came his death. Daniel 5:30. The glory of Babylon is not only related by profane historians to have been the greatest of all monarchies; but sacred scripture makes mention of it as such. *Thou saidst (saith the LORD) I shall be a lady for ever; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:*

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*but these two things shall come upon thee in a moment, in one day; the loss of children, and widowhood.* See Isaiah 47:5 to the end; and the accomplishment, Daniel 5:31. And what is yet, if possible, more remarkable in the fulfillment of this prophecy, is the astonishing overthrow. All conquerors, when they subjugate kingdoms, conquer them to possess them; and the more splendid they are, the more they delight in their conquests. But concerning Babylon, the LORD had said, *it should never be inhabited, nor dwelt in from generation to generation;* unless by doleful creatures, satyrs, and beasts of the desert; and this was literally fulfilled: for historians who have visited Babylon, all agree in one report, that the very spot where it stood, though in its splendour it covered over thirty miles in breadth; cannot now be ascertained. None indeed have ventured to explore the interior parts of it, on account of the beasts of prey, and serpents which dwell in it. There is one thought more, which this prophecy, connected with its accomplishment, furnisheth; and that is the view which the gospel hath taken of it, when speaking of it as a type of the utter destruction of Babylon under the New Testament dispensation. If the Reader will consult Revelation 17 and 18 and compare them with this prophecy, and the passage already referred to, Isaiah 47:5 to the end, he will find abundant matter to furnish him with subjects of the most improving nature.—I only add, as a finishing comment on the whole, when the Reader hath made his own observations upon these solemn scriptures, looking up to GOD the HOLY GHOST for instructions to improve the whole to the divine glory, and his own happiness, I beg of him to look into the human heart, yea, into his own, and see whether, by the fall of man, there is not a similar ruin

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induced, so that the heart which was once the temple of the living GOD, is now become the habitation of corrupt passions, like dragons and beasts of prey? Oh! the state, the fallen state of fallen man!

## REFLECTIONS

READER! we have been now attending to the inspired penman's account of the burden of Babylon. And we who live in gospel days, have lived to see the accomplishment of GOD's denunciation against that devoted kingdom. Here let us ponder well the solemn subject; for it is a very solemn one. Think not, Reader, that the subject is remote, and the history one in which you and I have no concern. Indeed, indeed we have the highest concern. For as Babylon became the den of dragons, which was once the glory of kingdoms, and the beauty of the Chaldees excellency; so our corrupt and fallen nature, is become the habitation of every unclean and corrupt affection, which was once beautiful and lovely. And unless this nature be changed by sovereign grace, and the heart, which is now like a cage of unclean birds and beasts of prey, be made once more the habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT; how shall we ever, see the face of GOD in glory, or be recovered to our original happiness?

Precious JESUS! now doth every view of our nature, and the miseries of it, tend to endear thee to the heart, and to bring home the vast, the infinite importance of thy salvation? Oh! thou purifier of our lost nature! Oh! thou almighty JESUS! thou canst cleanse, and thou wilt cleanse by thy blood, the souls and bodies of thy people! Yes! blessed JESUS, in thee, and by thee, they shall be restored, yea, more than restored, to their

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original purity and holiness. Thou wilt drive out the strong man armed, and subdue all our sins, under thee. Yea, *the GOD of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly*. Hail, thou glorious restorer of all our waste places! Hail, thou blessed EMMANUEL, who hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood. Ere long thou wilt take home thy Church to thine eternal kingdom, and present it to thyself, *a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it shall be holy and without blemish*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 14

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*This chapter is explanatory of the former. The LORD showeth the causes of Babylon's ruin, to avenge the cause of his people, and to punish their enemies.*

#### **ISAIAH 14:1**

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

What a beautiful opening is here! And now while we are enabled to read the prophecies, unfolded and fulfilled in CHRIST, how is the whole explained to our clearest apprehension! Reader! though the final accomplishment of this prophecy refers to the restoration of the Jews, when all the Gentiles shall be gathered in, yet the LORD'S mercy to his people, whom he foreknew, is all along carried on, from age to age, in the Church, and is uniformly spoken of as the one great object of his providence and grace!

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**ISAIAH 14:2-27**

And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. (3) And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, (4) That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! (5) The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers. (6) He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, *and* none hindereth. (7) The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break forth into singing. (8) Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. (9) Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. (10) All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? (11) Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. (12) How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. (15) Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (16) They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; (17) *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners? (18) All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. (19) But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and* as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. (20) Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy

people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. (21) Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. (22) For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. (23) I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts. (24) The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand: (25) That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. (26) This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. (27) For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it?* and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

I do not interrupt the reading through this long chain of the most wonderful events, because it forms one grand whole. The destruction which will ultimately fall upon the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST, and the triumphs of the Church, are here set forth, under very strong and figurative expressions. I cannot improve upon them, by attempting to represent the truth in stronger language, than is here made use of; for nothing indeed can exceed it. But what I particularly beg the Reader, with me, to remark is, that what the Prophet had before said, is here completely fulfilled: *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.

### **ISAIAH 14:28-31**

In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. (29) Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit *shall be* a fiery flying serpent. (30) And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and

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I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant. (31)  
Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none *shall be* alone in his appointed times.

The date of the prophecy is here faithfully set down, in order that, when accomplished, it may not be suspected to have been written after the things predicted had come to pass. The year that *Ahaz* died. The same year that *Uzziah* died, Isaiah had that glorious vision, chap. 6:1; and the death of *Ahaz* was remarkable also in this burden, concerning *Babylon*. Isaiah forewarns *Palestina* not to rejoice at the death of the king, for others shall arise to punish.

### **ISAIAH 14:32**

What shall *one* then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

This verse forms a blessed conclusion to the whole subject of Babylon's burden. It is as if the prophet had said, "Should any one of the nations around behold Babylon's fall, and Israel's emancipation, and return to their beloved Jerusalem, should any one ask, or send messengers to inquire into the cause, wherefore is this? the answer is direct: It is the LORD's controversy, not man's: Zion is the LORD's, he hath founded her, and therefore he will defend her. And though Zion's enemies may for awhile seem to triumph, and the transgressions of Zion may bring her into captivity; yet the LORD loveth Zion, and will bless her, and the poor of his people shall know this, and depend upon it." Zephaniah 3:12.

## REFLECTIONS

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How truly blessed it is to observe, and know, that the LORD watcheth over all the concerns of his people! Though Babylon triumph for awhile, and though the LORD suffer his people to go into captivity; yet they are still his people, and the LORD will not permit them to be oppressed for ever.

But what an awful scripture is this, for all the enemies of CHRIST and his people to read: *Hell from beneath is moved for all such, to meet them at their coming!* And what an aggravated load of woe is it, to think that they have been uniformly fighting against GOD and his people; so that their misery is abundantly aggravated, like the rich man's in the parable, when lifting up their eyes in torments, and not only seeing heaven afar off, but they whom in this life they most hated made most completely happy!

My soul! see to it, that thou art a citizen of Zion, and not of Babylon! This is the Church, the City, the royal, the holy City, which the LORD hath founded. Oh! for grace to be found a citizen of Zion, when the LORD writeth up the people. Better to be a doorkeeper of the gates of Zion, than a dweller in the tents of ungodliness. LORD, it is thou that hast founded Zion in JESUS; and in JESUS may my soul be found in Zion.

## CHAPTER 15

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*The prophet here enters upon the subject of history: and a woeful account it is. Not a word of comfort through the whole.*

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**ISAIAH 15:1-4**

The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, *and* brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, *and* brought to silence; (2) He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads *shall be* baldness, *and* every beard cut off. (3) In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly. (4) And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard *even* unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.

Here is a sad account of Moab! And in order to enter into a full apprehension of the history, we must consult the scripture account concerning this people. If we look back to the original settlement of Israel, we shall find that this was a nation descended from Lot, Genesis 13:10, 11; and the very Moab which, by Balak, called an idolatrous enchanter, even Balaam, to curse the people of GOD, see Numbers, 22 and 23. Israel had many times power to destroy them, but did not; yet Moab perpetually harassed Israel. In all ages, the people of GOD suffer persecution. The Reader will see more of their history, by consulting those scriptures, chap. 16:14. Jeremiah 28:1. Ezekiel, 25:8. Here the LORD describes the day of Moab's visitation, and the effects of it.

**ISAIAH 15:5**

My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives *shall flee* unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

I pause over this verse to remark, and admire, the tender mercies of the Prophet. Though an enemy, yet the Prophet weeps over Moab. Alas! who that is born of a woman, but

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must feel for the miseries induced by sin in our common nature? Methinks here is a loud appeal to the ministers of JESUS, to have very feeling hearts over the miseries coming upon sinners: How did the bowels of JESUS yearn over the approaching desolations of Jerusalem? Luke 13:34, 35.

**ISAIAH 15:6-9**

For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing. (7) Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows. (8) For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim. (9) For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

Everything contained in these verses is like the Prophet's roll, written within, and without, and full of nothing else but *lamentation, and mourning, and woe*. Alas! what an awful thing must it be, to be full of this world's sorrow, and without the knowledge of, and an interest in CHRIST to soften it!

**REFLECTIONS**

READER, in the history of Moab, behold the history of every man by nature, exposed to the just judgment of GOD, the curse of his broken law, and all the terrors, which will one day fall upon the wicked! their hatred to GOD and his CHRIST, is manifested by their hatred to his people; neither can the malignity he taken out or purged by whole burnt sacrifices. From generation to generation, their anger burns with implacable hatred, neither can anything soften it. And as nothing tends to lessen or remove it, so the causes

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everlastingly must exist, to increase it more and more! Oh! the awful state of the enemies of GOD and his CHRIST!

Reader! can we look back to the days of our dwelling with the Moabs of this world? Can we remember our return, like Ruth and Naomi, from the country of Moab to the land of Bethlehem, even the house of bread, in JESUS, who is himself the bread of life. Oh! the blessedness of such a recovery! Precious LORD JESUS! give us grace to praise thee: let nothing but thy power, in the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, could persuade Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem, or constrain our hearts into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST. Blessed LORD! since thou hast called us by thy grace, and brought our souls to be savingly acquainted with thy love, oh! help us to live to thy glory, and to cease from all the Moabs, who are the enemies of thy cross, and to come out from among them, and to be separated, and touch not the unclean thing; so wilt thou receive us, and be a Father unto us, and we shall be the sons and daughters of the LORD Almighty.

## CHAPTER 16

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*This chapter is a continuation of the burden of Moab. The prophet calls upon Moab, in her distresses, to be looking unto Him, who alone could save her, that should sit upon the throne of David, which is CHRIST; and in the neglect of this predicts her total ruin.*

#### ISAIAH 16:1-3

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Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. (2) For it shall be, *that*, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, *so* the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon. (3) Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.

It appears, that in the days of David, Moab was under tribute to Israel, and paid gifts 2 Samuel 8:2. And it should seem, that Moab had at the time of the Prophet's ministry, withdrawn her allegiance. Hence the Prophet admonisheth Moab to revive this payment. And as in the days of *Mesha*, king of Moab, this tribute was paid in lambs, the Prophet recommends Moab to do so now; 2 Kings 3:4, But is there not a spiritual lesson, of a much higher nature, intended by the Prophet's direction to Moab? Israel was about to go into captivity, and Moab was under the heavy displeasure of the LORD: Now, said the prophet to Moab, offer up the lamb for an offering in sacrifice, with an eye to CHRIST. Seek pardon and peace through his blood; and in token of your sense of sin before GOD, be kind and affectionate to the LORD'S people; hide the outcasts of the LORD'S heritage, and look unto mount Zion: otherwise, Moab will be utterly spoiled, and scattered, and driven away, as a wandering bird.

### **ISAIAH 16:4-5**

Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. (5) And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

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These are beautiful verses, and full of gospel. The LORD recommends Moab to give shelter to Israel. They are outcasts, but still they are the LORD'S. *Is this Zion* (said the nations, in Jerusalem's mourning) *is this Zion, whom men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?* Lamentations 2:15. Now Moab is advised to take the LORD'S outcasts in, and give them welcome in the day of their calamity. And the motives for doing so are added: *In mercy shall the throne be established:* that is, JESUS, the seed of David, will erect his throne in mercy, and the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, shall partake of the blessings which will issue from his throne. Therefore seek the favor of this almighty King, by being kind to the King's people. Reader! the same advice holds good in all ages, and among all nations. And who shall say, if the LORD inclines the heart of sinners to be kind to the LORD'S distressed saints, might it not encourage an hope, that he who gives the grace of love to his people, will give the grace of faith and repentance towards himself?

### **ISAIAH 16:6-12**

We have heard of the pride of Moab; *he is* very proud: *even* of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: *but* his lies *shall* not *be* so. (7) Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirhareth shall ye mourn; surely *they are* stricken. (8) For the fields of Heshbon languish, *and* the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come *even* unto Jazer, they wandered *through* the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea. (9) Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen. (10) And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the traders shall tread out no wine in *their* presses; I have made *their vintage* shouting

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to cease. (11) Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh. (12) And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

If the Reader looks closely to what is here said concerning Moab, he will find it a suited representation of all the pride and ostentation of all the flourishing nations of the earth. The pride of Moab consisted in her wines and luxuries; her strong holds, and noble cities. And what is it now, even in the present hour, among all carnal men and nations? What is said of *Calnah*, and *Hamath*, and *Gath*, may be said of kingdoms and of individuals; *they lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches; they eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph!* They know not the LORD'S CHRIST. Take away their carnal rejoicings, and they have nothing left to rejoice in. Amos 6:2-7.

### **ISAIAH 16:13-14**

This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time. (14) But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant *shall be* very small *and* feeble.

Here is the close of the history of Moab, and an awful history it is. The LORD'S purpose, and the time of executing his purpose, are both determined: so hath it been in all ages, and so it is, and must be accomplished. What a solemn, but beautiful observation the apostle Peter makes upon this subject, in the close of one of his Epistles: he had been observing, with much pain of mind, how profane scoffers held in contempt the LORD'S threatenings of sinners, and closeth up

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the observation with a word of consolation to the LORD'S people: *Beloved (saith he) be not ignorant of this one thing that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day. The LORD is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* And then the apostle adds a most striking scripture, and an earnest exhortation from it, to which I pray the Reader to refer, 2 Peter 3:10-14.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter, in the solemn contents of it, and then gather into one collected view, the history of Moab, in the scripture account of it, from beginning to end; and behold what a miserable life, the life of carnal men of every description and character is, in whatever point of view they are regarded. Moab is but a picture of men and things out of CHRIST, throughout the earth. The situation of Moab was indeed most lovely, in those rich plains of Jordan, by Jericho. But what are grapes and vineyards, or the fertility and riches of a kingdom, where the inhabitants know not the LORD? What is the whole Turkish empire, in all the luxuries the imagination can conceive, while under the curse of GOD in Mahometan darkness? Oh, Reader! think of the vast and immense privileges of the blessed gospel of the ever blessed GOD! It is not *for the precious things brought forth by the sun, neither for the precious things put forth by the moon; but the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush!* when once the soul is truly awakened to a sense of sin, and the apprehension of the wrath to come; when the short and perishing state of things

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around is properly seen, and as rightly valued; then nothing short of CHRIST can bring comfort and content to the heart. Reader! let us learn wisdom from the history and destruction of Moab, and send to Him, who is the ruler of our sinful land, our tribute, and seek in his sacrifice, pardon and forgiveness. Let us not only send to him, but come to him, the true LAMB of GOD, *which taketh away the sins of the world*. He is upon *the throne of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness*. Yea, *he* is the LAMB in the midst of the throne; and that throne is a throne of grace, as well as glory. He will hear, and answer prayer, for he is still the meek and lowly Saviour, who hath said, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls*. Oh! for grace to come boldly unto his throne, *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in all time of need!*

## CHAPTER 17

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This Chapter opens with the burden of Damascus; but there is much concerning Israel in it also. Damascus is threatened with destruction. The LORD'S promises concerning Israel, some sweet views if gospel times are here and there introduced.

#### **ISAIAH 17:1-3**

The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from *being* a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. (2) The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make *them* afraid. (3) The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

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*Damascus was the chief city of Syria; and in how many instances the Assyrians distressed the Church of GOD, the Old Testament history hath largely recorded. It is most instructive to observe, as we prosecute the annals of the Church, how the LORD raiseth up one nation, and putteth down another, as those nations are made instrumental to humble or to raise Israel's glory. In the mean time, the LORD preserveth the Church, as his handful of people, in the midst of all, through the earth. Rise or fall who may among the nations, yet Jacob, the LORD'S portion, continueth the same. Micah 5:5-9.*

**ISAIAH 17:4-5**

And in that day it shall come to pass, *that* the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean. (5) And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

*There was a time, even in the days of Solomon, when the nation of Israel was great and flourishing; but now, how is the fine gold become dim! Reader, look at this scripture in a spiritual sense, and observe how the glory is departed! But blessed be GOD, there is yet a remnant according to the election of grace; Romans 11:5.*

**ISAIAH 17:6-8**

Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two *or* three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four *or* five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel. (7) At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel. (8) And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect *that* which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.

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I follow the same order as our Bibles, in including these verses, as they are there done, in parentheses; for it seems to me to be so designed, as if to call upon the Reader to observe how the LORD, in the midst of Israel's judgment, remembers mercy; and in times of desolation, so remote from the coming of CHRIST, still throws in this sweet scripture, to remind the Church of the gospel days yet to come. Reader! determine for yourself (for I will not determine for you) and may GOD the HOLY GHOST guide and instruct you in the determination; but is it not with reference to JESUS, that the Prophet was here commissioned to tell the Church, that at that day a man should look to his Maker, and his eyes have respect to the HOLY ONE of Israel? What day could the Prophet mean, but the gospel day? And what direction should the eye of faith have, but to the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Isaiah 42:1, and 45:22.

### **ISAIAH 17:9-14**

In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation. (10) Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips: (11) In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: *but* the harvest *shall be* a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow. (12) Woe to the multitude of many people, *which* make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, *that* make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! (13) The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but *God* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. (14) And behold at eveningtide trouble; *and* before the morning he *is* not. This *is* the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

I include the whole under one view, and, besides the general observation to be made upon them as a prophecy, fully accomplished, in after ages, I pray the Reader to make his spiritual reflections upon what is here said, and I venture to believe that he will find a large scope for the most improving application. If the LORD'S Israel do forsake the LORD, the Rock of their salvation, the sure consequence is chastisement and disappointment. The LORD withers their gourds, and a worm will grow out of the root of their most pleasant plants. At evening tide they find trouble, and before the morning their comforts are gone. There is nothing for the soul to rest upon, or find joy in, but JESUS; and if we do not make him our chief happiness, it matters not what else we place it in; for all will deceive, and prove a delusion. Precious LORD! how doth every part of thy blessed word manifest the infinite importance of thyself, and thy great salvation!

### REFLECTIONS

READER! mark the burden of Damascus; and behold, in the history of that people, the final end of all the enemies of GOD, and of his CHRIST. Of what avail was the splendour of this kingdom, or the power of her armies? Though the haughty Syrian exclaimed, in the vanity of his heart, *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters in Israel?* yet, like the waters of the Dead Sea, everything around them, and in them, and what was brought forth from their watering, produced nothing but death. Without GOD, without CHRIST, no ordinances of grace, no word of salvation, no blood of sprinkling! Alas, when the evil day cometh, and

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the prosperous days of carnal delights are once over, all is over!

Precious Redeemer! let mine eyes be unto thee, and let my soul have respect unto the HOLY ONE of Israel! Surely nothing can truly sweeten even the sweets of this life, that they shall have no bitterness mingled up with them, except thou art in them; and the very thoughts of an hereafter (until a conscious interest in thee, and in thy salvation, makes that hereafter truly blessed) will be forever full of horrors to the thinking mind. Be thou, therefore, precious JESUS, the all of this life, and of that which is to come. In thee, and from thee, let all my springs flow; for then, and then only, will *my meditation of thee be sweet*.

## CHAPTER 18

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*This Chapter, like the former, is full of threatenings to the people to whom it refers, on account of their ill-will to Israel. It is but short, but it contains heavy tidings.*

#### **ISAIAH 18:1**

Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which *is* beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

Though the name of the nation against whom woe is here denounced, is not mentioned; yet, by being said to be beyond the rivers of *Ethiopia*, it is easy to discover, that it is a nation which had proved perfidious to Israel. The LORD taketh up,

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and avengeth the quarrel of his people; *whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye*; Zechariah 2:8.

### **ISAIAH 18:2**

That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, *saying*, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

Here is the threat of this enemy. Taking advantage of Israel's humblings, he cometh on when Israel is cast down. Let the Reader spiritualize the passage to himself and his own circumstances, and he will find it profitable. If the world, or the great enemy of souls, come on to distress the souls of GOD'S people, when the LORD is chastening them; the LORD seeth, and will avenge their quarrel. Though the LORD correct, yet they shall not; and though he brings down, he will bring up, and they shall not hinder. It is blessed to see this, and to know it! **What** a very sweet scripture, in a way of expostulation, is that in the prophecy of *Obadiah* against *Edom*, on this very account. I pray the Reader to look at it: *Obadiah*, verse 8 to the end.

### **ISAIAH 18:3-6**

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye. (4) For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, *and* like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. (5) For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away *and* cut down the branches. (6) They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall

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summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

Here the LORD soundeth an alarm to, all the enemies of his Church; and they are admonished to attend to the sound of the trumpet, that then the LORD goeth forth for the salvation of his people, *even for salvation with his Anointed*. Every eye shall see, and all faces shall gather blackness, when the LORD turneth back the captivity of his people. And observe how striking is the prophet's expression: *for so the LORD said unto me*. CHRIST is the rest, in which JEHOVAH resteth, and is well pleased: and therefore in him, and his great salvation, Israel's deliverance and security is found. And hence, when the LORD swore in his wrath, that the unbelievers should not enter into his rest, it referred to their rejection of CHRIST; Hebrews 4:1, to the end.

### **ISAIAH 18:7**

In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

I do not presume to say as much, but I am inclined to think, that what is said in this verse, is meant to shadow forth the glorious revenue of everlasting praise, which poor sinners, of every description and character, shall offer, when brought to the LORD, in a way of grace and salvation. They are here spoken of as scattered and peeled. And who more so than souls brought under conviction, until brought into a state of salvation in JESUS? And as the subject of woe in this chapter is to the land beyond the rivers of *Ethiopia*, why may we not suppose the song of praise, and the present brought unto the

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LORD, may be from the same land concerning whom the Psalmist says, *she shall soon stretch out her hands unto God?* Psalm 68:31. It is blessed to trace the most distant shades of whatever refers to the glorious salvation by CHRIST.

## REFLECTIONS

WHEN we consider the extensive nature of sin, and behold the universal reign of it in every nation, over every clime, and among all people; how full of relief is the thought that His empire, by whom sin is destroyed, is said as finally and fully to be *from sea even to sea; and from the river even to the ends of the earth!* And what but GOD'S grace can overcome and subdue man's corruptions by nature! what shall stop the hatred of the heart against the love of GOD, but GOD'S love in subduing that enmity? If, therefore, we behold *the land shadowing with wings beyond the river*, coming forth with wrath against the LORD'S people; and if we behold the LORD going forth with whirlwinds of the south, to blow the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, why should it be thought incredible that the weapons of sin should fall from the hands of the mighty, and the proud heart be brought to bend to the sceptre of divine grace?

Reader, mark what the LORD said unto the prophet, and let our souls seek to our rest as the LORD did unto his. Precious LORD JESUS, thou *art the rest wherewith the LORD will cause the weary to rest, and thou art the refreshing*. Here may we behold souls fly *as clouds, and as doves to their windows!* Here may *the kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts*. Yea,

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blessed JESUS, here may *all kings fall down before thee, and all nations do thee service!* Amen.

## CHAPTER 19

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*In this chapter, Egypt, the original and sworn foe to Israel, comes in for her judgment. Great misery and distress are threatened to Egypt. The close of the chapter contains great mercy, which is promised to Egypt in calling the inhabitants to CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 19:1-10**

The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. (2) And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, *and* kingdom against kingdom. (3) And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. (4) And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts. (5) And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. (6) And they shall turn the rivers far away; *and* the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither. (7) The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no *more*. (8) The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. (9) Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded. (10) And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices *and* ponds for fish.

Here is the same subject of national distress for the burden of Egypt, as that of Damascus or Moab, though the end differs: foreign wars, and domestic jealousies are predicted: so that every man's hand is to be against his brother. As a nation and people, Egypt is described as most calamitous. Famine, and the want of bread; and fish, which their rivers supplied in plenty, were to fail by the LORD'S drying up the waters. In short, a general desolation was to take place, in the burden of Egypt. If we spiritualize the history, it may be said, and said with truth, that there is a very Egypt, and the burden of Egypt falls in upon the soul, whenever the LORD remits the out-pouring of his HOLY SPIRIT. Reader, do you not find, in the risings of sin within, and the remains of indwelling corruption in the soul, that, like the Egyptian darkness, even a deadness and a darkness which may be felt is induced, and a burden indeed, of an intolerable nature, comes over the mind? And in such seasons, doth not the very spirit fail, and everything seems to be, for the time, in respect of grace, lost? And how often is the poor heart tempted to cry out, *My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD?* Lamentations 3:18.

### **ISAIAH 19:11-17**

Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I *am* the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? (12) Where *are* they? where *are* thy wise *men*? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt. (13) The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, *even they that are* the stay of the tribes thereof. (14) The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken *man* staggereth in his vomit. (15) Neither shall there be *any* work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do. (16) In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear

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because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it. (17) And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

In these verses the subject of lamentation is carried on, under various descriptions, and all corresponding to denote the burden of Egypt. Their senators and wise men became unable to guide the helm of public affairs. Egypt was remarkable for learning; for Moses, we are told, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. But now the whole nation is sunk into ignorance. And the cause is from the LORD; for it is said that the LORD had mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof. And so great was the dread of the LORD and his people upon the minds of the Egyptians, that every one that made mention only thereof became a terror to himself. Reader, improve the subject spiritually, and it will indeed be very profitable. Is not this account of Egypt similar to what the mind of man feels under the awakenings of a sense of sin, and a dread of divine wrath in consequence thereof? Are not the humblings of the mind under fear and apprehension of a judgment to come, infinitely greater than those which arise from the dread of temporal evils? And when the LORD convinceth of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, will not the soul be more convulsed, than with any other terror? John 16:8.

### **ISAIAH 19:18-20**

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction. (19) In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. (20) And it shall be for a sign and

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for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

I beseech the Reader to remark every word in these verses. Let him observe how the sweet promises contained in them open. *In that day*, namely, the gospel day; the day of CHRIST, which *Abraham*, ages back, but now so much nearer, *saw afar off; rejoiced and was glad*. And how blessed is the promise to Egypt in this day. Egypt, had been miserably spoken of before, but now in mercies. So is it in all the transitions from nature to grace. The language of Canaan is the language of the gospel; so that Egypt, shall partake with Israel in the mercies of redemption, and shall speak the same language. And observe, that this is to be not in one or two instances, but by towns and cities; yea, five at once, as if to intimate that day of gospel grace, when the HOLY GHOST shall be poured out upon all flesh, agreeably to the promise, Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21. Neither is this all: for an altar to the LORD shall be set up in Egypt. CHRIST is the New Testament Altar, and the Egyptians, like Israel, shall present all their offerings upon Him, and in Him, and by Him: neither doth the blessing of gospel grace stop here; for when the poor sinner, under convictions of sin, and the oppressions of the enemy, is constrained to cry out unto the LORD, the LORD will send a Saviour, and a great one, and he will deliver him from all his burden, and from all his sins. Pray, Reader, pause over this precious scripture, for it is indeed most precious; and say, to whom but to JESUS the almighty Saviour of lost sinners, can this refer? Indeed was not his name called JESUS by the angel, for this express reason, because he should save his people from their sins? Matthew 1:21.

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**ISAIAH 19:21**

And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform *it*.

Pause again, Reader, over this lovely verse, for it is a continuance of the same doctrine. The blessed and auspicious effect of a Saviour, and a great one, being sent to the cry of the Egyptians, shall be followed up with another vast privilege; the LORD JEHOVAH shall be known to Egypt, in his covenant character and relationship, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD. A good understanding shall take place between them: and whereas, in times past, the knowledge of the LORD was only in Israel; now *the knowledge of the LORD shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea*. Surely there never was a more blessed gospel, nor a more blessed promise! And when fulfilled, in bringing sinners from afar, to the knowledge and love of GOD in CHRIST; what a blessed accomplishment is there of these scripture prophecies! Isaiah 54:13.

**ISAIAH 19:22**

And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal *it*: and they shall return *even* to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

Still prosecuting the same blessed theme, here is another gospel mercy. The LORD will convince, and convert; the LORD will wound, and heal. The HOLY GHOST will make his word as a fire and as a hammer, to melt and break the stout heart of the sinner, *by the Spirit of judgment, and the Spirit of burning!* And he that brings under the rod, will bring into the covenant, and show himself to be both *the SPIRIT of truth,*

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*and the HOLY GHOST the comforter!* Jeremiah 23:29. Isaiah 4:4. Ezekiel 20:37. John 14:16, 17.

### **ISAIAH 19:23-25**

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. (24) In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, *even* a blessing in the midst of the land: (25) Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed *be* Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

What a blessed close doth the prophet make of this sweet sermon of prophecy, in the end of the chapter! The gospel church is said to be *an highway* for the people; and so it is, when the LORD lifts up his standard through the earth. The enclosure of Israel, that had been kept for ages, is then thrown down; and both *Jew and Gentile are brought into one fold, under one Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST, the righteous*. Oh! the felicity, when CHRIST shall be universally acknowledged, as the LORD JEHOVAH'S CHRIST; the one, the only ordinance of heaven for salvation to all the earth! LORD, I would say (and the Reader will surely join my soul in the prayer of faith), hasten thy blessed purposes, and let that sweet promise to our *Shiloh* be accomplished, when *he shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; when men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed*. Amen.

## REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter, and, gather up the several interesting contents of it into one view: pray over it, and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to make it truly blessed to thy meditation.

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In the afflictions of Egypt, behold the sure afflictions which arise out of a fallen sinful state. Burdens, like those the Egyptians felt and groaned under, must and will make every sinner groan, when once the heart is broken for sin, and truly brought acquainted with the miseries of it. But when, from under the galling load of a guilty conscience, the poor sinner cries unto the LORD, because of the oppressors; then the LORD sends them *a Saviour, and a great one*, and he delivers them. Yea, before they called, before they felt their misery, before the evil of sin was known in the earth, GOD the FATHER hath sent JESUS his dear and ever blessed SON; a Saviour, indeed, and a great One, mighty to save, to save his people from their sins.

Reader! what saith your experience to these things? The day is come; the highway is cast up; the gospel door is open, when Egypt and the multitude of the isles are called to join the true Israel of GOD, in the salvation of the LORD JESUS. Oh! for that rich blessing of GOD in CHRIST here recorded, to be every day fulfilled, that JEHOVAH the LORD of Hosts may bless with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST, *Egypt, his people, and Assyria the work of his hands, and Israel his inheritance*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 20

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*In this chapter, the prophet becomes a type, as well as a preacher. The LORD, is pleased to make his servant Isaiah by this means, instruct the church, concerning Egypt and*

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*Ethiopia.*

### **ISAIAH 20:1-2**

In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it; (2) At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

It is probable that this event of *Tartar's* taking *Ashdod*, formed an epoch in history, so remarkable, that the year needed not to be recorded. And no doubt that the prophet's going about bare-foot, and without his garment of sackcloth, which he usually wore, made the time also memorable. Isaiah it should seem, while he wore sackcloth, thus preached, by the poverty and mournfulness of his apparel, as well as by his words. But the LORD, his master, will have him now proclaim his truths by type, as well as by preaching. Happy are those servants of the LORD in all ages, whose lives and discourses both tend to glorify GOD in CHRIST.

### **ISAIAH 20:3-6**

And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years *for* a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; (4) So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with *their* buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. (5) And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. (6) And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such *is* our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

It was gracious in the LORD, to explain the meaning of this typical representation, that no misapplication might be made of it. And while the lesson tended to humble both nations, Egypt and Ethiopia, as the LORD designed it; the LORD'S mercy to his people Israel, was the more signally displayed. Surely Israel might learn therefrom, how unsuitable an arm of flesh must be to support them, when a whole nation was thus led into captivity itself. Reader! the same lesson is in force even now; whew shall we look for aid in the hour of necessity, but to the LORD our righteousness? *Truly in vain*, saith the prophet, *is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the LORD our GOD is the salvation of Israel*; Jeremiah 3:23.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! art thou struck with the view of the Prophet becoming a type, as well as a preacher and a prophet in the church of the LORD; and no doubt in the three years walk through the streets of the people, made thereby the drunkard's song, and the sport and derision of the profane; and will it not lead thee to contemplate Him in his unequalled humbleness and meekness of deportment, who, though LORD of life and glory, went about the streets of Jerusalem, in the garb of a poor Jew, *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*? Precious JESUS! how do all thy servants sink to nothing, compared to thee; pre-eminent in humility, as pre-eminent in nature, in office, and in character! Thou wert indeed the sum and substance of every type; and the one great end and purpose of both sacrifice, prophecy, and ordinance. With what unwearied zeal for thy

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FATHER'S honour, and with unabating love to thy church's salvation, didst thou endure *such a contradiction of sinners against thyself!* And how didst thou, when reviled, *revile not again, but committed thyself to him who judgeth rightly!* LAMB of GOD! keep the eyes of thy redeemed stedfastly fixed on thee; and in every exercise of life, may thy servants hear the sweet voice of consolation, arising out of thy bright example, made perfect through suffering: *Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

## CHAPTER 21

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*Here, are several burdens brought into one chapter in succession to each other: the burden of the Desert of the Sea; of Dumah, and of Arabia: but all in relation to GOD'S covenant people Israel.*

#### **ISAIAH 21:1-2**

The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; *so* it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

(2) A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

The *Desert of the Sea* can mean no other than *Babylon*; and the ruin of it is foretold by way of comforting GOD'S people in their captivity. It is blessed to observe, how beforehand the LORD is for his people, in laying in comforts again a time of tribulation; Elam and Media, that is, Persia and the Medes,

were to conquer Babylon; and therefore, when the church in her captivity found that the Medians were come to besiege Babylon, the recollection of this prophecy might give them comfort: for in the ruin of Babylon, would be their deliverance. Daniel 5:31.

### **ISAIAH 21:3-5**

Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing *of it*; I was dismayed at the seeing *of it*. (4) My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me. (5) Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, *and* anoint the shield.

Here the Prophet describes as it should seem, the terrible consternation and alarm, the impious monarch of Babylon would be thrown into, in the memorable night of his destruction. Let the Reader compare what is here said with Daniel 5:1-6, and 30. And how often in modern times, hath the last hours of notorious sinners been followed with similar alarms in their guilty consciences!

### **ISAIAH 21:6-10**

For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth. (7) And he saw a chariot *with* a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, *and* a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed: (8) And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights: (9) And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground. (10) O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

Here by vision, a sketch of that memorable event is given to the Prophet. Though at a distance of time and place so remote; yet the outline of the horrors of Babylon is given to the Prophet, to behold in vision: Chariots and horsemen; the cry of a lion, and a voice proclaiming, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods broken to the ground!* These were strong prophetic intimations of the vast ruin and overthrow, which should take place. And the Prophet's seal to the vision is striking, in that he saith, that what he had delivered, was from the LORD of Hosts, the GOD of Israel. Reader! do not overlook, that as this event, here foretold, was exactly fulfilled; so there is a far greater blessing the church is now taught to look for in gospel times, and from existing circumstances, we hope it is not greatly remote, in which *Babylon, the mother of harlots, shall fall to rise no more!* Revelation 17:5. 18:1, 2.

### **ISAIAH 21:11-12**

The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? (12) The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.

The burden of *Dumah* is short, but expressive; a watchman is questioned by a man of Mount *Seir*, a region possessed by the *Edomites*, the children of *Esau*, *what of the night?* he repeats the inquiry, and the watchman gives an answer; though no more is said, either of the cause or of the event, in the inquiry; yet it is a part of scripture, which, may be made abundantly profitable, under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST. A man of Seir is a Gentile, a stranger, a foreigner: doth he ask questions concerning the GOD of Israel? let every faithful watchman be ready to make answer: tell him of the night of

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sin, and the night of death; tell him of JESUS *the hind of the morning!* Propose to him all those numberless things, of grace and salvation, which are in the person, blood, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and see if he will inquire farther; for then surely the work is of the LORD, *who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working;* Isaiah 28:29.

### **ISAIAH 21:13-17**

The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. (14) The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled. (15) For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. (16) For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: (17) And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken *it*.

The *Arabians* and *Dedanims* are here brought in for a portion of the calamities now hanging over the countries to be made desolate. It is probable, that the latter were the descendants of *Dedan*, a son of *Abraham*, whom *Keturah* bare him, Genesis 25:3. And as to *Kedar*, so often spoken of in the word of GOD, we are not at a loss to trace the origin to *Ishmael*. The church in her song, speaks of her corruptions by nature, under the figure of the blackness of *Kedar* while rejoicing in her comeliness, from the comeliness put upon her, by her Solomon, the LORD JESUS CHRIST; Song Of Solomon 1:5. All these burdens carry with them the same divine signature, that they are not of the prophet's own mind, but come from the LORD; and are therefore sure and certain.

## REFLECTIONS

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MY soul! while reading the burdens of others, do not overlook thine own: but if JESUS, that almighty burdenbearer, hath removed the guilt and dominion of sin from thee; while thou art praising his name for the unspeakable and unmerited deliverance, thou wilt still remember *the wormwood and the gall!*

Oh! how galling was the load of sin, and how full of horrors the apprehension of the awful consequences of it, before JESUS was revealed, as *taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself!* And now, LORD, how blessed is it to see that thou *hast borne our sins in thine own body on the tree, when thou didst die, the just for the unjust, to bring sinners unto GOD!* Hence, blessed JESUS, I would now bring thee all my sins, and all my sorrows; for thou hast said, *Cast thy burden on the LORD, and he shall sustain thee!* I know, LORD, that thou wilt kindly and graciously support me, and bear me up under all; and know, LORD, that through thy grace helping me, I shall be more than conqueror in and through all. JESUS will bear me up, and carry me on, and bring me through all that yet belongs to my pilgrimage here below, until he takes me home to his everlasting kingdom, to bear me in the arms of his love forever.

## CHAPTER 22

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*The invasion of the land of Judah, is here predicted, and sad events implicated in it: but towards the close, there are many*

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*precious promises, typical, as it should seem, of Judah's deliverer, even CHRIST.*

### **ISAIAH 22:1-3**

The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops? (2) Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain *men are* not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle. (3) All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, *which* have fled from far.

*The valley of vision*, must mean Judah, for the Psalmist describes it as such, Psalm 125:2. And the holy city, Jerusalem, is called a *land of vision*, on account of the prophet's dwelling in it, and delivering their predictions there. And here, the LORD'S land, which is the glory of all lands, comes in for her visitation also, because of transgression. The songs of the temple are changed for the cries of the streets; and the people are in distress, in the prospect of the enemy's approach. Reader! what is said here of GOD'S people in general, may be said of every individual in particular: *when without are fightings, within will be fears*; correction is in the covenant. Psalm 89.

### **ISAIAH 22:4-7**

Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. (5) For *it is* a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains. (6) And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men *and* horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield. (7) And it shall come to pass, *that* thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

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The Prophet, like a true servant of the LORD, though himself had the least hand in bringing down the judgments of GOD, yet he will be the first to lament them. Alas! when GOD'S corrections are in our land, what would become of it, if the LORD'S handful of people were not at prayer? What a gracious and earnest request was that of the king, when he sent to the prophet, to beg of him, *to lift up his voice, for the remnant that was left*; Isaiah 37:1-4. Joel 2:17, 18. Here is a sad representation of the devastations made by the Persian army!

### **ISAIAH 22:8-11**

And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest. (9) Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. (10) And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. (11) Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

Whatever were the histories in the siege of Judah, as this scripture records, I stay not to inquire; but I think, without violence to the expressions, by *the uncovering of Judah*, and *the breaches of the city of David*, we may very safely suppose, it had reference to somewhat more than the mere events themselves, carried on in the siege. May it not be in reference (for I humbly ask the question) to Judah's being made sensible of her hypocrisy and deceitfulness, with her GOD; by which a breach in the covenant is made, and the LORD now resents it? Judah had sinned, but yet put on a covering of piety; and in her distress, looked to the number of her troops, and the strength of her inhabitants; but lifted not her eyes for help to the LORD, her Maker. Then, saith the

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LORD, this covering shall be taken off, and she shall be seen as she is. See another beautiful expostulation to this effect, Jeremiah 2:19.

### **ISAIAH 22:12-14**

And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: (13) And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. (14) And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Reader! do not fail to remark, how the LORD, by the same process of grace, carries on his merciful designs towards his people, in all ages. He visits their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges. He sends trouble among them, and calls to weeping and prayer. But if, instead of spiritual humblings, they seek to deaden sorrow by carnal enjoyments, and bid defiance as it were to the rod; the affliction is but the more increased. The Prophet interpreted the incurable wickedness of such, to be beyond the reach of all the sacrifices of the law. Reader! what a sweet testimony by the way do we discover here, of the vast and infinite importance of the blood and sacrifice of CHRIST! If the Reader wishes to enlarge his meditations on this subject, I would refer him to Leviticus 26:14, to the end. See, also Hosea 2:6, to the end.

### **ISAIAH 22:15-19**

Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, *even* unto Shebna, which *is* over the house, *and say*, (16) What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, *as* he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, *and* that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock? (17) Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty

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captivity, and will surely cover thee. (18) He will surely violently turn and toss thee *like* a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory *shall be* the shame of thy lord's house. (19) And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

The removal of *Shebna* from the office of treasurer, no doubt, took place in the history of Judah; perhaps in the event of the invasion. But the introduction of the subject here seems to have reference to what the Prophet had in commission to deliver concerning a greater than Shebna, in the close of the chapter. *Shebna*, therefore, is the representative of every man, who setteth up his rest on this side the land of promise; who takes confidence in anything short of JESUS. Oh! for grace to make a better choice!

### **ISAIAH 22:20-25**

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: (21) And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. (22) And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. (23) And I will fasten him *as* a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. (24) And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. (25) In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that *was* upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

The Prophet gives, in these verses, a very pleasing account of the character of *Eliakim*, and of the LORD'S approbation of him. I confess myself inclined to drop all considerations of the servant, to look at the master; for very certain it is, a greater

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*than Eliakim*, the son of *Hilkiah*, is here typically represented. I venture to set this down as a fixed and certain thing, because the LORD JESUS himself, when making himself known to his servant John and sending him to communicate what he saw and heard to the churches, declared who he was by this very insignalia, of the key of David, Revelation 3:7. And, Reader! do observe how the outlines of the Redeemer's office-character, are sketched in those of *Eliakim*. *I will call my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah*. And who was it that called the LORD JESUS to the service of redemption, and placed him as lord-treasurer over his house? The HOLY GHOST expressly tells the church, that CHRIST *glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, but was called of GOD, as was Aaron*, Hebrews 5:4, 5. See Isaiah 42:1-6. Matthew 17:5. And if *Eliakim* was invested with the robe, and the girdle, and all the government put into his hand, so as to be made a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the house of David; if *Eliakim* had power to open and shut; and shut, that none should open; if *Eliakim* was fastened as a nail in a sure place, and became a glorious throne to his father's house, so that all glory should rest upon him; can we refrain a moment, from having our very souls led, instinctively as it were, to all precious, all-glorious JESUS; whose robe of salvation is the everlasting clothing and glory of his redeemed; and whose girdle the faithfulness of the whole covenant, for his people to lay hold of, and hang by in time, and to all eternity? Who but JESUS hath indeed the key of the house of David? Who can open, if he shuts, or who can shut if he opens? *Eliakim* had but the doors of entrance or exclusion in the palace, or the church, to command; but our *Eliakim*, the SON OF GOD, hath the key of all hearts, the key of his word, the keys of heaven, death, hell, and the grave.

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Precious consideration to the believer, and not to be parted with for a thousand worlds. He is a nail indeed, and in a sure place: for on him, JEHOVAH, our GOD and FATHER, hath fastened all the persons, mercies, appointments, blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal, of his church and people, from all eternity. And on the earthly Eliakim the whole was but hung; it was not his own; neither could he long keep it; for himself and all his appendages had but a day of duration. But with the Eliakim came down from heaven, all the glory which was put upon him, was his own before. For as the SON of GOD, being one with GOD, everything which constitutes the GODHEAD was his, essentially so, in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST: and as GOD-MAN Mediator, all power and glory was and is his, both by purchase and by gift, and must be so forever. Surely then, are his people, all his redeemed, will joyfully, and with the most lively acknowledgments of love and praise from the lowest vessel of mercy, to the highest flaggons of servants, who minister before him, hang upon JESUS all the trophies of redemption; crying out with the church, both above and below, *worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive honour, and glory, and power, and majesty; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood!* Revelation 5:9. And as the chapter closeth, when in that day, the nail fastened in a sure place shall be removed, cut down, and fall; and the burden also upon it, fall together with it; oh! what blessedness is discoverable, in this sweet relation also. For who doth not see in this prophecy, all the great leading characters of redemption by JESUS? He who another prophet saith, *was to be anointed as the most Holy, and to be cut off, but not for himself, when finishing sin and transgression?* Daniel 9:24, 25. Precious LORD JESUS! thou

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didst bear the sins of thy people in thine own body, on the tree; and when thou wert cut off, and hadst made *thy grave with the wicked, and with the rich in thy death*; then was that blessed promise to be fulfilled; *to see of the travail of thy soul, and be satisfied; and as thy FATHER'S servant, to justify many in having borne their iniquities!* Isaiah 53:9-12.

## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! I pass over every lesser subject, and every lesser object, to fix mine eyes on thee, oh thou excelling excellence of all perfection! *The burden indeed of the valley of vision*. It is the LORD, who for thine own people, thine Israel and Judah after the flesh, hath brought thee forth, as the glorious Eliakim, over thy FATHER'S house, and for the covering of Judah which was by sin uncovered, and for repairing the many many breaches of David, which transgression had opened; thou, and thou only, couldst be competent to perform! All our own attempts, and every aspiring exertion of man, were found but as the pride of *Shebna*. Nothing could restore what sin had taken away, until thou, the LORD of life and glory, came from heaven, to bring back the waste heritages, and *to restore the desolations of many generations*. Hail! thou glorious almighty JESUS. Blessed be GOD our FATHER, who hath called thee over his house, and committed all government into thine hand, *that all men should honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER*.

Help us, LORD, to hang all the stress of our salvation, both our being, and our well-being, wholly on thee. And do thou, LORD, for thou only hast the key of David, to do it, open thy treasures of wisdom and knowledge to our raptured view, and

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open our souls to the enjoyment of them. Open thy word, and open our eyes to see it, and our hearts to enjoy it, our ears to hear, and our tongues to proclaim the wonders of redemption. And oh, LORD! shut out all thoughts that would arise, to rob us of our delight in thee, and our whole dependence upon thee. Let every faculty of our souls, by the almightiness of thy power, be resolutely shut against everything but JESUS. Drive, LORD, every buyer and seller out of thy temple, which is our bodies; and let nothing open our souls to receive ought but thee. Say to our hearts, to our affections, Open, ye gates, that the LORD JESUS, the King of glory, may come in, in the daily, hourly influences of his grace, until he finally and fully open the everlasting gates of heaven, to take us home, to the enjoyment of glory in JESUS forever. Amen.

## CHAPTER 23

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*The Prophet here describes the overthrow of Tyre, and in characters of great misery. Promises are made in the close of the chapter, of a change.*

#### **ISAIAH 23:1-7**

The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them. (2) Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished. (3) And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, *is* her revenue; and she is a mart of nations. (4) Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, *even* the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, *nor* bring up virgins. (5) As at

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the report concerning Egypt, *so* shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. (6) Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle. (7) *Is* this your joyous *city*, whose antiquity *is* of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

It is remarkable that this prophecy was delivered at a time when *Tyre* was in the height of prosperity, and resting to the full in the enjoyment of flourishing trade and merchandize. For long after this, the prophets *Ezekiel* and *Zechariah*, both of them, took notice of the pride and greatness of *Tyre*. Ezekiel 28:1 to the end. Zechariah 9:3, 4. But of what avail is the pomp of nations, where the love of God is not? Of what avail is worldly prosperity to individuals unsanctified by grace!

### **ISAIAH 23:8-9**

Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning *city*, whose merchants *are* princes, whose traffickers *are* the honourable of the earth? (9) The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, *and* to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

There is hardly a passage in the whole prophecy of Isaiah more full and comprehensive than what is contained in these verses, to set forth man's nothingness, and the LORD'S all-sufficiency. The Prophet puts forth the subject in the form of a question; as if speaking after the manner of men, nothing can be competent to overthrow a people, whose very merchants are princes. Yes, saith the Prophet, answering his own question; the LORD of Hosts, who razed *Tyre*, can and will destroy it. Reader, take home the precious instruction, from the history of nations in their rise and fall, to your own individual instance, in all the circumstances of life, and learn from it that solemn truth of JESUS, in the interesting question he put, and which answers itself: *what is a man profited*

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*though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?* Mark 8:36. Luke 12:16-21.

### **ISAIAH 23:10-14**

Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: *there is* no more strength. (11) He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant *city*, to destroy the strong holds thereof. (12) And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest. (13) Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, *till* the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; *and* he brought it to ruin. (14) Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.

Here we are brought acquainted with the means the LORD will make use of, for the overthrow of *Tyre*. The *Chaldeans* shall be the LORD'S instruments; and what adds to the aggravation of *Tyre's* sorrow, to humble her pride still more, is, that she shall be brought down by a power, which, like a mushroom that springs up in a night, was nothing in the days of *Tyre's* grandeur. The *Chaldeans* were not, until the *Assyrian* founded the nation: it was but a wilderness. Reader, it is distressing to the proud, both of empires and individual persons, to be brought low; but when the LORD makes use of contemptible instruments to humble them; this is humbling indeed. And is it not so now? In the contentions of nations do we not see it? In the bringing down the lofty looks of a sinner, is it not done frequently by humbling providences, such as sickness, poverty, and the like? See a beautiful illustration, Jeremiah 31:18-20. And another, Luke 15:13-19.

### **ISAIAH 23:15-18**

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And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. (16) Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered. (17) And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. (18) And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

It is worthy remark, that *Tyre's* captivity was appointed by the LORD, to be of the same length as Israel's, and under the same government. Was this designed, (I only ask the question, not determine) that the children of *Tyre*, by mingling with GOD'S Israel in captivity, might become acquainted with Israel's GOD? Certain it is, that after *Tyre* began to recover from her ruin, and commenced trade again, there was a friendly intercourse between *Israel* and *Tyre*. In the days of *Nehemiah*, certain men of *Tyre* lived in *Judah*, for the holy man of GOD complained of their profaning the sabbath in selling their fish on the LORD'S day, *Nehemiah* 13:16. And it should seem, by what our LORD saith of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, that he had his eye upon it for good; *Matthew* 11:21, 22. And in the after age, when CHRIST had finished redemption, and was returned to glory, the apostles, in their general dispersion of preaching the gospel, found disciples in *Tyre*, *Acts* 21:4. Reader, who shall say, but that for the conversion of the men of Tyre, in bringing the LORD'S heritage that were among them to the knowledge of JESUS, the overthrow of Tyre was appointed? Who shall calculate to what extent in the present hour the LORD is accomplishing his

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purpose, in the commotions of the earth, among kingdoms and people, in order to gather his dispersed to himself, from all the varieties of the earth? Oh, what a subject of this kind will open in heaven, when the LORD shall have brought home his whole Church! Then every tongue will break out in that voice of praise, in singing the song of Moses, and of the LAMB, *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou, King of saints!* Revelation 15:3.

## REFLECTIONS

READER, how truly blessed is it to see, in the rise and fall of nations, that the LORD is carrying on his own gracious purposes; that all the events of nations, kingdoms, and empires, are but ministering to that little handful of people, whom GOD *hath formed for himself, and to show forth his praise!* The mind is lost in amazement, when beholding the love, and care, and the watchings over of the LORD upon his Israel. It was said of them, as a distinguishing feature of character, that *they should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.* And uniformly through the Bible, we find this to be the case. In GOD the FATHER's purpose they thus have all along moved on. In JESUS love, and grace, and favor, everything is made to minister to them. And in the mercy, teachings, and influences of the HOLY GHOST, all his tendencies are towards them. So that if the overthrow of nations shall promote Israel's welfare, the LORD overthrows them. If the prosperity of nations become necessary to humble Israel, the LORD brings this to pass also. In all things, and by all means, JEHOVAH is forwarding his gracious designs for his Church, and the final happiness of Zion, and of the redeemed of the LORD,

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is at the bottom of all the dispensations and providences going on throughout the world. Reader, think of this; carry the thought with you wherever you go; bring it into recollection whatever history you read, of the nations that are past, or of the nations now existing; and while the solemn thought is deeply impressed both upon your mind and my own, oh! for grace to inquire and search diligently, whether we are of the true Israel of GOD? If we are not of this world, but JESUS hath chosen us out of the world, what have we to do with its customs, and its pleasures and pursuits? Surely we cannot have a more decided testimony, than when sitting aloof from all its unnecessary concerns. If JESUS be our portion, then our intimacy will not be great with those, who have their portion only in this life. O how sweetly doth JESUS call to his hidden ones, who *dwell* indeed, but do not *belong*, to the men of *Tyre*, and of *Zidon*, in the present day: *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

## CHAPTER 24

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*Solemn judgments are here set forth, in a general way. Towards the close of the chapter, the subject brightens in the prospect of the coming of CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 24:1-3**

Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. (2) And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the

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lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. (3) The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

Some of the old copies read the word earth, *land*, and confine the sorrows to the house of Judah. But it should seem from what follows in the after-parts of the chapter, where the same subject is spoken of as *the whole world languishing*, to be more general, yea, universal. And when we consider that, *by the sin of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*, there can be no reason for limiting the consumption of human nature, and the sorrows of mankind to the house of Judah. Reader, do not fail to observe, that in the waste here spoken of, the disease is epidemic, and spares neither age, sex, nor situation. *Here, the servant is as his master*. Romans 5:16. Job 3:19.

### **ISAIAH 24:4-12**

The earth mourneth *and* fadeth away, the world languisheth *and* fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. (5) The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. (6) Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. (7) The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh. (8) The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. (9) They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. (10) The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in. (11) *There is* a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. (12) In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

Here is but little variation from what went before. The representation is as if taken from the prophets vision; the roll

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is written within and without, and the contents are *lamentations, and mourning, and woe*; Ezekiel 2:10. One verse is in the midst to explain the cause, *It is the curse which devoureth the earth*; Genesis 3:17. Reader, think what would have been the sorrow and misery forever, had not JESUS *redeemed us from the curse of the law, in being made a curse for us*; Galatians 3:13. And never fail to connect with this subject, that scripture, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

### **ISAIAH 24:13-15**

When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, *there shall be* as the shaking of an olive tree, *and* as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. (14) They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea. (15) Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, *even* the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

How blessed and gracious this comes in! In the worst of times, there is *a remnant according to the election of grace*. If the LORD, indeed, had not left us, and did not still leave us, *a small remnant we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah*. Pray turn to those scriptures, Romans 11:5. Isaiah 65:8. How suitable is it, as the prophet speaks, that this remnant should lift up their voice, and sing redemption! For if the plague be so general, what must be the mercy to escape it? If the world be universally gone to putrefaction, how blessed must it be to be *the salt of the earth!* Matthew 5:13. Daniel 3:27. Acts 16:24, 25.

### **ISAIAH 24:16-21**

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, *even* glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe

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unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. (17) Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *are* upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. (18) And it shall come to pass, *that* he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. (19) The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. (20) The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. (21) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones *that are* on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

GOD'S people feel their leanness, in times of general calamity. And no doubt, sorrow for sinners, as well as the distress they feel in themselves, have a great tendency to waste, and lower the spirits. When the LORD'S judgments are in the earth, the righteous cannot but tremble. *Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake;* Hebrews 12:21.

### **ISAIAH 24:22-23**

And they shall be gathered together, *as* prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. (23) Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Here is a most precious conclusion, and full of gospel mercies. JESUS was called by the FATHER purposely to bring the prisoners out of the prison, and them that sat in darkness out of the prison-house. And when we observe the promise here given, that though shut up, yet after many days they shall be visited; what a sweet testimony is this of the grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. Consult those scriptures, Isaiah 42:6, 7. Zechariah 9:11, 12. Luke 4:14-20. Reader, ask your own

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heart, must not JESUS in such a day, and in the display of such mercies as are here said to be shown by him, in visiting his people *after many days*, must he not be truly glorious, in the eyes of his redeemed? Yes! the moon shall look pale, and even the sun blush, and hide his diminished head, as overawed and having lost all lustre, in being eclipsed by his Maker and his LORD!

## REFLECTIONS

READER, while reading this Chapter, and beholding the miseries of the world, in consequence of sin, may we not exclaim with the Psalmist, *Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth?* Oh! the incalculable sorrows, by reason of sin, and the distresses in all ages! It deluged the world by water; it destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; it hath produced death in all the circumstances of mankind! But to see the awfulness of sin in its strongest colors, we must look at *Golgotha*, and behold JESUS dying for sin, *the just for the unjust, to bring sinners to GOD.*

Reader, do not forget to whom it is owing, that the earth still stands! Look unto JESUS! and so look, until the eye affect the heart. Oh! it is blessed to have such views of the LAMB of GOD, that shall drive away all other considerations, and make all things blush, like the heavenly bodies in the presence of their LORD, in having the whole heart and affections centered in him. Precious JESUS! be thou my one glorious object, and all leanness of soul will be forgotten, yea, done away.

## CHAPTER 25

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*This is a most precious chapter, containing promises on the part of GOD, and praises on the part of the Church. It is all over gospel; and as suited to the present hour of the Church, as to the time in which it was delivered.*

#### **ISAIAH 25:1-3**

O LORD, thou *art* my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful *things*; *thy* counsels of old *are* faithfulness *and* truth. (2) For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built. (3) Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

The Prophet, in the name of the Church, begins the song of praise. And without all doubt, it is a gospel song, in which redemption is celebrated. Probably with reference to the ruin of Babylon, which, though the captivity of the Church in Babylon was not then begun, much less finished; yet looking to the close of it, under the teaching of the SPIRIT, the prophet blesseth JEHOVAH for bringing his people out of it, and destroying the Church's enemies. But we lose the whole beauty of this hymn, and the design for which it is handed down to us, if we do not see in it the faithfulness and truth of JEHOVAH, in the accomplishment of redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Here the Church sings and triumphs, and every redeemed soul shouts aloud, *O LORD thou art my GOD. I will exalt thee, for thou hast indeed, done wonderful things.* Reader, think what wonders in redemption! what wonders in *thy* redemption!

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**ISAIAH 25:4-5**

For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall. (5) Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; *even* the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

Reader! look at JESUS, while reading these verses. Behold him as all this, and infinitely more: and what a rich enjoyment do those views in Him, and by Him, and from Him, afford the soul, under any, and all the exercises here spoken of; when we not only find a fence, and a strength, but refreshment and comfort; not only see ourselves sitting under his shadow, but tasting of his fruit; and not only enjoy his salvation, but find him to be himself the whole of our salvation! See those scriptures, Song Of Solomon 2:3, 4. Isaiah 32:1, 2. Psalm 27:1-6.

**ISAIAH 25:6**

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

I do not say but that the Prophet had an eye to Israel's joy, in returning, after their captivity, to their own land; and in the first sense of these verses, to the end of the chapter, the words may be so referred: but it were sadly to read those precious things, were we not, now they are unfolded to us in gospel days, to read them principally and fully, as pointing to JESUS, and the rich feast of salvation brought by him, in the holy mountain of his Church. Here we have a feast, indeed, and a feast of fat things. The LORD of Hosts, even JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of persons, FATHER, SON, and HOLY

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GHOST, hath made it. And it is made for all people; not merely the house of Israel only, but for us poor Gentiles, who were *aliens and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel*. And he that made the feast, hath called us to the feast, and sent to us in the lanes, and streets, and highways, to bring us in, though poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind. And we have found, that our unworthiness hath proved no obstacle to the receiving the bountiful provision of the LORD. It is the feast of a king, yea, the heavenly king; and they that are the highly privileged partakers of it, do partake of it, *without money and without price*. Precious LORD JESUS! have I found *thy flesh to be meat indeed, and thy blood, to be drink indeed?* Then if so, LORD, to my soul's salvation, these things become as marrow to the body, and as the strongest bodied wine to the animal spirits, which by resting upon the lees, both gets out all the strength of the grape, and becomes refined, by remaining, long unshaken; so, LORD, would I feed and rest on thee! Matthew 22:2-4. Proverbs 9:1-5. Luke 14:16-24.

### **ISAIAH 25:7**

And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

Was not this blessed promise faithfully and fully completed, when, at the hour of CHRIST'S death, by an invisible hand, *the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom?* Mark 15:38. Before this, the veil of ignorance, the veil of enmity, and the numberless veils of separation, which stood, and must forever have stood, between a holy God and unholy sinners, kept all people back from the smallest possible communion with GOD, and totally covered all people and all nations. But now, blessed JESUS, by thy blood, thou

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hast opened *a new and living way* for thy people, and art entered thyself within the veil, to cause thy redeemed to follow thee, that *where thou art, there they shall be also*; Hebrews 6:19, 20. Let the Reader compare such blessed views as these of our LORD JESUS, with what is said concerning Moses, and learn therefrom, the felicity to which believers are called, in the removal of all coverings in their drawing nigh to the LORD; Exodus 34:33, 34. 2 Corinthians 3:10 to the end. Hebrews 10:19-25.

**ISAIAH 25:8**

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

This verse, if there were no other in the chapter, would at once decide that somewhat infinitely more important than the mere temporal deliverance of the Church from Babylon, was intended in this blessed chapter. And who is it but our JESUS, of whom, and by whom, it could be said, that *death should be swallowed up in victory*? How should tears be wiped away from all faces, until JESUS had first taken away all sin, which is the sole cause of tears, by his blood? Who are the people here spoken of but JESUS's people? And how, to all eternity, could the rebukes of sin, the rebukes of GOD'S broken law, the rebukes of GOD'S justice, the rebukes of all GOD'S creation; yea, the rebukes of their own guilty consciences; how could all these be taken away, but by JESUS becoming both *sin and a curse for them, that they might be made the righteousness of GOD in him*? Blessings on thee, thou LAMB of GOD for the accomplishment of all these precious things! And praised be the LORD JEHOVAH, our GOD and FATHER, that his mouth hath

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spoken it, and his covenant faithfulness hath confirmed it. Reader, do not pass away from this most blessed verse, until thou hast read the following scriptures: Hosea 13:14, compared with 1 Corinthians 15:54-57. Hebrews 2:9-15. Revelation 21:3, 4.

**ISAIAH 25:9**

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

There is a very great beauty in this verse, as well as great glory; and the believer enters into the proper apprehension of it, when what is here said by the Church at large, he knows, and can, and doth make application of to himself. There is now no question as to whom redemption is wholly owing, in that precious soul's experience, from knowing and feeling, under the convincings of the HOLY GHOST, the plague of his own heart, hath fled to JESUS, and found him a full all-sufficient, and complete Saviour. And what holy triumphs will be his portion in that day, that blessed glorious day, when, closing the eye of the body in death, the eye of the soul opens to the view of JESUS, and in him, to all the glories of eternity! Oh! the blessedness of the long waiting, yea, the long exercised soul, when this day breaks in upon him! I detain the Reader with a short observation more upon this verse, just to remark that the word *save*, he will *save* us, is derived from the same root as the word JESUS, a *Saviour*, is derived: as if to direct the Church to his identical person: this is our GOD—this is our LORD! It is blessed to observe this!

**ISAIAH 25:10-12**

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For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. (11) And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth *his hands* to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands. (12) And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, *and* bring to the ground, *even* to the dust.

Reader! I must not swell my Poor Man's Commentary: I only, therefore; detain you, to observe on these verses, that the LORD hath uniformly, through all the Bible, connected the subject of destruction to his foes, and the foes of his Church, with the salvation of his people. And however men may amuse themselves with hopes, like the spider's web, that peace and safety shall be their portion; yet the enemies of GOD, and of his CHRIST, must be found liars. When JEHOVAH first made known, what had lain in his bosom from all eternity, the setting up his dear Son as the Head of his Church, the devil set up his kingdom against him: all, therefore, that oppose CHRIST are taking part with that apostate spirit, and, if living and dying in his service and kingdom, can have *no inheritance in the kingdom of GOD, and of his CHRIST*. All, therefore, of this description, will be trodden down, *as straw is trodden own for the dunghill*. Awful consideration!

## REFLECTIONS

READER! how shall we close our meditation on the gospel subject contained in this chapter, in better terms than in seeking grace to catch the Prophet's note, and blessing GOD, and exalting his holy name, as he did, for such mercies as are here recorded, and with which the LORD comforted his Church

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and people, in days remote from the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Think, Reader! how gracious the LORD is, and was, and ever will be, that he will have his people made happy in the expectation of blessings, as well as in the enjoyment of them! So that by faith, our fathers in the Church, gone before us, lived upon CHRIST, and feasted on the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, as the souls of his redeemed now live and feast upon him since redemption- work hath been completed; and all, with one heart and one mouth, glorify the same GOD, and Saviour, for the same precious salvation. Hail! holy, gracious, almighty GOD and FATHER! let the souls of all thy people bless and praise thee, in and through the person and work of our adorable Mediator; that from thine own free and everlasting love it is, that thou hast made a feast of fat things in thy Church, thy holy mountain! Yea, LORD, it is thou who hast given us JESUS, thy dear and ever blessed SON, and with him thou hast given all things.

Hail! thou blessed IMMANUEL! thou art strength to thy poor, a feast to thy hungry, a garment to thy naked; yea, everything, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity! It is thou, blessed JESUS, who in our nature hath conquered sin and all its dreadful consequences, and fully, and finally, and completely taken away their rebuke, and wiped away all tears from off all faces.

Hail! thou blessed and eternal SPIRIT! by whose gracious teachings these precious things are made known to us, and by whose divine influences our hearts are brought both to believe and to rejoice in them! Blessed be thy holy name, for the discovery that *the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it!*

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LORD! add one blessing; more to the numberless blessings contained in this chapter, if agreeable to thy holy mind and will; and cause the heart of him that writes, and him that reads, to know their own personal interest in the blessings themselves. Oh! for grace here, that in glory hereafter, we may join that rapturous song: *Lo, this is our GOD, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation! Amen.*

## CHAPTER 26

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*This is another joyful song, and a gospel song, full of the praises of JEHOVAH for redemption, interspersed with reflections on the wonderful deadness of the souls of GOD'S people, in the view of their mercies.*

#### **ISAIAH 26:1-2**

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks.  
(2) Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Reader! do not fail to observe how the prophet continually harps upon *that day*, that glorious day, the gospel day, when the LORD will bring again Zion. And though some have thought that the deliverance of the Church out of Babylon might well call forth this song, of praise; yet even then, every child of GOD, even Israel thus delivered, could not but celebrate that temporal salvation as typical of a spiritual and eternal salvation by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The deliverance of

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the Church from Egypt, was a type; and consequently the deliverance from Babylon is the same. And as this song was to be sung in Judah; was it not as a representation of the Church of JESUS? See those scriptures, Jeremiah 23:5-8. Hebrews 8:8-12. Isaiah 60:18.

**ISAIAH 26:3-4**

Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee. (4) Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength:

The first of these verses is a blessed promise; and the second is the foundation of the enjoyment of it. Some read the last phrase of it (and indeed the margin of our old Bibles preserve the reading so) "the LORD JEHOVAH is *the rock of Ages*." Now as the HOLY GHOST taught the Church, through Paul the apostle, expressly so, that the rock which followed Israel, was indeed CHRIST; we do no violence to the words, but on the contrary, express more fully what they themselves express, when we say, "for in the JAH JEHOVAH is CHRIST." And what saith the HOLY GHOST elsewhere? GOD *was in* CHRIST *reconciling the world to himself*; 2 Corinthians 5:19. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

**ISAIAH 26:5-7**

For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, *even* to the ground; he bringeth it *even* to the dust. (6) The foot shall tread it down, *even* the feet of the poor, *and* the steps of the needy. (7) The way of the just *is* uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

These are plain, but very gracious expressions. The LORD'S people may be, indeed the LORD'S people will be, humbled, and brought under humbling providences; but JESUS weigheth

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out to them in measure all that is needful for them, and no more. And as to their oppressors, JESUS seeth them all, and knoweth them all, and keeps an account of all their malice. And woe unto them when GOD ariseth to punish. Psalm 12:5.

**ISAIAH 26:8-10**

Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of *our* soul *is* to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. (9) With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments *are* in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. (10) Let favour be shewed 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.

Here is a sweet view of a gracious soul in particular, and of the Church, in general, in the silent, humble, waitings on the LORD, as well in providence as grace. I hope the Reader is brought acquainted with these things. A life of GOD in the soul cannot be kept up without it. If we have union with CHRIST, we cannot but have communion with GOD; and devout souls know what it is, in night visits from JESUS and to JESUS, us well as in daily approaches, both public and private, to his court, to enjoy *fellowship with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST*; 1 John 1:3. Psalm 5:3. Song Of Solomon 3:1. Psalm 130. throughout. Indeed it is this which marks their character from that of the ungodly who know not GOD.

**ISAIAH 26:11-18**

LORD, *when* thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: *but* they shall see, and be ashamed for *their* envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them. (12) LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. (13) O LORD our God, *other* lords beside thee have had dominion over us: *but* by thee only will we make mention of thy name. (14) *They are* dead, they shall not live; *they are* deceased, they shall not

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rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. (15) Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed *it far unto* all the ends of the earth. (16) LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer *when* thy chastening *was* upon them. (17) Like as a woman with child, *that* draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, *and* crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD. (18) We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

How strikingly is the conduct of wicked and unregenerate men here marked! If the LORD'S hand be lifted up in judgments; though they see the judgments; yet as the LORD'S judgments they see them not. And though the LORD'S hand be fallen down in punishments; though the punishments they feel; yet the LORD'S hand in them they regard not. Here again, as in the former verses, the contrast is set forth between the righteous and the wicked; between *him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth him not*; Malachi 3:18.

### **ISAIAH 26:19**

Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

I do not presume to decide; but I humbly ask the question. Is not this verse the address of CHRIST to his Church, or of the FATHER to JESUS, in the first part of it; and of JESUS in the after-part of it? Surely as GOD the FATHER engaged to his dear SON, when giving him as a covenant to the people, to bring him up from the grave, and his people with him, there can be no impropriety in beholding GOD the FATHER as thus again confirming his covenant promises to CHRIST, and saying, *Thy*

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*dead men shall live*; first in grace, and then in glory. See those scriptures, Ezekiel 37:1-14. Revelation 20:6. Founded on this promise, may we not suppose JESUS to be then speaking of the means how this great event shall be accomplished; *Together with my dead body shall they arise*. John 11:25, 26. 1 Corinthians 15:20. John 5:25-29. Then may we not suppose, after the promise comes the accomplishment, and CHRIST calls to his people, *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust*: 1 Corinthians 14:15. John 5:21. The figure of *the dew of herbs*, to illustrate the doctrine of the resurrection, is uncommonly beautiful and interesting. For the herbs of our gardens, during the winter, are but like dry sticks. Their buildings, therefore, in the spring, are altogether new, and like a resurrection. The dew of the spring, therefore, is the source of their revival. And such will be the dew of JESUS upon the bodies of his people, in making the earth cast forth her dead, as the earth casteth forth the spring-herbs. And upon the souls of his people, JESUS is in every instance; the same as a dew from the LORD, that waiteth not for man, neither tairieth for the sons of men. It is wholly by virtue of our union with CHRIST, that both the resurrection of grace, and that of glory, is, and will be accomplished. Job 14:7-15. Micah 5:7. Romans 8:11.

**ISAIAH 26:20-21**

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. (21) For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Oh! what blessedness is contained in these words! and what a blessedness have thousands now in glory, found in them, when upon earth! If I mistake not, here are all the persons of the GODHEAD inviting the children of CHRIST; yea, taking them by the hand, to come into GOD'S pavilion; and as the LORD once said unto Noah, *Come thou and all thine house into the ark*; so he saith now to all who by faith, like Noah, *prepare an ark*, in JESUS, *to the saving of their house*. And he that takes by the hand, and leads them; the same almighty hand *shuts them in*. See Genesis 7:1-16. Hebrews 11:7. But what are these *chambers*, which are here spoken of, and which the LORD calls the Church's chambers? Hath the LORD indeed built for them some secret enclosures, into which the righteous may run and be safe in times of public or private calamity, when the LORD'S judgments are in the earth? Oh! no; in the event of common *providences*, GOD saith, *I will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked*; Ezekiel 21:3. In things of nature, Solomon remarks, *All things come alike to all*; Ecclesiastes 9:2; that is, the fever, or the sword, will, if commissioned by the LORD, destroy all. But the feelings, and supports from the LORD, even in those exercises, will still mark the godly from the sinner. But what then are these chambers into which the LORD brings his people? Surely the chambers of his covenant of redemption, in which are found all the attributes and perfections of GOD the FATHER; all the fulness of right and interest in the person, blood, righteousness, and grace of GOD the SON as Mediator; and all the precious comforts and influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST. All the chambers of his love, promises, grace, and mercy. Here they find repose and shelter from all evil; and, Noah-like, ride out the storm in the

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ark, CHRIST JESUS; while, like the deluge, the indignation of GOD'S wrath against sin is poured down upon the Christless and the ungodly. Oh! for grace to enter into the chambers; and to see the LORD'S hand both shutting our souls *in*, and every enemy *out* by which danger might be introduced. Precious JESUS! may it be my portion, in thee to have peace, while in the world there is nothing but tribulation! John 16:33.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! canst thou sing this gospel song of salvation, which the LORD said should be sung in Judah? Surely that sweet note is thine. Thou hast a strong city; for JESUS is both the foundation, and the walls of it; yea, JESUS is the all in all of it; for upon all the glory, he is the defense. JEHOVAH thy GOD and FATHER hath founded his Church upon JESUS, and JESUS is both the husband and king of his Chinch, and hath by his HOLY SPIRIT opened the gates to the nation made righteous in his righteousness to enter in. And surely, LORD, he kept in peace, yea, perfect peace, while kept in thee, and by thee, and living upon thee. Oh! for grace to trust in my LORD GOD forever: for in my LORD GOD JEHOVAH, there is CHRIST the Rock of Ages.

And LORD, I pray thee, that amidst all the circumstances of my passing pilgrimage, by night, or by day, when thy judgments are in the earth, and when by thy sweet ordinances thou art leading thy people to the enjoyment of thyself, in every state, and under every change in me, my soul may desire to rest in thee who art unchangeable; and who *having loved thine own that are in the world, thou lovest them to the end*. Oh! let it be the language of mine heart, that *with my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me have I*

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*sought thee early.* And do thou, LORD, bring me into thy chambers. Give me to see that in thy covenant-engagements to my glorious Head I am secure from all danger. All thine attributes, all thy promises, thy word, and thine oath, do secure to me salvation with all its blessings. Surely, LORD, while thus blessed, and thus redeemed in JESUS, I may well sing the song of salvation in this house of my pilgrimage, neither shall any stop me in my triumphs in CHRIST JESUS. Every day, and all the day, will I chaunt aloud, *The LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

## CHAPTER 27

### CONTENTS

*Here is the same delightful subject continued, and carried on, through the whole; namely, the LORD'S care of his church, and the destruction of his enemies, and this united subject runs through the whole chapter.*

#### **ISAIAH 27:1-4**

In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that *is* in the sea. (2) In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. (3) I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day. (4) Fury *is* not in me: who would set the briers *and* thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

In the opening of this chapter, the Prophet begins it, if not in the same words, yet at least to the same amount, as the Psalmist doth one of his Psalms, when he saith, *I will sing of*

*mercy and judgment; unto thee, O LORD, will I sing;* Psalm 101:1; for here is mercy to the LORD'S Church; and judgment to the LORD'S enemies. The Prophet is using figurative language, when, under the image of a serpent and a dragon, he would represent the enemies of GOD'S Church and people. The scripture hath explained both, and in the victories of JESUS plainly shown to whom they both refer. The arch-apostate spirit is uniformly known in the word of GOD, as *the dragon, and the old serpent, which is the devil*, Revelation 20:2. The Church is very frequently represented under the similitude of a vineyard, and a garden; and the red wine is the choicest wine, intimating that all choice things are given to the Church; Isaiah 5:1. &c. Matthew 20:1, &c. Song Of Solomon 7:11, 12. But what a sweet promise is here of the LORD'S keeping his vineyard: how gracious, how constant, how unceasing is the LORD'S watchfulness over it! And Reader! do observe: the LORD not only keeps it, but waters it; not only defends it from without, but blesses it from within; not only keeps off evil, but is himself her chief good! Song Of Solomon 4:12. And observe how gracious the LORD is in the intimations of his love and forbearance. There is nothing of anger or resentment in him towards his people. If there were, everything opposed to the LORD, would be but as briars and thorns, which the fire of his fury would instantly consume.

**ISAIAH 27:5**

Or let him take hold of my strength, *that* he may make peace with me; *and* he shall make peace with me.

I place this verse alone, in order that the Reader may consider it somewhat more particularly. It is JEHOVAH the FATHER who is here speaking, and therefore it may be

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supposed that he is speaking, in the first sense, of the person of our glorious Mediator. And the words will then be as if JEHOVAH said, "Let him, as GOD, for such he is, and as such he is able, let him take hold of me. For having both natures, as GOD and man in one person, he is able, by virtue of both, to take hold of both parties, GOD and man, and in the strength of JEHOVAH, make peace between both, "by the blood of his cross." And if we regard the words as the direction given to the Church, though still with reference to CHRIST; the direction is, "Let the poor sinner in every state, and under every exercise, take hold of CHRIST, my strength, and rest upon him by faith, in a firm dependence upon his salvation; and he shall find peace with me." Reader! what a precious promise, founded on a precious Saviour!

### **ISAIAH 27:6-10**

He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. (7) Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? *or* is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? (8) In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. (9) By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this *is* all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up. (10) Yet the defenced city *shall be* desolate, *and* the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

All these are so many different expressions, to intimate that the LORD'S mercy to his people is all of grace, and not for their deserts. The LORD watcheth over them for good; but it is for the exaltation of his free grace.

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**ISAIAH 27:11**

When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, *and* set them on fire: for it *is* a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

I detain the Reader over this verse, just to remark, that though, in the first view, the doctrine may seem harsh, yet the proper apprehension presently clears it up, and stops such a conclusion. The sense of the passage will not be far to gather, if we consider who, and what are meant *by a people of no understanding*. It doth not mean persons born with weak or no intellect: this is not what is meant in scripture language, when speaking of persons of no understanding. Job explains it at once, when he saith, *Behold the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding*, Job 28:28. Hence, therefore, by the people the prophet here speaks of, which have no understanding, is meant men that do not, and will not, depart from evil; who know what is good, but do what is evil; who hear of JESUS, but reject and despise him. Concerning such, this scripture saith, *He that made them, and he that formed them, inasmuch as they reject CHRIST, which is the mercy of GOD, will show them no favor*.

**ISAIAH 27:12-13**

And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. (13) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

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The chapter closeth most graciously. There is a day promised, when Israel shall be gathered, yea, individually gathered. And when the gospel proclamation, in the jubilee trumpet, shall be blown, the saving effects shall be known. Poor sinners, ready to perish, from all the countries of the earth, shall come, outcasts from Assyria and Egypt; and all the LORD'S people, shall be united together, and be one fold under one shepherd; for JESUS shall be all in all. Jeremiah 33:13. Revelation 14:6, 7.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! while JEHOVAH is thus singing to his Church, and commanding his people to sing unto her also, a vineyard of red wine: let you and I join the holy song, and beginning in Him, who is the chief musician, and the whole cause of our song, and who alone can string our hearts, and tune them to his praise; let us consider the blessedness of this vineyard of the LORD, and how he hath formed it for himself, and for the showing forth of his glory. Did not GOD the FATHER form this vineyard? And did not JESUS, his dear and ever-blessed SON, purchase it from his FATHER, at infinite cost and pains, even with his blood? And did not GOD the HOLY GHOST gather the stones out of the hearts of his people and form them as trees of his own right hand planting? And do not all the sacred persons of the GODHEAD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, bless this vineyard, and with their sweet and gracious droppings of dew and rain, and all the blessed influences of heaven, visit it, and watch it, and water it every moment? And if so, who but would sing the song of salvation to this vineyard, so favoured, so blessed, and so kept, by sovereign and almighty grace! Oh! LORD! grant that there may be no blasted fruit, no withered

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branches in thy church and vineyard; but let the gracious cultivation flourish and bring forth fruit to the praise of thy name! And, Oh! precious JESUS! do thou come into thy garden, and eat of thy pleasant fruit! Oh! suffer not *the wild boar out of the wood to root it up, nor the wild beast of the field to devour it*. But do thou enable all of thine to take hold of thy strength, and in thy righteousness to be eternally secured. Be thou, LORD, the security of thy vineyard, and both the glory and the defense thereof: for then we shall be indeed strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might; and unceasingly sing of the LORD'S redemption of his vineyard, the Church, upon earth, and the everlasting glories of JESUS and his Church in heaven Amen.

## CHAPTER 28

### CONTENTS

*Amidst many threatenings to the people for their rebellions, this chapter contains some most glorious descriptions of the person of CHRIST, and the wonders of salvation in him.*

#### **ISAIAH 28:1-4**

Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! (2) Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, *which* as a tempest of hail *and* a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. (3) The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: (4) And the glorious beauty, which *is* on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, *and* as the hasty fruit before the summer; which *when* he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

We shall find the best illustration of the things here spoken by reading with it the prophecy of *Hosea* who had delivered the greater part of his prophecy somewhat about fifty years before this part of *Isaiah's* ministry. *Ephraim*, which represents the ten tribes, being settled in *Samaria*, a rich and flourishing country, waxed fat and kicked, and perverted the LORD'S bounties into occasions of sin. The LORD therefore was now preparing an instrument to humble his people, and, in the king of *Assyria*, was about to bring up a *mighty and strong one*, as the LORD is pleased to call him, which should bring them down. Reader! what a sad thought, but how true it is, that from the propensity of our fallen nature, that which should restrain from sin, is made by us the very means of indulging in sin; and because a gracious GOD pours out a greater fulness of his blessings, we take therefrom a greater freedom to offend!

**ISAIAH 28:5-6**

In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, (6) And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

How blessed do these verses come in, after such views as the former held forth of man's sin, to afford relief, in the contemplation of GOD'S glory. I hope the Reader is too well taught by the HOLY GHOST, to need any other information of who is here meant, by the crown of glory and a diadem of beauty. Surely none but JESUS the Mediator can come up to this Character. And if the Reader will turn to the sixty-second chapter of *Isaiah's* prophecy, verses 2 and 3, he will there find JEHOVAH'S promises to the LORD CHRIST, as the Head of his Church, under those very characters. And when the Reader

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hath done this, if he will turn to the fourth chapter of the same prophecy, he will find no less instruction concerning this Spirit of judgment and of burning, by which the LORD carries on his purposes of grace in the hearts of his people. I only detain the Reader to remark yet further on this passage, that by what is here said *of the residue of his people*, probably is meant the kingdom of Judah, or, if not, some of GOD'S *hidden ones* in Ephraim, who might be alarmed in the times of general calamity. Reader! it is blessed to see, that in the worst of times, there is *a seed* remains. And it is further blessed to see, that the LORD knoweth and watcheth over them that are his. Psalm 22:30, 2 Timothy 2:19. Isaiah 27:3.

### **ISAIAH 28:7-11**

But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment. (8) For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness, *so that there is* no place *clean*. (9) Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breasts. (10) For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little: (11) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

Here is another solemn charge, and more pointed than the former. Errors are not only found in Ephraim, but in Judah; not only among the carnal, but the professor. Yea, GOD'S ministers, both prophet and priest, are said to have erred through strong drink! Precious JESUS! is it possible that we can behold thee drinking *the cup of trembling* to the very dregs; and that any who minister before thee, and in thy name, can be found drinking *the drunkard's cup*? Well might Isaiah cry

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out, and exclaim, *Whom shall he teach knowledge?* It should seem from the whole of this passage, that the people bantered at what was spoken, and turned it into laughter. Some have rendered the word, which we translate *stammering* lips, *ridiculous* lips; and this idea seems to render the thing probable. And if the priest and the prophet indeed erred through strong drink, it is more than probable, they became ridiculous in what they preached. Alas! alas! to what a state is our nature fallen!

### **ISAIAH 28:12**

To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

This is a blessed verse, which comes in like some precious cordial to a dying man, who had been fainting before under afflictions all around. But, Reader! who is the person here spoken of, *to whom he said?* Who is the *He* here meant? I do not presume to determine, but, I venture to believe, that it is He who guided the prophet Isaiah's pen, even GOD the HOLY GHOST. And who, and what, is *the rest* to whom the prophet was to direct the people; and at a time when their own prophets and priests, by their errors and drunkenness, could not teach knowledge? Who could this be, but thee, thou blessed JESUS, who in the days of thy flesh didst invite to come to thee, *the weary and heavy laden, and they should find rest to their souls?* Matthew 11:28, 29. Reader! do you know JESUS, under this character? Have you come to him, and found him indeed the refreshing? Oh! how blessed, under all the storms and disquietudes of life, to say, with one of old, *Return unto thy rest, unto thy JESUS, my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee!* Psalm 116:7.

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**ISAIAH 28:13-15**

But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. (14) Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. (15) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

These are very awful verses, and enough to make the ears of every one that heareth them to tingle. And what must the end be of scorers, mockers of GOD'S word, and despisers of his threatenings?

**ISAIAH 28:16**

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

I cannot begin to offer a single observation upon this most precious verse, before that I have first desired to bend the knee of my heart before the throne, to bless the LORD for it. And at the same time I would no less desire to adore the riches of his grace, in that the LORD GOD would not leave so blessed a portion to our conjecture, concerning whom it referred to, but by his servant the apostle Peter hath done it to our hands. Let the Reader therefore, when he hath again and again read what the prophet here saith, turn to the Epistle of Peter; 1 Peter 2:6-8. Reader! think how gracious our GOD and FATHER is, thus to lay the foundation of his Church! think how firm, immoveable, blessed, and eternal, is JESUS CHRIST, the rock on which his Church is built? And oh

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how safe and secure must they be in their everlasting interests, who are built upon him, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. Oh! precious, precious JESUS! whatever stone of stumbling, or rock of offence thou art to those that know thee not, be thou to me the rock of salvation; *for blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in thee!* Reader! think it not troublesome to turn to those several scriptures; Matthew 21:42. Psalm 118:22. Acts 4:11, 12. Zechariah 3:9. Daniel 2:34, 35. Romans 9:33. Ephesians 2:20, 21. Romans 10:11.

### **ISAIAH 28:17-22**

Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. (18) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report. (20) For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*. (21) For the LORD shall rise up as *in* mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as *in* the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. (22) Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

I have often thought, that among all the unpromising appearances of things around, when men sin with a high hand, in slighting and despising both GOD's judgments and GOD's mercies; the most unpromising are among those that mock at GOD's rich plan of redemption by CHRIST. There is somewhat so truly awful in this, as should seem to carry with it features of peculiar danger. Blessed be GOD, there are

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instances of the sovereignty of grace in the recovery of all characters in the vast catalogue of sin, so as that none should despair, while none presume. Nevertheless there is somewhat in the malignity of the mocker, which, like the sort of the bond-woman, peculiarly marks the hatred of the mind, and makes one very apprehensive of such being given up to a reprobate mind. How solemn is this last verse: *Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong!*

### **ISAIAH 28:23-29**

Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. (24) Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? (25) When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? (26) For his God doth instruct him to discretion, *and* doth teach him. (27) For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. (28) Bread *corn* is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break *it with* the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it *with* his horsemen. (29) This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, *which* is wonderful in counsel, *and* excellent in working.

The chapter ends very graciously, in showing the Church, under the similitude of the husbandman, how the LORD takes care of his household. And as JESUS hath sweetly set forth the same blessed truths, under the same imagery; we cannot be at a loss to apprehend the whole of the instruction. *Ye are GOD'S husbandry*, said the apostle; and JESUS himself saith, *I am the vine, ye are the branches*. Oh! for grace to be thus favoured, and to know that we are brought into the vineyard, the Church of the LORD of hosts. Isaiah 5:7. 1 Corinthians 3:9. John 15:1, &c.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! what a wonderful history doth the Church of God hold forth in all ages! Never was there a people so favoured as Israel! Never surely a nation so degenerate. In whatever period we look at the account, the contemplation is the same. *Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? Was it ever known that any people under heaven, when once they had taken up with an idol, because they knew not the true GOD, ever put it down again for another? But, saith the LORD, my people Israel, to whom I have made myself known in blessing them; my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*

Reader! pause over this, and then behold what a wonderful GOD is our GOD! Are we, like Israel, prone to lay down anything, yea, nothing that is, or can, be durable and solid, for a foundation to build upon for eternity? Hear what the LORD saith; *I will lay in Zion, for a foundation stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation!* Blessed GOD and FATHER! precious LORD JESUS! holy eternal SPIRIT! cause our souls here to build, and on this rock to bottom all our hopes of heaven and happiness. Oh! for grace to try thee, thou blessed JESUS, as GOD the FATHER hath tried thee, and found thee faithful. Never, never; shall I be ashamed or confounded while I trust in thee, and rest upon thee, in life, and death, in time, and to all eternity!

**CHAPTER 29**CONTENTS

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*The Prophet is here reproving Jerusalem, and showing their folly. Towards the close of the Chapter, the LORD gives some sweet promises to the house of Jacob.*

**ISAIAH 29:1-2**

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. (2) Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

We might have been at a loss to know what the Prophet meant by *Ariel*, had he not himself explained its by adding, *the city where David dwelt*; consequently Jerusalem. The word itself is taken from a root, signifying the *Lion*. But the Chapter opens with a woe upon it; and it should seem, from the manner in which the sacrifices were offered, it was on this account; probably in those sacrifices, the people did not join faith in CHRIST, and hence, all sacrifices without an eye to CHRIST, must be followed with a woe.

**ISAIAH 29:3-13**

And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. (4) And thou shalt be brought down, *and* shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. (5) Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones *shall be* as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. (6) Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. (7) And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision. (8) It shall even be as when an hungry *man* dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold,

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*he is* faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion. (9) Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. (10) For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. (11) And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it *is* sealed: (12) And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. (13) Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Here are the same, or similar denunciations, as have been before noticed. GOD'S judgments for men's rebellion. And what makes the whole most awful, is, that those judgments and punishments remain unsanctified. The people did indeed, when the LORD'S afflictions were upon them, call upon the LORD; but it was in form only, not in heart. Lip service, not soul affection, constituted the whole of their religion. Reader! look narrowly over your own heart, under this particular: rottenness begins there. Ezekiel 33:30-32. Jeremiah 12:2. Matthew 15:8.

### **ISAIAH 29:14-16**

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid. (15) Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? (16) Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

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All spiritual visitations which the LORD makes upon his people, are among the heaviest of his judgments. And in what an awful instance was this prediction fulfilled, and is still fulfilling, on Israel, in their rejection of CHRIST, the LORD of life and glory!

**ISAIAH 29:17-19**

*Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? (18) And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. (19) The meek also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

Here the LORD comes in with sweet promises, for the LORD still favors his people, and will have mercy upon Israel. Hence, therefore, here are blessings of fruitfulness promised; blind eyes are to be opened, deaf ears to be unstopped, and humble souls shall be made joyful in the LORD: And who doth not, or will not see, in all this, the outlines of the coming of JESUS? Compare chap. 35:5, with Matthew 11:5, and then ask whether words can be plainer?

**ISAIAH 29:20-21**

For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off: (21) That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

This prophecy surely had its accomplishment, also, when the Scribes and Pharisees sought to entangle JESUS in his talk; Matthew 22:15-22. Luke 20:20.

**ISAIAH 29:22-24**

Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. (23) But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. (24) They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

Reader! above all things, do remark how gracious the Chapter closeth. The LORD will be friends with Jacob, notwithstanding all his rebellion. The cause is assigned, the LORD redeemed Abraham, that is, in the covenant of redemption founded in CHRIST; and in the promise to Abraham, Jacob's seed was included. Oh! the grace of GOD in CHRIST! Isaiah 42:24, 25, and immediately followed with Isaiah 43:1-7.

**REFLECTIONS**

MY soul! learn from Jerusalem's transgressions, and from Jerusalem's sorrow, how to form proper conceptions of thy unworthiness, and the LORD'S chastisement of thy sins. Surely, as in a mirror, mayest thou behold thy features, and learn from both, the sweet instructions of thy GOD. Well mayest thou take up the language of the Apostle, and say, *what then, are we better than they? No, in no wise: for he hath proved both Jews and Gentiles all under sin.*

Blessed LAMB of GOD! it is thou, and thou only, that art the burden-bearer of thy people's sins, and hast taken them away by thy blood. Oh! for grace to behold thee as the sole cause of JEHOVAH'S pardoning love, *having made our peace by the blood of the cross.* And oh! for grace to plead in thee, and by

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thee, the whole blessings of the covenant promised to Abraham, that no faces of Israel's true seed may gather paleness. It is in thee, blessed JESUS, that all nations shall be blessed. Out of thee, there can be no blessing; but in thee, all blessings to Jacob's seed abound. May my soul live upon thee and thy fulness, and may all the redeemed *sanctify thy name, and sanctify the HOLY ONE of Jacob, and fear the GOD of Israel.*

## CHAPTER 30

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*This Chapter, like the former, contains reproofs mingled with promises. The graciousness of GOD to his church is tenderly set forth and there is much of CHRIST in this sweet scripture.*

#### **ISAIAH 30:1-5**

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: (2) That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! (3) Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt *your* confusion. (4) For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes. (5) They were all ashamed of a people *that* could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

Reader! remark amidst all the rebellions of Israel, how the LORD still calls them children. And though chastisement must and will follow their disobedience, yet, the very chastisement proves the LORD'S design to recover them. And the method

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the LORD takes to accomplish his purpose, manifests his gracious intention. For, do they seek strength from foreign alliances? then shall those alliances be the rod to their own punishment. Do they seek to Pharaoh instead of the LORD? and trust in the reeds of Egypt, when the Rock of ages would have supported them? then shall shame and a reproach be the consequence. Reader! it surely distinguisheth a divine hand, when our confidences prove our ruin!

### **ISAIAH 30:6-7**

The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence *come* the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people *that* shall not profit *them*. (7) For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength *is* to sit still.

These are parts of the same burden, and not unlike what was said before concerning Egypt, under the figure of *the land shadowing with wings*, chap. 18:1.

### **ISAIAH 30:8-14**

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: (9) That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD: (10) Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: (11) Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. (12) Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: (13) Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. (14) And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the

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bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water *withal* out of the pit.

It should seem that *Isaiah* wrote to them, as well as preached to them. And as Israel's rebellion descended, like the blood in the veins, from father to son, there needed a standing memorial on the subject; for what the Prophet said to one, suited all. It is an awful thing when the preachers of the word accommodate what they deliver, to the false tastes of their hearers!

### **ISAIAH 30:15-17**

For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. (16) But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. (17) One thousand *shall flee* at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

Now the LORD raiseth up instruments to punish his children from their own pursuits, and, like *Jonah's* gourd, maketh a worm to come forth from the root of it! The LORD had assured his people, that if they would rest upon his power, he would protect them. But they thought a banded army of men would be better, and, therefore, as they valued Egypt's strength more than heaven's security, they should find, to their cost, that that strength should profit them nothing.

### **ISAIAH 30:18-21**

And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD *is* a God of judgment: blessed *are* all they that wait for him. (19) For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto

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thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. (20) And *though* the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: (21) And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Reader! observe the workings of grace, and how the LORD'S love breaks out, before the weapons of sin in the rebellious child's hands fall down. And do observe, in this sweet scripture, not only the waitings in the LORD to be gracious, but to be *very* gracious; not only his bowels yearning to pardon, but to take into favor. And though, in outward providences, the LORD seemed to frown, in the hard and coarse fare of bread *in adversity*, and water *in affliction*, yet love was in all, and at the bottom of all. And, as a proof of it, whereas in times past, the LORD'S prophets and teachers had been prohibited from speaking to the people, in the name of the LORD; yet now the people should not only hear and see them, but feel the power of grace upon their hearts, accompanying the word. They should have *the hearing ear and the seeing eye*, yea, they should not only hear the word behind them, but feel it in them, and have CHRIST *formed in their heart, the hope of glory*. Reader! do you know anything of this?

### **ISAIAH 30:22-26**

Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. (23) Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. (24) The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. (25) And there shall

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be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers *and* streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. (26) Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

How very sweetly and blessedly doth the Prophet describe the sure effects of grace, in the hearts of those, where GOD's words, like the good seed, have fallen into good ground! Everything that is filthy, they desire to cast away; and everything that is holy, they desire to follow. And the LORD goeth on to bless such souls, and to water the word sown in their hearts, with the continual dew of his blessing: there shall be *rivers and streams of waters*, Song Of Solomon 4:15. Psalm 46:4. And as all creation groaneth by reason of man's sin, so shall the inferior creatures be made fat and full, by reason of man's recovery by grace. Yea, so blessed shall be this day, that light, life, and joy shall burst forth, compared to former darkness, death, and sorrow, as the light of *seven days*, a fulness of glory. Reader! is it not so in the soul, when JESUS, the *morning star*, hath arisen, and a light, never more to be darkness, is made by almighty grace, in the circumstances of every poor sinner?

### **ISAIAH 30:27-33**

Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning *with* his anger, and the burden *thereof is* heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: (28) And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing *them* to err. (29) Ye shall have a song, as in the night *when* a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel. (30) And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall

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shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of *his* anger, and *with* the flame of a devouring fire, *with* scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. (31) For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, *which* smote with a rod. (32) And *in* every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, *it* shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. (33) For Tophet *is* ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made *it* deep *and* large: the pile thereof *is* fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

I hope that the Reader is, by this time, so well acquainted with scripture, as to need not the remark how, all along, the LORD is forever blending, judgment with mercy. Here we have, as in many other places in the word of GOD, the horrible punishment of the despisers of GOD and of his CHRIST; while we have been comforted with the blessings of those that love and fear him. And in all periods of the Church we find these united predictions constantly and faithfully fulfilled. And the people of GOD are called upon to bless GOD, when the LORD puts down their enemies before their face. They have *a song as in the night*. Witness the case in Egypt, Exodus 15:1, &c. Witness the same in *Babylon*, Psalm 137:8, 9. And the final triumph of GOD's people is described the same, when standing on the sea of glass, and singing the song of Moses and of the LAMB: *Who shall not fear thee, O LORD, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy? For all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest!* Revelation 15:2-4.

## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! rebellious as I am, and unworthy of the least of thy mercies, yet, LORD, for thine own great name's sake, let

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my covering be the covering of thy SPIRIT; and let me never seek strength from the Egypts of this world, in an arm of flesh, or the false confidences of the heart. Oh! precious LORD JESUS! be thou my strength, and salvation, and my sure help in every time of need! And let that sweet promise of thine, everlastingly stay me; *the LORD waiteth to be gracious; waiteth, not only to give the mercy in the best time, but to prepare his people for the best, and most timely enjoyment of it.* Let this be my case, O LORD. Do thou prepare me for the true apprehension of thyself, and of all thy mercies. And when my LORD hath made room in my poor soul for himself, by driving out every other thought, and affection; then may my GOD and Saviour, come and take the entire possession, and reign and rule there, the LORD of life and glory!

Most gracious LORD! how ought my soul to praise thee, for thy graciousness to Zion, in the present hour; that amidst all the languishing state of thy Churches, thou art still merciful in preserving to us our ordinances. Yea, LORD, thou hast not, as our backslidings have deserved, removed our candlestick out of its place. Our sabbaths, we still enjoy. Thy holy word is still in our houses. Our teachers are not shut up in a corner. Oh! for grace to see our mercies and oh! for the LORD'S blessing upon them, that they may be rendered blessings indeed to us, and our souls made blessed in the use of them! But is there not, O LORD, cause to fear, that since, in the present day, the light of gospel truth, compared to former times, is *as the light of seven days* in one; if the nation that is called by thy name, loveth *darkness rather than light, because her deeds are evil*, that thine indignation, as this chapter sets forth, *will burn as a devouring flame?* Is there not reason indeed to dread, that

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*the LORD will put a bridle in the jaws of the people causing them to err? And as they persist in despising this CHRIST, and do not like to retain GOD in their knowledge: the LORD will give them over to a reprobate mind? Almighty GOD! in reading thy judgments, mingled with mercy, I would rejoice indeed, but rejoice with trembling. Oh! give to my soul songs in the night. The present hour is an hour that needs such mercies. Do thou, LORD, impart them to thy people, as in the days of old. And now, while thy Church standeth as upon a sea of glass, let the song of Moses and of the LAMB be the song of all thy redeemed: Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints.*

## CHAPTER 31

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*This chapter is to the same purport as the former. The prophet setteth forth the folly of all human confidences. Some gracious promises are given towards the close of the chapter.*

#### **ISAIAH 31:1-3**

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are* many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD! (2) Yet he also *is* wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. (3) Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

Reader! we shall find scriptures, such as the present, truly profitable, under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, if we make application of what is here said in history, concerning Israel's trusting in Egypt, to ourselves, and the people of GOD, in spiritual things. Is it not an unnatural alliance for men in grace, to seek comfort from the men of the world? If at any time the waters of the sanctuary run low, will the cisterns of worldly enjoyments supply the place? Oh! the folly of GOD's people in mingling with the carnal! Surely it is impossible for one to touch pitch and not be defiled: and surely equally impossible is it for gracious minds to go among the worldly and the vain, and not wound the soul. Oh! for grace to be always remembering those scriptures, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18. Isaiah 52:11, Revelation 18:4.

### **ISAIAH 31:4-5**

For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, *he* will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof. (5) As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver *it*; and passing over he will preserve it.

Here the LORD condescends to make use of two beautiful similitudes, to point out his watchfulness over his people. The strength of the lion, and the solicitude of the bird, are brought in view in proof of it. Will the lion, hungry, and seeking for prey, be dashed with the appearance of poor timid shepherds, how many soever they are, who are anxious to save their lambs? Or will the birds, in their flying over their young, defend their lives at the hazard of their own; and shall not he that gave strength to the one, and tenderness to the other, abound both with strength and affection towards his people?

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Reader! seek grace to preserve alive in the soul that well founded confidence, which rests wholly upon JEHOVAH's own free, sovereign love and grace, and mercy towards his redeemed in CHRIST. Isaiah 49:15, 16. Matthew 23:37.

### **ISAIAH 31:6-9**

Turn ye unto *him from* whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. (7) For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you *for* a sin. (8) Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited. (9) And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire *is* in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

It is blessed to observe how the LORD'S precepts are frequently accompanied with promises; and his commands to his people to return to him, with giving the ability to return. See a beautiful illustration, Jeremiah 31:18-20. And the provision for returning is blessedly set forth by another prophet, in reference to the blood of CHRIST, Zechariah 9:11, 12. And when these divine properties are wrought in the heart by grace, and the LORD hath prepared his people for his mercy; then the mercies prepared for them are given, and, as these other verses set forth, idols are thrown away, and all enemies, like the *Assyrian* are considered as nought.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter, and behold in it a confirmation of all the great and leading truths of God! All human strength is like the strength of Egypt; of no dependence in the hour of need: and all confidence therefore

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in it, will assuredly disappoint. Oh! how forcibly therefore doth this chapter, and indeed the whole scriptures of GOD, proclaim in our ears, *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

Blessed LORD JESUS! let every renewed view of man's nothingness, and of thy all sufficiency, tend yet more and more to endear thee to my heart. Truly, LORD, I see that in vain is salvation looked for from the hills, or from the multitude of mountains. It is thou, and thou alone, O LORD, in thy blood and righteousness, that art the salvation of Israel. Do thou, blessed JESUS, as this chapter graciously sets forth, enable me, at all times, to pass by all other considerations, and get above all fears, and pass over to thee the strong hold of all thy redeemed. In thy Zion, thy Church, thou art, and ever will be, a wall of fire round about; and the furnace in Jerusalem, both for trying and purifying thy people. LORD! purify my soul among the sons of Levi, and let all my poor offerings be in thee, and by thee, that I may offer to the LORD an offering in thy righteousness.

## CHAPTER 32

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*The prophet is soaring high in this chapter, and looking far into the blessed things to be brought to pass in gospel times. Under the reign of CHRIST'S kingdom, he foretelleth the glorious events of it!*

#### ISAIAH 32:1-2

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Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. (2) 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 a great rock in a weary land.

In some of our old Bibles, the reading is rendered more strong, by defining the person to whom this refers. Behold *the* king. What king? Surely him whom JEHOVAH himself saith, *he hath set upon his holy hill of Zion*, Psalm 2:6. And the same copies read, and *that* man? What man? Surely he that is to reign in righteousness when the man that is GOD'S fellow, Zechariah 13:7. We sadly enervate scripture, when we mix up human things with divine. Some have supposed that this scripture is a prophecy concerning the reign of the good king; but how then could this be a *prophecy*, when it was delivered at the very time of Hezekiah's reign? Was it needful to tell the people by prophecy, of the goodness of a reign, when they were enjoying it? Moreover, those who fancy it hath the smallest allusion to Hezekiah, should show the fulfillment of it. So far was the reign of Hezekiah from being a fence and a security to the people, that the poor man himself was thrown into a terrible fright when the enemy came up to invade his land, chap. 37:1. And add to all these considerations, it must be confessed, that after all that can be said of the worth and goodness of Hezekiah, never could such things be said of him, nor indeed of any one among the fallen sons of men, as are here said of that king, whose reign was to be in righteousness. I hope I shall be forsaken if I err, but I cannot but conclude, that all the blessed events which are here spoken of, are wholly to be looked for under him, and his auspicious reign of grace in the hearts of his people, whose name is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; Jeremiah 23:5, 6.

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Zechariah 9:9. Psalm 45:1-6. And if we wholly set aside all thoughts of Hezekiah, and view JESUS, then we shall enter by faith, and under the leadings and teachings of the HOLY GHOST, whose office it is to glorify the LORD JESUS, into a sweet enjoyment of what is said in this precious chapter. Then we shall see that this righteous King, this holy Man, is reigning indeed now, in the present hour, and his reign of grace is come. In his spiritual kingdom, he is a refuge against all the wind of spiritual temptations, persecutions, afflictions, and the like. And he is no less a fountain of waters, and streams from Lebanon, in the consolations of his HOLY SPIRIT amidst all the dry and thirsty frames of his redeemed. Song Of Solomon 4:15. Psalm 46:4. John 7:37-39.

### **ISAIAH 32:3-8**

And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. (4) The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. (5) The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said *to be* bountiful. (6) For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. (7) The instruments also of the churl *are* evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. (8) But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.

It would enlarge this Commentary to an extent indeed, were I to analyze the several verses here brought together, and say the half of what might be said in the paraphrase upon them. But all the blessed effects here spoken of, may be well supposed to result from the Redeemer's kingdom in the hearts of his people, when: JESUS reigns and rules there, the LORD over every passion. Reader! what I would particularly

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desire you to do while reading these verses, is the same conduct as I pray for grace to observe in my own instance, I mean, to ask and inquire whether our eyes be no longer dim; if our ears be hearkening; and if, with heart and tongue, we are blessing him who reigneth in righteousness? For if we truly belong to his kingdom, then hath he opened our eyes, and unstopped our ears, and formed both our hearts and tongues to speak to his praise. See what the prophet said was to mark the era of his reign, Isaiah 35:4-6; then turn to the gospel in proof of it, Matthew 11:5; and then once more look within, and mark well if there be a suitable correspondence there!

### **ISAIAH 32:9-20**

Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech. (10) Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. (11) Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird *sackcloth* upon *your* loins. (12) They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. (13) Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns *and* briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy *in* the joyous city: (14) Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; (15) Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. (16) Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. (17) And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. (18) And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places; (19) When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place. (20) Blessed *are* ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth *thither* the feet of the ox and the ass.

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I include the whole of these blessed verses under one reading, for the sake of shortness. How very gracious is this call to all careless and inconsiderate persons; and how strikingly doth the Prophet set forth the awful judgments which must fall upon those, that slight the invitation to mercy; while, at the same time, he sets forth the security and happiness of those that accept it. Reader! the LORD grant, if consistent with his mind and will, that you and I may be among the number of those, the Prophet pronounceth blessed, from sitting round those rich waters of grace, beside which the great Shepherd of Israel feeds his sheep?

### REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou King of righteousness! whom JEHOVAH hath set for his own King in Zion! Let my soul trace thee, and feast on thy glories, while I behold thee on thine holy hill! Truly, LORD, by thine own right, as one with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, thou art JEHOVAH, LORD of all! But let me view thee in that softened and endeared light, as CHRIST the Mediator, King of Kings and LORD of lords. For here, LORD, I behold thee as possessing all power, in heaven and on earth. And in the special government of thy spiritual kingdom, let me behold the righteousness, judgment, and peaceableness of it. Almighty Sovereign of thy people, do thou take to thyself thy great power, and reign and rule in the hearts of all thy subjects. Surely, LORD, it belongs to thee, for the kingdom is thine, by gift, and by purchase; by conquest, and by surrender, to order, arrange, appoint, and regulate all the administration of it. And surely it is no less thy sole prerogative, to bring down all thine enemies under thy feet.

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To thee it belongs to pardon the penitent; to be bountiful to the needy, to comfort the distressed, and to hold forth the sceptre of mercy to the guilty. Yea, LORD, all grace is thine in thy kingdom here; and the glory will be thine, in thy kingdom forever. Oh! LORD JESUS! be thou all, and more than all, that this sweet scripture represents thee; *an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest*. Let thy people, as thou hast said,  *dwell in peaceable habitations*: yea, LORD, let them dwell in thee, and then  *the work of thy righteousness will be peace, and the effect of thy righteousness will be quietness and assurance for ever*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 33

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*This Chapter contains a mingled subject of divine judgment and divine mercies, The enemies of GOD and his Church are threatened, and his people comforted.*

#### **ISAIAH 33:1**

Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou *wast* not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; *and* when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

If this denunciation be directed, as it should seem to be, being personal, to any particular character or nation, the Assyrian must be the one evidently intended. In proof, let the Reader consult 2 Kings 18:11. and 19:35, 36. And for the full ruin, See Daniel 4:28, to the end.

**ISAIAH 33:2**

O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

What a sweet, though short prayer! And if it refers to the former history of the invasion of Samaria, by the king of Assyria, how speedily was it answered.

**ISAIAH 33:3-12**

At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered. (4) And your spoil shall be gathered *like* the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them. (5) The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. (6) And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, *and* strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD *is* his treasure. (7) Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without: the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. (8) The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man. (9) The earth mourneth *and* languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed *and* hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off *their* fruits. (10) Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself. (11) Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you. (12) And the people shall be *as* the burnings of lime: *as* thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

If the Prophet be here speaking of general things, the whole will be suited to all times, in the Church. GOD'S faithfulness is the same: the efficacy of CHRIST'S blood and righteousness, the same: and the blessed effect of both, the same, on the minds of the people. When JEHOVAH ariseth in grace upon the hearts of his redeemed, how is he exalted in glory to their view!

**ISAIAH 33:13-14**

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Hear, ye *that are* far off, what I have done; and, ye *that are* near, acknowledge my might. (14) The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

If temporal judgments, like those which GOD wrought upon the *Assyrian* army, had such effect upon the sinners in Zion, what will be the terror and dismay of transgressors, in the prospect of the everlasting judgments of GOD? And, Reader, do not fail to remark, that these things are here said, not of sinners in general, but Zion's sinners more especially; the CHRIST-despising sinners, who count *the blood of the covenant* an unholy thing. Jeremiah 12:5. Hebrews 10:29.

### **ISAIAH 33:15-17**

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; (16) He shall dwell on high: his place of defence *shall be* the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters *shall be* sure. (17) Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

What a string of rich promises are here, like so many pearls for the believer's neck! What is it to walk righteously, but to walk in CHRIST, and with CHRIST? Colossians 2:6. And what is it to despise the gain of oppressions and the like, but, under the sweet influences of grace, to live as becometh the gospel, of CHRIST: *to put off the old man which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness?* See the portrait at the full, Ephesians 4:21-25. And what will be the consequence of this life of faith? *He shall dwell on high;* in JESUS out of the reach of danger. Being one

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with CHRIST, he is saved in CHRIST. No arrow from the shaft of the enemy shall touch him. *No weapon formed against him shall prosper.* But these blessings are not all. His place of defense shall be *the munitions of rocks.* He shall be hid out of sight, out of reach, out of danger, in times of general calamities, when *the sinners in Zion are afraid.* And though in rocks, and retired corners, yet *his bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure.* Precious promises! And as full and sure, in spiritual things, to the people of GOD, as in temporals. For though hid from men, his eyes shall see JESUS *in his beauty.* And he will be to him both the *bread of life and the water of life:* all he needs in time, and all his blessedness to all eternity. John 6:35.

### **ISAIAH 33:18-24**

Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where *is* the scribe? where *is* the receiver? where *is* he that counted the towers? (19) Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, *that thou canst* not understand. (20) Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle *that* shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. (21) But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a place of broad rivers *and* streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. (22) For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king; he will save us. (23) Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey. (24) And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein *shall be* forgiven *their* iniquity.

These precious things are said, to carry off the minds of the people from the terrors of the approaching captivity, to the prospect of gospel times, which should be accomplished by

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the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The *Assyrians*, and those which would lead Israel into bondage, would be a fierce people, and of a language the Hebrews could not understand: But, saith the LORD, let Zion be comforted in the prospect of his coming, whose advent shall be in righteousness, and who bringeth salvation forever! Oh! how truly blessed is it to read those rich promises, with an eye to JESUS! And now we who live in gospel times have seen them accomplished; what unspeakable mercies have they all found, who have truly found them in JESUS, and JESUS in them! In him and his complete salvation, we are indeed come to that blessed climate, where sickness, sorrow, and death, in the final consequences of it, are done away; and we hear him, in his glorious character, proclaimed, JEHOVAH ROPHE, *I am the LORD that healeth thee*, Exodus 15:26.

## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! I would pass by all other reflections, profitable as they might otherwise be, if I had not thee in view, to look at my LORD JESUS, under some of those most sweet and precious revelations which thy servant the Prophet has given of thee in this chapter. Here I see thee, LORD, the true, the lawful king in Zion! Here I behold thee, the glorious LORD in the midst of thy people! Yes, blessed JESUS, thou wilt be indeed, and thou hast been in all ages, *a place of broad rivers and streams*. For what though thy Church, like Jerusalem of old, hath no navigable seas, nor gallant ships, nor frontiers of her own, to keep her from the common foe; yet if JESUS, in his own person be all these, and more, who shall attack, or dare approach to hurt? What proud galley with oars shall row to

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the hurt of thine anointed, while JESUS is himself the broad river, and streams of waters? Oh! precious LORD! how eternally secure must they be, who have a GOD in CHRIST for their judge; a GOD in CHRIST for their lawgiver; and a GOD in CHRIST for their king! Take me, dear LORD, under thy protection, and be thou to me, JESUS: for then I shall no longer say, *I am sick*, when thou hast forgiven, and taken away all iniquity, and *cast all my sins into the depths of the sea*.

## CHAPTER 34

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*In this chapter we have the LORD'S judgments declared, which shall finally and fully take place on all out of CHRIST. Explained and illustrated by the gospel standard, it becomes the same, as all the sacred writers of the New Testament declare, concerning the final judgment of GOD.*

#### **ISAIAH 34:1-4**

Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. (2) For the indignation of the LORD *is* upon all nations, and *his* fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. (3) Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. (4) And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree.

The manner in which the LORD, by his servant the Prophet, opens this chapter, is very striking, and not unsimilar to other places on the same subject. When the LORD speaks, well may man hear; Ezekiel 9:1. Micah 6:2. It is only for the Reader to turn to those scriptures, to discover, how both prophets and apostles agree in this same thing; 2 Peter 3:10. Matthew 24:29, 30. Revelation 6:12-14.

### **ISAIAH 34:5-8**

For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. (6) The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. (7) And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. (8) For *it is* the day of the LORD'S vengeance, *and* the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

I pass over the several particulars in these verses, which mean one and the same thing, of GOD'S judgments, differently set forth, to call the Reader's attention to that striking one folded up in them of *the LORD'S sacrifice in Bozrah*. Is there not in this an allusion to the same person and sacrifice, as the prophet in a vision relates to us in the sixty third chapter? I beg the Reader to turn to it, and pause over the subject. Who but CHRIST, is the sacrifice of JEHOVAH? Who but CHRIST was seen coming from Bozrah, in his dyed garments of blood? And was not this *the day of vengeance, and the year of the LORD'S redeemed?*

### **ISAIAH 34:9-15**

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And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. (10) It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. (11) But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. (12) They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none *shall be* there, and all her princes shall be nothing. (13) And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, *and* a court for owls. (14) The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. (15) There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

If we read these scriptures through the medium of the gospel, and drop the similitudes in the realities, we shall find an exact description of the human heart, void of grace; and the dreadful condition of all such as live and die in an unregenerate state.

### **ISAIAH 34:16-17**

Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them. (17) And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

Here the LORD seems to refer to the prediction, when the fulfillment arrives. As if the LORD had said, "Let such as behold the desolations here spoken of look back, and mark how I predicted them, and how faithfully my word is accomplished." It is a solemn truth, though but seldom regarded as it ought,

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that, the very name of JEHOVAH ALOHEIM, (GOD *in covenant*) implies, that the LORD is, and will be, equally true to his threatenings, as to his promises: for all shall prove him *the faithful God*; Deuteronomy 7:9, 10.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! here is a very solemn chapter, full of awful threatenings: from beginning to end. And, as we read what is here said, may we not, though from the mouth of one, who while professing a knowledge of GOD, in works denied him, take up the same language, and say as he did, *GOD is not a man, that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

Almighty LORD! may my soul lie low in the dust before thy divine majesty. And although looking up with humble hopes of acceptance in, and through the person, blood, and righteousness of thy dear SON; yet, LORD, my very flesh trembleth when I think of thy judgments. Thou hast said, and sure it must be accomplished, thou wilt be a *swift witness*. And oh! how exact, how unanswerably true, must be thy testimony! Not one action can be unknown to thee; not a thought escape thy notice. Oh! ye sons of men! think, ere it be too late, how tremendous will be the judgment of all that slight or despise the only possible means of escaping the wrath to come. What everlasting paleness, dread, and horror, will be upon all faces who have rejected CHRIST, the one only ordinance of JEHOVAH for salvation! *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

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## CHAPTER 35

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*This chapter is as full of blessed promises to GOD'S church, as the former was full of threatenings to GOD'S enemies. Under the richest similitudes, is set forth the auspicious era of CHRIST'S reign: every verse in it is full gospel.*

#### **ISAIAH 35:1-2**

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. (2) It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God.

Under the figure of a barren land, and a wilderness, is set forth the ruined state of man's nature by the fall; than which, nothing can be more forlorn. The prophet represents it as most desolate. But by the coming of CHRIST, who ariseth as the sun, with healing in his wings, fruitfulness, gladness, and joy, take place of the barrenness and poverty. The Hebrew expression is very strong, it *shall flourishing flourish, or blossoming blossom*. I do not presume to say so, and speak decidedly upon the passage, but I humbly conceive, that *a flourishing flourish* means the graces of the Church shall be so much in CHRIST, and from CHRIST, in the union and oneness between him and his people; that the *blossoming blossom* will be unceasingly kept up, and remain alive in him; as the branch in the vine. And if the Hebrew expression be supposed to imply this, the Reader will observe, that there is more in it, than in all the most flourishing circumstances of a church or

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people, where the source and cause is not from within in JESUS, but from without, from any other auspicious circumstances. Colossians 3:3, 4. John 15:4, 5. I only detain the Reader to remark, with what holy joy ought we of the Gentile Church, to read this blessed scripture, which hath a peculiar reference to the poor wilderness state of the heathen world! Song Of Solomon 8:5. Acts 11:18.

### **ISAIAH 35:3-6**

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. (4) Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence; he will come and save you. (5) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. (6) Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

How delightfully the prophet preacheth consolation to the Old Testament saints, in the prospect of their coming Saviour! This was the one source of holy joy, to which the holy men of old were uniformly directed, when at any time exercises arose. *He that was to come* became the running verse of the faithful's song. Matthew 11:2, 3. Luke 2:25-32. And under the New Testament dispensation, what is it but the same, to give strength to the hands that hang down, in the assurance that he that is to come brings with him the credentials of his commission, in performing the mighty miracles here described, as should be accomplished; Matthew 11:5. Mark 7:32. I pray the Reader not to overlook the glories of his person, of whom these things are said, and in the power of his GODHEAD, by whom they were to be wrought! And with these impressions upon his mind, let him turn to the gospel, and see JESUS, the LORD of life and glory, accomplishing

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wonders, in nature and grace, both on the bodies and souls of his people!

### **ISAIAH 35:7-10**

And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes. (8) And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*. (9) No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*: (10) And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

See how the blessings of redemption, in the gifts of the HOLY GHOST, are beautifully set forth, under the similitude of rivers and streams of water. And when that HOLY SPIRIT came down, agreeably to our LORD'S own blessed promise, on the day of Pentecost; and ever since, when he comes down on the souls of his people, is not the SPIRIT poured out from on high, which makes every plant in the garden of JESUS to flourish? What is that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of GOD, but GOD in his threefold character of persons; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; from whom, as from an ocean, all the streams of spiritual life, grace, comfort, and consolation flow? I pray the Reader to consult some of the numberless scriptures where these truths abound; Psalm 46:4. John 7:37-39. Isaiah 55:1. John 4:10-14. Revelation 22:1, 2, Reader! do not fail to remark, how full a blessings this chapter is, in promises to the redeemed. The close of the chapter forms indeed a short, but comprehensive description of the safety and felicity of the Church, until grace is consummated in glory. There shall be a

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*way* for the redeemed to come; and this shall be an *highway*; a way not to be mistaken: in which there shall be no lion nor ravenous beast. Every redeemed soul shall travel it; the unclean shall not pass it; but the wayfaring man shall not err in finding it, however weak in other things his understanding may be. And the whole ransomed shall pass it, and sing the song of redemption, with everlasting joy, when sorrow and sighing is done away forever. And who doth not see in all this, the whole outlines of redemption plainly marked? JESUS is *the way, and the truth, and the life*. And as none cometh to the FATHER but by him; so all and every one that doth come, *he will in no wise east out*, John 14:6 and 6:37. And JESUS is the highway, and *the way of holiness*; for the holiness of his redeemed is in him, and by him. And what is an highway, but a way open to travelers? Every poor traveler to Zion can go no other way; neither will the king of it, even JESUS, suffer such as are asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, to err in the way. *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* They shall hear a voice behind them, saying, *This is the way, walk ye it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left*. Neither shall that roving lion, the devil, overcome, nor even exercise the travelers in this way unnecessarily. JESUS hath conquered him for them; and will finally conquer him in them. One perpetual song belongs to the redeemed; and, saith this scripture, they shall sing it in their coming and return. Reader, by way of confirmation, turn to those scriptures, Jeremiah 50:4, 5. Song Of Solomon 3:3. Isaiah 30:21. 1 Corinthians 10:13. Revelation 7:9 to the end.

## REFLECTIONS

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READER! was there ever a sweeter scripture of description, concerning the blessings of JESUS and his salvation, than what this chapter affords? Behold how the mind of JEHOVAH hath been occupied from everlasting, and in all ages, to comfort his Church in the prospect of the coming Saviour? Think of the infinite love of JEHOVAH, in not only providing redemption, and in such a way; but also in preparing the minds of his redeemed for the full enjoyment of it, when the SON of GOD should come. Under these impressions, look into the gospel, and behold how minutely every feature of the LORD JESUS, corresponded to the prophet's prediction. And then, above all, as it concerns your own everlasting welfare, look narrowly, whether all the blessings here spoken of in JESUS, and by JESUS, be indeed *your* portion. My brother! do, I beseech you, bring home the general mercies of redemption to your own personal and particular state and circumstances. Hath the wilderness of your own fallen state by nature, been made by grace to blossom as a rose? In the dry parched soil of your own corrupt heart, hath the HOLY GHOST been poured out by his regenerating influences, and made the streams of his renewing fruitfulness to abound? Have your blind eyes been opened, and your deaf ears unstopped? Healed by JESUS, is your lameness done away, so that in his name and righteousness you can, and do now leap as an hart; and your tongue, that was once dumb, can, and doth speak of his salvation plainly?

Oh! ye chief of sinners! who are blind, and ignorant of the way of righteousness, behold JESUS is the way, and the highway, in which none that are found walking shall ever err! Oh! ye who have spent your strength for nought, and your

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labour for that which satisfieth not, hearken diligently to the Prophet's call. He is commanded to say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong; behold your GOD shall come and save you! Precious LORD JESUS! do thou come and save, come and bless, come and guide thy redeemed home to thy Zion which is above! Help all thy redeemed to sing now the song of redemption, in this house of our pilgrimage: and ere long to sing it forever before thy throne of glory, *in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 36

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*In this, and the three following chapters, the prophet is relating somewhat of the history of the Church, and not delivering a prophecy. He relates in this chapter, the descent of the king of Assyria upon Judah; and dwells largely upon the arrogant blasphemy of his general, Rabshakeh.*

#### **ISAIAH 36:1-22**

Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, *that* Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. (2) And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. (3) Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder. (4) And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this wherein thou trustest? (5) I say, *sayest thou*, (but *they are but* vain words) *I have* counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? (6) Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his

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hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him. (7) But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is it* not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar? (8) Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. (9) 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? (10) And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it. (11) Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand *it*: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall. (12) But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? *hath he* not *sent me* to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? (13) Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. (14) Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. (15) Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (16) Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make *an agreement* with me *by* a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; (17) 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. (18) *Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (19) Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? (20) Who *are they* among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? (21) But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. (22) Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that *was* over the household, and

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Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

As the great object of this Commentary is to bring the scriptures in a way of explanation to the humblest capacities, and at the same time to suit the scantiest pockets; I think it unnecessary to say more on this chapter, than to Make reference to what hath been already offered on this same history, in the Poor Man's Commentary, on the Second Book of the Kings. If the Reader will consult what was said on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> Chapters of the Kings he will find what I hope the LORD will bless to his perusal; to that scripture, therefore, and the observations upon it, I refer him: I only beg him to remark the importance of the scripture itself, as a history, in the Church of GOD, which cannot be more evident than from this one circumstance, that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath caused it to be twice recorded. My motive for passing it over here, without further observations, I hope the Reader will not mistake; it is to avoid unnecessary repetitions, and rather to lead to the seeking of divine teaching. May the LORD, again and again, bless the perusal of it, both to writer and Reader, to the divine glory, and to our furtherance in salvation.

## CHAPTER 37

(1) And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. (2) And he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. (3) And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are

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come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. (4) It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that is left. (5) So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. (6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. (8) So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. (9) And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, (10) Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. (11) Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered? (12) Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of Eden which *were* in Telassar? (13) Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? (14) And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. (15) And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying, (16) O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. (17) Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. (18) Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, (19) And have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. (20) Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD, *even* thou only. (21) Then Isaiah the son of

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Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: (22) This *is* the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. (23) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy One of Israel. (24) By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, *and* the forest of his Carmel. (25) I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places. (26) Hast thou not heard long ago, *how* I have done it; *and* of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. (27) Therefore their inhabitants *were* of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the housetops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up. (28) But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. (29) Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. (30) And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat *this* year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. (31) And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward: (32) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. (33) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. (34) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. (35) For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. (36) Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore

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and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. (37) So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. (38) And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

## CHAPTER 38

(1) In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. (2) Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, (3) And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. (4) Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, (5) Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. (6) And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. (7) And this *shall be* a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; (8) Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down. (9) The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness: (10) I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. (11) I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. (12) Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me. (13) I reckoned till morning, *that*, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me. (14) Like a crane *or* a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with looking* upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me. (15) What shall I say? he hath both spoken

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unto me, and himself hath done *it*: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. (16) O Lord, by these *things men* live, and in all these *things is* the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. (17) Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it* from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. (18) For the grave cannot praise thee, death can *not* celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. (19) The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do* this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. (20) The LORD *was ready* to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD. (21) For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay *it* for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. (22) Hezekiah also had said, What *is* the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?

## CHAPTER 39

(1) At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. (2) And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. (3) Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, *even* from Babylon. (4) Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that *is* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. (5) Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: (6) Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. (7) And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. (8) Then said Hezekiah to

Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

## CHAPTER 40

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*At this Chapter, the Prophet begins a sermon, and a most blessed one it is, which continues to the very close of his prophecy. It is all pure gospel from beginning to end. The HOLY GHOST commands the Prophet to comfort his Church with proclamations of the Redeemer's coming, and the blessed events of his reign.*

#### **ISAIAH 40:1-2**

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (2) Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Reader! do not fail to remark the LORD'S gracious commands for comforting his people; he *doubles* it. Not that we are to suppose there was any reluctancy on the part of Isaiah to perform this blessed service; but certain it is, that the most forward of GOD'S servants, in becoming sons of consolation, are not half so earnest in this employment as the LORD is. And do not to remark yet further, that, let the world say what they please, there is a people whom the LORD owns, and whom he will have comforted; yea, and he will be himself their comfort. And must it not be a blessed service, to be the ministers and instruments, in the LORD'S hand, to this, the LORD'S employment? And will not the Reader be anxious to remark

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how, and with what comfortable words, the LORD commands his people to be comforted? Let him pause over what is here said, and read the words again. Jerusalem, the guilty city, the bloody city, yea, the city of slaughter, where the butchery of all the prophets took place, and where the LORD of the prophets should, in after-ages, die upon the cross; this place, this people, shall have her sins pardoned! And, agreeably to this, immediately upon the resurrection and ascension of the LORD JESUS, when he gave his final commission to his disciples, to go forth with the offer of salvation to all the world; JESUS commanded them *to begin at Jerusalem*, Luke 24:47. One should have thought, (speaking after the manner of men) that Jerusalem would have been excepted in the general grant; and that there, if anywhere, the LORD would have said, Go not. But, *the LORD'S thoughts are not our thoughts, neither his ways our ways*. One thought more on this most blessed passage: what doth the LORD mean by Jerusalem having *received double for all her sins*? Surely it means, what is literally true, that in the person of her LORD, the atonement he made for sin was of such infinite value, that it not only compensated for all the evil done by sin, but, over and above, left such a redundancy of merit, as might be well called double, and such as will never be accounted for in the blessings of pardon, peace, and glory, and happiness to all eternity. Reader! I beseech you, often, yea, very often, turn to this sweet scripture, and think of JESUS!

**ISAIAH 40:3-5**

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: (5) And the glory of the LORD shall be

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revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

All the Prophets, with one voice, proclaimed the coming Saviour; but John the Baptist was eminently pointed out as the immediate herald and harbinger of our LORD; Matthew 3:1-3. Malachi 3:1. If the passage be read, as undoubtedly it should be read, spiritually, the humbling principles of grace, in preparing for the cordial reception of the Saviour, will fully explain the lowering of mountains, and making straight the crooked. And how is the *glory* of CHRIST revealed, in accomplishing those things in the hearts of his people? Precious JESUS! let every thought be brought low, that thou, and thou alone, mayest be exalted! 2 Corinthians 10:5.

### **ISAIAH 40:6-8**

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field: (7) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass. (8) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

In these verses of the Prophet's sermon, he draws a striking contrast between the fading, dying purposes of man, and the incorruptible and never-ending counsels of GOD! And the Apostle Peter makes a beautiful comment upon it, 1 Peter 1:23-25.

### **ISAIAH 40:9-11**

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! (10) Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him. (11) He shall feed

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his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

This is a most beautiful address to Zion, the gospel church of JESUS, and to Jerusalem the beloved city. Some have thought that it had an allusion to the proclamation made by Cyrus, for the people in Babylon to return from their captivity; but certainly the grand and leading object was, to tell poor captive sinners in Zion, of their recovery from sin and Satan, by the LORD JESUS. For here are the well known character-offices of CHRIST. Will enemies oppose them? the LORD's strong arm shall cast them down. Are JESUS's sheep weak and tender? His compassion will be suited for them. The lamb unable to walk, he will carry in his bosom, John 10:11. I must not forget to observe that some have read the passage of *Behold the LORD GOD will come with strong hand; Behold the ADONAI shall come against the strong one; meaning the devil; and his arm shall rule for him; they have rendered, shall rule over him.* And if the words be accepted in this sense, as well as the other, they are not only most blessed, but agreeable to all the divine truths. Our LORD himself beautifully illustrates the doctrine, under the figure of *a strong man being overcome, by a stronger.* Luke 11:15-22. Isaiah 49:24-26. John 12:31. Colossians 2:15. Hebrews 2:14. 1 John 3:3. Reader! do not fail to remark the blessed views this short but sweet passage gives of the LORD JESUS. He is described as destroying all his and his Church's enemies, as a King; while feeding, nourishing, and protecting his people; with all the tenderness of a Shepherd.

### **ISAIAH 40:12-18**

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Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? (13) Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him? (14) With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? (15) Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. (16) And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. (17) All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. (18) To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

Some have thought that the person of GOD the FATHER is here spoken of, because the Church is taught to look up to Him with peculiar reverence of character, as the Creator. But, as the church is never taught to look up to GOD the FATHER, in this glorious distinction of character, to the exclusion of the other persons of the GODHEAD, but always in conjunction with them, I see no reason to break the connection of the chapter, by supposing that what went before, and which is evidently spoken of the person of CHRIST, as Mediator, is not continued through this passage also. In all the acts of creation, as well as of redemption, the word of GOD tells us, that every manifestation of JEHOVAH is in and through the person, offices, and character of our LORD JESUS CHRIST: Hebrews 1:1, 2. And if we read this sublime description in the person of the LORD JESUS, as the glorious Head of his Church and people; and while we read it (and which seems to have been the design for which it is given) recollect our interest in him; oh! how blessed doth every word then come home to the soul, to comfort, to encourage, and to give confidence to every

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redeemed sinner. Reader! read again and again these verses. Recollect what was said before of JESUS'S tenderness as a Shepherd, and here see how *great* he is, who was there said to be so *gracious*. Blend both views in one; then say, how safe, how eternally safe and secure, must that redeemed soul be, however poor, however little and insignificant in himself, who is truly one with Him, whose *power* takes up the isles as a very little thing; whose *wisdom* measures the waters, and meteth out the heavens; and to whom the nations are *but as the drop of the bucket*? Reader! have you an interest in this omnipotent JESUS, in whom are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*? Make this the subject of inquiry, as one of the most blessed improvements of this scripture; and then you will enter into a full apprehension of what the Prophet saith: how impossible is it to find any to whom to liken JESUS, and how impossible it is to enrich him by any services of his creatures, before whom Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. And how truly blessed is it, moreover, to contemplate this sovereignty of our LORD JESUS, in the *new* creation of the soul, while reading such sublime instances of the *old* creation in nature?

### **ISAIAH 40:19-25**

The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. (20) He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree *that* will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved. (21) Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? (22) *It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: (23) That

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bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. (24) Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. (25) To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Who but must feel humbled to the very dust of the earth, while reading, in these verses, the sad state to which man is reduced by the fall? We see man so prone to idolatry, that if the poor creature be so poor, that he cannot have a *golden* image to fall down to, he will be content with a *wooden* one, nay, any dunghill-god, rather than the true GOD. Reader, be not offended with the remark, for, depend upon it, it is founded in truth: Every son and daughter of Adam is equally disposed, by nature, to the same folly: it is grace makes all the difference. For even those whose pride would seem to revolt at the idea, owe their preservation from idolatry to the teaching they have received from the very scriptures of GOD; which yet, through the pride of reason, they believe but in part. See, in proof, a just but melancholy portrait of human nature, drawn by an apostle, Romans 1:18, to the end.

### **ISAIAH 40:26-31**

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth. (27) Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? (28) Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. (29) He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. (30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: (31) 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.

As the Prophet's commission opened, so the chapter is closed, in giving a special comfort to the LORD'S people. It is impossible to conceive in the whole compass of language, anything more gracious, more affectionate, or kind, than what is here said, in the LORD'S love, to Israel. Every glorious perfection of JEHOVAH, and all his covenant relations, seem here to be brought forward, to give confidence to his people, in the security of his promises. It would be to injure the blessed passage, to attempt any comment upon it. Every word is so plain, so sweet, and so gracious, that he who is taught of GOD, cannot possibly mistake the meaning; and the soul that is under the influences of the HOLY GHOST, must receive the comfort of it. And how very tender is the LORD'S manner of expostulating with his people, on the unreasonableness of their timidity! *why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel?* Reader! may the LORD give you and me grace to enjoy the full blessedness of what is here said. Thousands, who are gone to glory, have been, while on earth, refreshed by it; and thousands there are still to be supported by the same, during their pilgrimage state below. Oh! for the LORD, who gives the scripture, to give to you and to me, by his HOLY SPIRIT, the enjoyment of the LORD in his scripture, and then shall we rest in the supports of a GOD all-sufficient and all-gracious in CHRIST, to rise above all the changeable circumstances of creatures in us, and about us, until we come to lie down in the everlasting arms of our LORD, in the kingdom which is above.

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## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! hear what thy LORD saith in this blessed chapter, and behold how he hath both commanded his people to be comforted, and provided every means for their comfort. Precious LORD JESUS! in thee and thy great salvation, I do indeed see a most blessed and suitable provision for pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; yea, LORD, in thy full and finished redemption, I do behold how JEHOVAH hath received more than an equivalent, yea double for all the sins of thy people. And shall not my soul rejoice and be comforted in the consolation? Shall not my very heart leap for joy, and my poor tongue, that was dumb by nature, be ready to sing plainly? Yea, LORD, I will sing, and not be afraid, for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song, and thou art become my salvation. I will call upon all within me, and all without me, to join in the joyful service. I will say, with the Prophet, Sing, *O ye heavens, for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*

But chiefly shall my note of praise be directed to thee, O LORD. While I enjoy the gift, I will bless the Giver; and in the moment when I feel the blessedness of salvation, I will feel yet more the blessedness that JESUS himself is my salvation. Oh! thou gracious Shepherd of thy people! here I behold thee, in all the tenderness of that office; and how truly delightful is it to my soul, that while I read of thee as revealing thyself under such graciousness of characters, I know thee in the full realization of every one of them in my

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heart, as the great Shepherd of my soul. Never suffer me to lose sight of thy love, O LORD, nor of the power and wisdom which thou possessest, and by which all the necessities of my soul must be answered. No, LORD, suffer me not to suppose, even for a moment only, that my way is hidden from the LORD, or my judgment, passed over from my GOD. I know, LORD, that thou seest me, and knowest me, with every minute circumstance belonging to me; yea, LORD, it is thou who orderest, and appointest, and regulatest, and will finally bless all. Help me then to wait always upon thee, that, like the eagle, I may renew my strength. For, sure I am, my LORD never faints himself, nor is he weary of helping his poor ones. And, while I am waiting upon JESUS, and looking after him, JESUS, I know, hath been before hand with me, and is looking after me. Precious LORD! comfort me with thyself, and I shall be strong indeed, *and never weary: I shall walk and not faint!*

## CHAPTER 41

### CONTENTS

*The Prophet continues his sermon through this Chapter, which he had begun in the former. The chief points here dwelt upon, are the proofs of GOD'S power and grace, in testimony of his GODHEAD, both in creation and redemption, in opposition to all the idols which the corruption of man's fallen nature hath set up.*

#### **ISAIAH 41:1**

Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew *their* strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

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It should seem that this verse forms an immediate inference from the last verse of the former chapter. Silent waiting upon the LORD, at his footstool, when drawing nigh, in and through JESUS, being the way to renew the spiritual strength; it were to be wished, that this humbleness of soul, and waiting for the LORD'S preparation to approach his throne, were more considered than it is; for it is very awful to rush into the presence of the LORD, as the unthinking horse rushed to the battle. See those scriptures, Ecclesiastes 5:2. Proverbs 16:1. James 1:17. and Psalm 62:1. as the margin renders it, *silent* before GOD.

#### **ISAIAH 41:2-4**

Who raised up the righteous *man* from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made *him* rule over kings? he gave *them* as the dust to his sword, *and* as driven stubble to his bow. (3) He pursued them, *and* passed safely; *even* by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet. (4) Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I *am* he.

In these verses, JEHOVAH challengeth the inquiry into is sovereignty and power, that the eternity of his nature, and the graciousness of purposes in redemption, may be fully proved. And in the instance of *Abraham*, the great father of the faithful, as it should seem, is meant, the righteous man. See Genesis 15:6: Romans 4:3, 11. The *Chaldee* paraphrase renders the words, *who brought Abraham publickly from the East*. And it should seem that the LORD refers, in Abraham's instance, to the slaughter of the kings; Genesis 14:14-16. But what is yet more particularly to be regarded, in the illustration of these verses of the Prophet, is that JEHOVAH seems to point to the sovereignty of his distinguishing grace, in the call of

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Abraham. Who was it called this righteous man? And what righteousness was it he had, but the righteousness of faith in the promised redemption by CHRIST? And who gave him this faith? Oh! how truly blessed is it to trace the LORD'S hand as the first and predisposing cause, in all dispensations, whether of providence or grace? But while we behold Abraham, let us not overlook CHRIST. Who raised up JESUS, the HOLY ONE of Israel, in his mediatorial character, and gave nations before him, and made him universal LORD of angels and of men! Here is the sum and substance of the scripture, to which the whole points, and in which the whole centres. CHRIST is indeed the CHRIST of GOD. Acts 3:26. Luke 9:20.

### **ISAIAH 41:5-7**

The isles saw *it*, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came. (6) They helped every one his neighbour; and *every one* said to his brother, Be of good courage. (7) So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, *and* he that smootheth *with* the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It *is* ready for the sodering; and he fastened it with nails, *that* it should not be moved.

It is enough to read the account which the LORD here gives of idolatry, to behold the folly of it to the full. One sinner encouraging another, is among the devices of Satan, to blind the eyes of all. 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

### **ISAIAH 41:8-10**

But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. (9) *Thou* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou *art* my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. (10) Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

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I beg the Reader to pause over these blessed verses, and inquire, with me, whether it be not the LORD JESUS that is here spoken to by JEHOVAH, when beholding him as the Husband and Head of his Church and people? There can be no doubt that such is the case in that similar passage, Isaiah 49:3. for there the LORD JESUS is surely the Speaker. And, indeed, those blessed promises which follow, must confirm it. For all the promises of the Bible are first made *to* the Person of CHRIST, and then *in* Him, they are all *yea and amen, to his people*. And, if we accept the passage in this delightful view, what beauty and glory do we discover in it? Reader! think what condescension there must be in thy LORD, that there should be a communication of names between CHRIST and his people, as well as an union and interest in all that CHRIST hath, as Redeemer. Was it not enough, thou dear LORD, that thy Church should be called by thy name; but wilt thou be called by her's? *Is this the manner of men, O LORD GOD?* No, surely! It is indeed customary for women to take the name of their husbands, but it is peculiar to the love and condescension of our JESUS, to call himself *Israel*, to show his love and oneness with his spouse, the Church; 2 Samuel 7:18, 19. When the Reader hath duly pondered the gracious promises, made by JEHOVAH, to this glorious Israel of ours, even our CHRIST, to whom they were certainly made, and in whom they were certainly fulfilled, with all their precious *yeas* and *amens*: (see some more of the same kind, Psalm 89:20-29; and then see the reasons for them, Hebrews 5:7-10.) when the Reader has satisfied his mind on this grand point, let him then remember, for his personal comfort and interest in the same, that what is given to CHRIST, as the Head of his Church, is given also to his people in him, as his body; and from an union with him,

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they are interested in every one. See in proof, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. 2 Corinthians 1:20.

**ISAIAH 41:11-13**

Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. (12) Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, *even* them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. (13) For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Read the gospel, and behold the confirmation of these promises, for there needs no more; John 18:4-6.

**ISAIAH 41:14-16**

Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. (15) Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat *them* small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. (16) Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, *and* shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

If the Reader will observe, he will find that all these blessed promises are made to one individual person; and, to whom could these things be said, but to the person of our LORD? As CHRIST himself is the great promise of the Bible, so every promise is first made to Him, and then to his people in Him. Without an union with him, there can be no pretension to a single promise. The charter of grace is: *Men shall be blessed in Him*; Psalm 72:17. The Reader will not see any objection to this doctrine, from CHRIST'S being called *Jacob*. That difficulty will be at once removed, from what was offered in the observations on the preceding verses: CHRIST not only

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condescends to call himself by his Church's name; but GOD the FATHER (graciously to his people) beholds him; and speaks to him, under this same name; chap. 49:3. And the Reader will find a farther confirmation of this blessed doctrine, if he will consult what CHRIST said of himself, under the spirit of prophecy, by his servant David: *I am a worm* (said that holy and lowly LAMB of GOD) *and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people*; Psalm 22:6. Oh! how truly refreshing to my soul is it, in the moment of writing, to trace JESUS in these most blessed scriptures, under such precious views, as tend to endear Him more and more, to the heart. And, Reader! be not hurt, nor let your faith stagger, that such promises were needful for CHRIST to receive, and to have fulfilled. For the human nature of CHRIST, though united to the GODHEAD, continued human nature still, and, as such, required communications of strength, for the work of redemption, from JEHOVAH. And hence it was one part of the covenant, that what the FATHER called him to undertake, he would enable him to perform. See Psalm 89:3, 4. 19-24. Isaiah 42:6-8. 11:1, 2, John 3:34. I detain the Reader one moment longer on this most beautiful and interesting passage, just to remark the very great loveliness of the similitude chosen by the LORD, to represent the lowliness of our JESUS, and the almightiness of his victories. The *worm Jacob* threshing the mountains, is one of the strongest figures, to set forth how JESUS, in his apparent weakness, overcame strength; for on his cross were all his triumphs accomplished. He was, as his servant, the Apostle, expresseth it, *crucified through weakness, yet he liveth through the power of GOD*; 2 Corinthians 13:4. Never, surely, was JESUS more glorious than in the humiliation of the cross, never more triumphant, than when, in that memorable

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day, he threshed the mountains of leopards; when *spoiling principalities, and powers, and nailing all that was against his redeemed to his cross*; Colossians 2:14, 15. And how the LORD CHRIST gloried in his FATHER at that hour, the Reader will discover by consulting those scriptures of his agony in the garden, and on the cross, John 17:1, 2. 12:23; 13:31, 32. Now read the garden scene, Luke 22:39-44; then either of the Evangelists' account of the crucifixion; and say, did not our glorious Head *rejoice in JEHOVAH, and glory in the HOLY ONE of Israel?*

### **ISAIAH 41:17-20**

*When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. (18) I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. (19) I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: (20) That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.*

Now, Reader, having given to our glorious Head the honour due unto his holy name, in having beheld him as the individual Person spoken to, in the promises before; we shall now be the better prepared, through grace, to enter into the proper enjoyment of these sweet promises which here follow, and which, if we are CHRIST'S, are all our own: 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. Galatians 3:29. And here again remark, that as all the former promises were made to one certain person, even to the *worm Jacob*; so here they are all made to *many*, even to all who are poor and needy, *who seek water, and there is*

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*none, and their tongue faileth for thirst.* Mark, I pray you, the striking difference in the persons spoken to; and, I think under divine teaching, it will be impossible but to see CHRIST in the one, and his people in the other. And do not overlook the FATHER'S love in all, and the many, many blessed things here promised, which, when spiritually interpreted, are most full and blessed indeed. For what are the rivers here spoken of, but rivers of grace? And what is the wilderness, but the barren, dry, and lifeless state of our poor fallen nature? And oh, how truly blessed is it, when we see JEHOVAH'S hand in all, and acknowledge him all! Ephesians 1:3.

#### **ISAIAH 41:21-24**

Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong *reasons*, saith the King of Jacob. (22) Let them bring *them* forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they *be*, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. (23) Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye *are* gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold *it* together. (24) Behold, ye *are* of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination *is he that* chooseth you.

Here is a solemn and unanswerable appeal to the despisers of GOD and his CHRIST, to show cause wherefore such mercy; as is in the covenant of redemption, is slighted? What the Apostle closeth one of his sermons with, is to the same amount; and, without all doubt, the final condemnation of such men will be on this very account. Acts 13:38-41 .

#### **ISAIAH 41:25-29**

I have raised up *one* from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as *upon* mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. (26) Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and

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beforetime, that we may say, *He is* righteous? yea, *there is* none that sheweth, yea, *there is* none that declareth, yea, *there is* none that heareth your words. (27) The first *shall say* to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings. (28) For I beheld, and *there was* no man; even among them, and *there was* no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word. (29) Behold, they *are* all vanity; their works *are* nothing: their molten images *are* wind and confusion.

What a blessed view is here again given of CHRIST, and the glorious events of his coming! It seems as if our GOD and FATHER delighted to be forever calling upon the Church to notice him. The *north* is perhaps an allusion to our LORD'S being called out of Nazareth; for this lay north of *Canaan*. Some have thought that *Cyrus*, as a type of CHRIST, was alluded to; and it is true, indeed, that in a subsequent part of Isaiah's prophecy, things are spoken of Cyrus by name, and many of them are, no doubt, typical of CHRIST. But we lose the beauty and glory of Scripture in all instances, wherein we make use of persons or things, which are typical, any farther than the mere type becomes necessary. When they are useful as mediums to convey to the mind the great objects to which they minister, I would very thankfully use them, as I would a carriage to convey me to a friend I longed to see, when, without this means I could not well, in my own strength, perform the journey. But when I arrived at the spot where my friend was, and I saw him, and embraced him, I would spring at once from the carriage, and leave it forever to fly into his arms. Reader! if you and I behold CHRIST in this and other scriptures, let us do by types as we would by carriages, and make CHRIST what the FATHER hath made him, so to love him, as to give all things into his hands: John 3:35. I do not detain you to remark how much of CHRIST and his gospel are

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contained in this short but sweet passage, for the gospel is full of nothing else, but to show his person and righteousness, and the vanity of all beside. It is JESUS who first speaks to Zion, and bringeth good tidings to Jerusalem; and GOD the SPIRIT confirms the message in the hearts of his redeemed, that GOD is true; Isaiah 65:1. John 1:36.

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HOLY SPIRIT! I beseech thee, by thy gracious influences, enable me to keep silence, and in humble waitings to distinguish thy divine leadings from my own carnal reasonings, when I draw nigh the throne of grace, in and through the LORD JESUS. Then shall I indeed come properly prepared, and renew my spiritual strength. Holy FATHER! I bow with reverence at thy footstool. I have access to the mercy-seat in and through CHRIST, but it was thou that didst call JESUS to be my High Priest, and gave him dominion over the people. Yea, LORD, thou art indeed the first and the last, JEHOVAH from the beginning. Precious LORD JESUS! I see in thee JEHOVAH's counsel, purpose, grace, and will! *To* thee were all the promises made, *in* thee are they all fulfilled, and *from* thee thy people derive all interest and right in them. JESUS hath threshed the mountains, and in him shall all his people be more than conquerors. Yea, LORD, thou hast subdued sin and Satan *for* us; and it is thou, and thou alone, that wilt subdue those powers *in* us. Oh! LORD! how are the souls of thy redeemed already made joyful in the assurance of victory, and both rejoice in the LORD, and glory in the HOLY ONE of Israel. Blessed, almighty FATHER! blessed forever be thy name, that thou hast opened in the wilderness, to the thirst of poor

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sinners, fountains and rivers of waters! Thou hast planted *the Plant of Renown!* Thou hast given *the Tree of Life!* Thou hast, as the husbandman, made JESUS as the vine, and his people the branches. It is thou, even thou, that hast called him from the north, and made him blessings to the people. Oh! then, when my soul, which is poor and needy, shall at anytime seek water, and there is none, when all within me and without me is fainting for thirst, Oh! be thou to me, blessed JESUS, as rivers and streams from Lebanon; yea, be in me, a well of water, springing up to everlasting life, so shall I drink and live for ever!

## CHAPTER 42

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*The Prophet prosecutes the same glorious subject through this Chapter, as in the former. We have a blessed sermon indeed; GOD the FATHER is the preacher; CHRIST, the Mediator, is both text and sermon; and GOD the HOLY GHOST is opening and making application of the blessed contents to the Church in CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 42:1-4**

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. (2) He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. (3) A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. (4) He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Had we any doubt whether the Prophet were speaking of himself, as GOD'S servant, or of some other man, the Evangelist would decide the inquiry; for in the account he gives of the Person and ministry of the adorable JESUS, he expressly saith, that *this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophet*; and he then quotes, the very words contained in these verses; see Matthew 12:17-21. But, Reader, I pray you attend to the gracious manner in which GOD the FATHER introduceth his beloved SON, as well as to the matter which he speaks concerning him. He first calls to the church to behold *him*, both as his *servant* and as his *elect, in whom his soul delighted*. CHRIST, as Mediator, is JEHOVAH'S servant; for, as such *he took upon him the form of a servant*; Philippians 2:6-8. And JESUS is not only GOD'S dear SON, and his *only begotten Son*, and as such, *one with the FATHER in the essence of the GODHEAD*; but he is also GOD'S *elect* in his office as Mediator, and for which he is truly GOD'S *delight*. Therefore, saith JESUS, *doth my FATHER love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again*. Oh! how much must the redemption of our nature have been upon the heart of JEHOVAH from everlasting, when he that from all eternity lay in the bosom of the FATHER, is chosen to come forth for the salvation of his people; and GOD the FATHER speaks of him as loving him with his whole soul, for this great undertaking; John 10:17, 18. And, Reader; do observe, in these verses, how blessedly the FATHER speaks of him: his love and delight in him: the blessedness he hath put upon him: the spirit he hath put in him: the meek and tender qualities he shall be known by: and the success of his mission. Do not fail to remark all these blessed things, which in these few verses, GOD the FATHER speaks of CHRIST, and

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then turn to the gospel, and behold how the original corresponds with the portrait here drawn of him.

### **ISAIAH 42:5-8**

Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: (6) I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; (7) To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. (8) I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

In the former verses, JEHOVAH was speaking *of* CHRIST; here we find him speaking *to* CHRIST: and a most blessed discourse it is. The LORD opens it with a sublime preface, in asserting his own divine authority, as the fountain of all being, giving existence to all his creatures, and incessantly supporting the life he hath given. Reader, is it not most blessed to your mind, to behold the source of the believer's hope in CHRIST? Oh, what a divine warrant and authority is here for faith to act upon, in the accepting, receiving, and resting the whole of our salvation upon CHRIST, when we behold how GOD the FATHER's hand is in the whole appointment! Having prepared the Church for the cordial reception of CHRIST, by asserting his own supremacy in the ordination of CHRIST to the office of Mediator; JEHOVAH goeth on to address CHRIST, his chosen, by opening the great mystery of redemption in the covenant, and giving CHRIST his commission. The LORD begins with calling him; *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness*. CHRIST came forth voluntarily to the service, but did not come uncalled; see Hebrews 5:4-6. Psalm 40:7, 8. Next, the

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promises come in: *I will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.* The human nature of CHRIST needed support in the vast work of redemption; and it was a grand part of the covenant, that the FATHER should give it to him Psalm 89:19-23. Next come in the glorious object of this call of JEHOVAH, and his support of CHRIST in his services: *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* Here is the momentous cause of the whole; that JESUS should be the representative of his people, and the whole of the covenant for them, acting in their name and stead, in all he did and suffered. This is at the bottom of all our hopes and assurances of redemption by CHRIST'S blood. Then follow the blessed and gracious effects upon his people, by virtue of his undertaking and accomplishment: *To open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth the prisoners out of the prison-house; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people. Israel.* And oh, how truly blessed is it, not only to see, but feel, the gracious effects wrought in our own hearts by the HOLY GHOST, in confirmation of this most precious doctrine! Isaiah 35:4-6, compared with Matthew 9:35. And, Reader, do not overlook the blessed verse with which this passage is closed: JEHOVAH, who declares his jealousy of his own name and glory to be such as that he will not give his glory to another; yet, as if to show his oneness in nature and in glory with his dear SON, here gives him the whole glory of the covenant. He is to *open blind eyes:* and who less, than a GOD could do this, and have the glory of it what a decided testimony doth this become, and from GOD the FATHER himself, that CHRIST is GOD? Indeed, none but GOD could be competent to the work, or to the honour of redemption. Reader, I pray you cherish the blessed thought (for it is most blessed) which this verse fully gives, as an

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unanswerable evidence in the soul, by the SPIRIT'S confirmation, against all the heresies of the present day; 2 Peter 2:1.

### **ISAIAH 42:9-14**

Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. (10) Sing unto the LORD a new song, *and* his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. (11) Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up *their voice*, the villages *that* Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. (12) Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands. (13) The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. (14) I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, *and* refrained myself: *now* will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

Here are the joyful consequences induced by the Redeemer's acts of grace and mercy, as before described. Surely all must sing the new song, which GOD puts into their mouths, when their souls are new-strung with chords of grace in JESUS! And when the LORD goeth forth conquering and to conquer, souls will be born to CHRIST, to be the travail of JESUS'S labouring pains, in bringing forth to his satisfaction; Isaiah 53:11.

### **ISAIAH 42:15-16**

I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. (16) And I will bring the blind by a way *that* they knew not; I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Nothing can be more blessed than these promises, when we behold them as our own, from a conscious oneness with CHRIST, and when we live upon them, from living upon him. Then we see that he who thus undertakes to be everything to his people, doth and will fulfil; and though we cool and tire in our love, the LORD never falters in his; Zephaniah 3:14-17.

### **ISAIAH 42:17-25**

They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye *are* our gods. (18) Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. (19) Who *is* blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger *that* I sent? who *is* blind as *he that is* perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant? (20) Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. (21) The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable. (22) But this *is* a people robbed and spoiled; *they are* all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. (23) Who among you will give ear to this? *who* will hearken and hear for the time to come? (24) Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. (25) Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid *it* not to heart.

Here, as in the former chapters, the contrast is drawn between the LORD JEHOVAH, and the idols of the nations around; and the striking difference which marks the several worshippers is made between them that *serve the LORD, and them that serve him not*. And in the midst, a beautiful allusion is also made to the person of CHRIST. And who that reads the Prophet's account, and compares it with the Evangelist's, but must be struck with the wonderful agreement? Isaiah 50:4-6.

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Matthew 27:28-31, The chapter closeth with tracing up the desolations of our ruined nature to the source and origin of that ruin in man's own apostacy and rebellion. The LORD is justified in all the righteous acts of his government. By the entrance of sin, misery followeth: and what can rescue and redeem from present and everlasting woe, but his righteousness, who hath thereby *magnified the law, and made it honourable?*

## REFLECTIONS

LORD! help both him that writes, and him that reads, to attend to thy call; and while JEHOVAH is proclaiming concerning his dear SON; and describing him as a most blessed Saviour; O for grace to answer with *hosannas, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD!* Yea, LORD, on our bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, we would pray for grace to receive the ever blessed JESUS as the FATHER'S first, and best, and most comprehensive of all blessings: and to make use of CHRIST, as the FATHER hath intended, to our salvation; and his glory!

We bless thee, O LORD, for thus holding forth JESUS to the Church. He is, indeed, everything that is lovely in himself, and everything that is gracious for his people. He *is meek, and having salvation;* a full and all sufficient Saviour; an able and well-qualified Saviour; a kind and tender-hearted Saviour. Yea, precious JESUS, thy people know thee, and have proved thee, that thou art all this, and more; for never hast thou, in any one instance, broken *the bruised reed, or quenched the smoking flax.*

But while we praise thee, almighty FATHER, for what thou hast said to us, concerning our glorious Head, and for our encouragement to come to him, we still find cause to bless thee yet more, for what thou hast said to him *for us*, and as our covenant Head; that he is thine *elect, in whom*, as the Church's Surety and Mediator, *thy soul delighteth*. Oh, the blessed assurance, that JEHOVAH is well pleased for his righteousness sake! O the unspeakable felicity, that CHRIST, in our own nature, hath magnified the law, and made it honourable! And O the well-grounded hope, that as CHRIST is given of our GOD and FATHER, as a covenant of the people, and accepted as such; all his people must be found in him, be accepted in him; and be everlastingly secured in him, from all possibility of danger, in life or death, in time and to all eternity! Remember; LORD! we would humbly say, thy word, wherein thou hast caused us to hope. Look upon the face of thine Anointed, and do as thou hast said: *I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever*, are thine own words O LORD; and therefore, as thou hast sworn unto our David, so let his seed be established forever, and do thou *build up his throne unto all generations!* Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

## CHAPTER 43

### CONTENTS

*This Chapter is a continuation of the former, in which the LORD comforteth the church with assurances of salvation. An allusion is made to Babylon, but still with reference to the rich purposes of grace in CHRIST.*

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**ISAIAH 43:1**

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine.

If we connect this verse, and indeed the whole opening of the chapter, with what went before, (and certainly, though we divide into chapters, the original preaching or delivery of the prophecy was not so) how surprising is it, to behold the LORD'S ways with his people. The last chapter ended as if the LORD and Israel had parted in anger; but here GOD begins in grace and mercy, as though nothing had happened. Reader, do not fail to observe how all tenders of reconciliation begin on the part of GOD. Though the LORD gave Jacob to the spoiler, and Israel to the robbers, yet the LORD will be gracious again.

**ISAIAH 43:2-4**

When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Mark well the causes of the divine love; Jacob and Israel are the objects of GOD'S care, from every consideration: JEHOVAH *created* them, and hath *newly created* them in CHRIST; he hath *redeemed* them also, and he hath *called* them. He is their GOD in covenant; and so dear are they to him, that he hath given all nations for them, They are the gift of his love, the purchase of CHRIST'S blood, the subjects of his grace; and therefore they are, and must be most precious in his sight: so

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that all the elements of nature, so far from proving noxious to them, shall be made to minister to his glory, in their welfare. Reader, think of these precious things; and if thou canst find in thine experience testimonies of redemption by CHRIST, ask thine heart, what can be wanting to endear a poor sinner to the LORD, whose precious blood must be infinitely more costly and valuable than all the riches of *Ethiopia* and *Egypt*.

**ISAIAH 43:5-7**

Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; (6) I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; (7) *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

What a blessed provision do we find in these divine promises, for the recovery of GOD'S ancient people, the Jews! Neither the north nor the south shall be able to detain the seed of JESUS, when the hour of their deliverance shall come. There is *a set time to favor Zion*; and, as in grace, so in glory, the LORD will finally call home his people, from the four winds, from *the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven*; Isaiah 59:20. Matthew 24:31. I pray the Reader not to overlook the cause of all, in the person of the LORD JESUS, evidently and plainly spoken of, in the last of these verses. He it is, as JEHOVAH'S servant, and to whom, for the purpose of redemption, *a body was given*, that is the sum and substance of all that is here said; Psalm 40:6, 7.

**ISAIAH 43:8-9**

Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. (9) Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and

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shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, *It is* truth.

Some have supposed this to be a challenge to the worshippers of idols; but I humbly conceive, that as these verses follow the account of Him, of whom JEHOVAH speaketh so gloriously, it is rather a demand, in reference to gospel days, to bring forth the blind and the deaf, spiritually considered, to whom the LORD JESUS would give the restoration of their faculties, in virtue of his great redemption; and as the heathen world are called in to behold the testimony, is not this a plain allusion to the conversion of the Gentiles? Isaiah 49:6.

### **ISAIAH 43:10-13**

Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (11) I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour. (12) I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange *god* among you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God. (13) Yea, before the day *was* I *am* he; and *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

How truly blessed are these verses in relation to the witnesses of JEHOVAH! The people saved by the LORD are his witnesses, his prophets are his witnesses, and yet, above all, the LORD CHRIST, as JEHOVAH's servant, is his witness. So JEHOVAH declared him to be, when he said, *I have given him for a witness to the people*, Isaiah 55:4. Reader, what saith your experience to these divine truths? Are *you* the LORD'S witness, that he hath brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light? And, on the other hand, while you witness *for* the LORD, doth the HOLY GHOST *witness with your spirit*, that you are a

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*child of GOD?* Romans 8:16. Oh, it is blessed and precious indeed, when we can and do *set to our seals that GOD is true*, since none but a self-existing and almighty GOD, in covenant in CHRIST, could save the soul of a poor sinner!

**ISAIAH 43:14-15**

Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry *is* in the ships. (15) I *am* the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

The title which, upon this occasion, the LORD takes to himself, is most gracious: for as the Church was about to be led into Babylon, nothing could more tend to keep up the spirits of the people during their captivity, than the recollection that still JEHOVAH was their Redeemer! And, Reader, is not the same view always precious to a child of GOD, when the enemy seems to triumph with a high hand? Isaiah 59:19.

**ISAIAH 43:16-17**

Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; (17) Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

It is worth observing how often, under the Old Testament dispensation, the LORD reminds the Church of that wonderful deliverance which he wrought in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, by way of teaching the people, in the review of past mercies, to be looking for renewed manifestations; Micah 6:4, 5.

**ISAIAH 43:18-21**

Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. (19) Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness,

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*and* rivers in the desert. (20) The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. (21) This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

The last of these verses gives a full answer to the inquiry, wherefore the LORD so favoured Israel? All is for the divine glory; and all that glory is in CHRIST; Ephesians 1:10. Revelation 4:11. Oh, how truly blessed, to behold all glory given to our glorious Head, CHRIST JESUS, that all may terminate in JEHOVAH'S glory, and open a source of never ceasing praise to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, in and through the Mediator, CHRIST JESUS! John 17:1.

#### **ISAIAH 43:22-24**

But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. (23) Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. (24) Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

Reader, do not fail to overlook the very great tenderness of this expostulation, which the LORD makes with his people. What did the LORD look for, and expect in his people? Evidently, from what is here said, the LORD was jealous of their not calling upon him: Jacob, father of the Israelites; was remarkable for keeping up acquaintance, by prayer and communion with the LORD. And the LORD had never said *to the praying seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face, in vain*. But it seems the children did not turn after their father; they neglected to come to the mercy-seat; they grew shy of the

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LORD; they brought not the tokens of love in sacrifices and offerings. Reader, doth not the blush of shame tinge our faces, while hearing GOD'S charge against Israel for this neglect, under a consciousness that we are equally guilty? Precious JESUS, how truly humbled do I feel my soul in the very moment that I read of Israel's inattention, under a deep sense of my own! Is it possible that so much love in JESUS can be requited with so much indifference? Yes! for I feel it, and groan under it; Romans 7:24, 25.

**ISAIAH 43:25**

I, *even I*, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

What a verse of mercy, grace, and goodness is here! One might justly have been led to expect, after what the LORD had said in the preceding paragraph, that for such baseness and ingratitude, punishment and correction would have followed. But GOD'S *ways are not our ways; nor our thoughts his thoughts*: truly, as the apostle hath said, *where sin aboundeth, grace doth much more abound*, Romans 5:20; and all the ways of grace are of this kind, and constrain every soul that is made a rich partaker of it, to cry out, with the Prophet, *who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?* Micah 7:18, 19.

**ISAIAH 43:26-28**

Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified. (27) Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me. (28) Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

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The LORD still dwells upon the subject of his grace, and Israel's unworthiness, by way of pointing out his long-suffering, and the necessity of their soul exercises. And, Reader, in this charge, you and I may, equally with Israel, plead guilty. In all ages of the Church, it will be found the same. It is our rebellion which brings upon us the necessary chastisements of a kind Father. Both in original, and actual transgression, we have *all sinned and come short of GOD's glory!*

## REFLECTIONS

LISTEN, my soul, to what the LORD speaks, in this most blessed and precious chapter, to JESUS, as the Head of his church, and to his redeemed in him. Read first, the promises, every one of them, as made to the Person of thy great Surety and Saviour; and then, from thy union and interest in him, take them all, in JESUS, and with JESUS, for thy portion. Say, my soul, hath not the LORD created thee, and formed thee; not only in the original creation of nature, but in the new creation by grace? Hath not the LORD called thee, redeemed thee, and declared thee to be his own, both by the purchase of his blood and the conquests of his grace? And is it not true that while the LORD saith, *This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise;* thou art earnestly longing to praise and glorify him for all the tokens of his distinguishing grace? Take then the comfort of in these sweet promises, and let neither fiery flames nor stormy seas, in the most tribulated path yet remaining for thee to go through, distress; for JESUS (he saith it himself) is with thee, and will conduct thee, and carry thee safely through them all. Oh!

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thou gracious LORD of all my mercies; thou HOLY ONE of Israel, my Saviour!

But, my soul, pause over the blessed view which this chapter opens to thy contemplation, of the price thy JESUS gave for his Church in redemption. He saith, it was *Egypt* for her ransom, and *Ethiopia* and *Seba*. Yes, thou bleeding LAMB of GOD! thou didst indeed make a dear, dear purchase of thy Church, and didst buy her, out of the hands of infinite justice with a sum perfectly incalculable. All the riches and treasures of *Egypt*, and all the pearls and gold of *Ethiopia* and *Seba*, sink to nothing, in comparison of the infinite, and never-to-be-fully compensated in value, blood of CHRIST. Oh! how precious must have been thy Church in thy sight, thou dear Redeemer, when neither JESUS stopped short in giving himself for her, nor GOD the FATHER kept back the SON, the only Son of his bosom, for her redemption? My soul, never lose sight of this; but, in the blessedness of the contemplation, continually say with the apostle, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

Be humbled to the dust, my soul, while, in the view of such divine goodness thou callest to mind thine own undeservings. Oh, thou kind, thou tender, thou compassionate LORD JESUS! Have I caused thee to serve with my sins, and wearied thee with mine iniquities? Do I remit my visits to a throne of grace, and seldom go there unless necessities constrain me? Is it so, my honoured LORD, that there is a backwardness in my very nature to the love of thee, and the desire after thy company? LORD! how is it, that I am every day condemning what I every day again trespass in; and find occasion still to mourn over,

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what still again marks my conduct? Oh, precious JESUS! undertake for me; and deliver me, LORD, in thine own time, which is the best time, from the body of sin and death, into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD. JESUS will make me free, and I shall be free indeed! Amen.

## CHAPTER 44

### CONTENTS

*This Chapter is but a continuation of the same subject as that of the former. The LORD is comforting and encouraging his church; and pronouncing judgment against her enemies.*

#### **ISAIAH 44:1-5**

Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: (2) Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, *which* will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. (3) For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: (4) And they shall spring up *as* among the grass, as willows by the water courses. (5) One shall say, I *am* the LORD'S; and another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe *with* his hand unto the LORD, and surname *himself* by the name of Israel.

Nothing can be more lovely or blessed than what is contained in these gracious promises, if read, as they are evidently designed, as made, first, to the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as Mediator; and, secondly, to all his seed in him. I hope the Reader is, by this time, so well acquainted with his Bible, as not only to hear JESUS called JEHOVAH's servant, without being offended at the SON of GOD's humiliation; but

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also to see and enjoy a blessedness in the name. Had not the LORD JESUS, when he took our name and nature, put himself into covenant engagements to stand in our law-room and place, as JEHOVAH's servant, never would our redemption by his blood and righteousness, have been accomplished. But now, in fulfilling all righteousness, and coming down to the lowest state of humbleness, for the purpose of obedience. He hath been *made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him*; 2 Corinthians 5:21. Philippians 2:6, 11. And how truly blessed is it to behold, in all things, and in all offices, what the LORD JESUS became, as the sinner's Surety and Saviour, by GOD the FATHER's own appointment! All the promises here made to the Head of the Church, and his people, are by Him who made and formed the human nature of CHRIST, when giving him a body for the purposes of redemption, and engaging to help him through the whole of the vast undertaking; see Psalm 40:6. 89:19-24. 139:13-16. Hebrews 5:4, 5. Then follow the promised blessings to CHRIST and his seed; and oh! how truly blessed is it to see the barren, dry, and wilderness state of poor perishing souls, made flourishing and fruitful, in and through their union with CHRIST JESUS? And when GOD the FATHER remembers his everlasting covenant with his dear SON, and pours out his SPIRIT from on high; then all those blessings follow, which are here described. One saith, another confirms it, and all deliberately make a voluntary surrender of themselves to be the LORD'S, when once the HOLY GHOST hath brought them to see and know who CHRIST is, and what CHRIST is, and hath made them *willing in the day his power?* Song Of Solomon 2:16. 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

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**ISAIAH 44:6-8**

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God. (7) And *who*, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. (8) Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it?* ye *are* even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is* no God; I know not *any*.

What sublimity is in these verses! How truly delightful to see the LORD JEHOVAH claiming his rightful sovereignty, and revealing himself under such glorious and distinguishing characters! There needs no comment upon what the LORD here saith of himself. Reader! let us be humbled to the dust in the contemplation of JEHOVAH's glory.

**ISAIAH 44:9-20**

They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. (10) Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that is* profitable for nothing? (11) Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; *yet* they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together. (12) The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. (13) The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. (14) He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish *it*. (15) Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down

thereto. (16) He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: (17) And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god. (18) They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; *and* their hearts, that they cannot understand. (19) And none considereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? (20) He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?

What a fine contrast does this view of the dung-hill god of a man's own creating, form with what went before, in which the glory of JEHOVAH is so sublimely set forth! If there were not facts existing to prove it, would it ever be credited, that any man, much less multitudes of men, should be found weak enough in intellect to form an image of wood, and fall down before it in worship? But, Reader! remark from it, to what an awful state is man reduced by the fall. Oh! how truly blessed is it here again, as in every other instance, to behold the mercies which JESUS brought in by redemption. Jeremiah 2:11.

### **ISAIAH 44:21-22**

Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou *art* my servant: I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. (22) I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Reader! methinks I can never say enough in calling up your attention, with my own, to observe in what endearing terms

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the LORD is pleased to recommend his grace, and love, an mercy to his Israel! And do not forget that what is here said, is said, to the person of our LORD: first to him, and then, in him, to all his people. And be not hurt that the promise is, of *blotting out as a thick cloud his transgressions*; for when JESUS stood as Israel, and, as such, the surety and representative of Israel, his Church; he stood as defiled with the filthy garments of our poor fallen polluted nature. He saith himself, by the spirit of prophecy, that his *iniquities were gone over his head, as a heavy burden too heavy for him*, Psalm 38:4. And is it not the express doctrine of the Bible, that JEHOVAH *laid on him the iniquity of all his people*? Indeed, had this not been the case, how would our sins have been taken away? See, I pray you, those scriptures in confirmation, and may the HOLY GHOST give both you and me a right understanding in them: Isaiah 53:4-6; Galatians 3:13. And hear the holy JESUS, in his cries under the weight and burden of our sins, Psalm 69:1-4. When you have duly pondered this solemn, but most blessed of all subjects, then look well for your own interest in these promises of JEHOVAH, from your oneness and union with CHRIST, and see that you have *redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of all your sins, according to the riches of GOD's grace*; Ephesians 1:6, 7.

**ISAIAH 44:23**

Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done *it*: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

How beautiful and lovely comes in this hymn of praise, after the review of what went before of redemption by CHRIST. And how beautiful and lovely is it to observe, that the LORD takes

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the whole glory and praise of it to himself. He is the Author and Finisher; the Orderer, the Contriver; for in his wisdom, and love, and counsel, and purpose, the whole originated. And observe, it is JEHOVAH himself that here calls upon all creation, both animate and inanimate, to join in the song of redemption. Oh! Reader! what a song will redemption be, in that day, when the LORD JESUS shall come to gather up his jewels!

**ISAIAH 44:24-28**

Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; (25) That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise *men* backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; (26) That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: (27) That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: (28) That saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Here is a renewed instance of JEHOVAH'S claiming the distinguishing prerogative of his sovereignty; and a most blessed one it is. And when we consider the reasons for which the LORD thus reveals himself, in holding it forth for the confirmation of his love to his people, nothing can be more blessed, both as it serves to display the divine glory, and to encourage the minds of the people. The LORD here first introduceth *Cyrus* by name, who in after-ages was to be raised up for the deliverance of his people: concerning whom the succeeding chapter speaks more largely.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this blessed Chapter (for it is a very blessed one), until we have first looked up for grace to gather the several improving reflections it affords; and also looked within, into our own hearts, for the discovery of our personal interest in it.

And first, blessed IMMANUEL! my soul would desire to behold thee, as the glorious Head and Representative of thine Israel; unto whom all these precious promises are given, and in whom they become *yea and amen* to thy redeemed in thee. Yea, LORD, thou hast condescended to become all that is here said for thy Church, thy body; and therefore, in thee, and by thee, and from thee, would my soul alone look for all the blessings of the covenant.

And shall I not plead then with thee, my GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, for his righteousness sake, that thou wilt do as thou hast said? Did JEHOVAH promise our glorious Surety, to *pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground?* And is not my soul athirst for those waters of Bethlehem; and longing for the gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT, more than the hart panteth for the water brooks? Oh! for the sevenfold gifts of the SPIRIT, to be poured out from on high on my soul, *until the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water!* And oh! for grace to give, and to be continually giving the same full testimony to the truth as it is in JESUS, that I may call myself the LORD'S, and fully and unalterably subscribe with my hand and whole heart, that *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine!*

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Blessed LORD! would I say, while the heavens are singing salvation, and the lower parts of the earth are sounding praise, let my poor lisping tongue join the charming chorus, that *the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!*

## CHAPTER 45

### CONTENTS

*Much is said in this chapter of Cyrus, king of Persia: but much more of JESUS, King of Zion. It is spoken by way of prophecy in the first relation to Babylon, but in the more direct reference to the redemption by CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 45:1-4**

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; (2) I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: (3) And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Israel. (4) For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

This is a most remarkable portion of the holy scripture, and very highly merits our attention. The LORD here speaks of a man, and a stranger too, not one of Israel, and calls him by his name, at least 200 years before the events predicted of him were to be fulfilled. In the history to which this portion of the prophecy refers, we find the conquest of Babylon exactly

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answering. Profane historians relate that *Cyrus* entered Babylon, by means of a subterraneous passage, opening from the river by two-leaved gates, and at a time when from the strength of the city and its walls, the king was carousing in full confidence of safety. Sacred history also bears testimony to the same in the corresponding account; See Daniel 5:1-6 and 30. But what is yet more important for us to remark, is what the LORD saith concerning the cause of this ruin. The Church's salvation was the one sole object, and in the very moment that the LORD raised up Cyrus, as his instrument for this purpose, Cyrus himself knew not the LORD. I pray the Reader to make this the practical improvement from this scripture; and never to lose sight of the LORD'S design, in the LORD'S appointment of men and things. How often, in the present hour, are men made the unconscious ministers of GOD for good to his people, although their heart thought not so, neither did they intend it. Think, Reader, from such a view as this, and which is every day going on in the world, how dear to JESUS his Church is!

**ISAIAH 45:5-7**

I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: (6) That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else. (7) I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*.

It is most blessed to read those scriptures, in which JEHOVAH takes to himself his supreme sovereignty. A believing soul finds great delight in the contemplation. For, in the first place, the self-existing and eternal nature of JEHOVAH becomes the security of the Church in JESUS; and, in the next place, those

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divine attributes become the pledge and assurance for the fulfillment of all the divine engagements to the Church in JESUS. And, Reader! do not overlook, the sweet spiritual instruction given to us in those relations of JEHOVAH: if the LORD be alone the self-existing and eternal JEHOVAH; and if both light and darkness are of his creation; to whom shall we look for spiritual light, to illumine the darkness of our poor souls, blinded by the fall, but to him who alone can command the light to shine out of darkness? Oh! thou, who at the first creation saidst, *Let there be light, and there was light*, command the light, in the new creation of the souls of thy people, to shine out of darkness in their hearts, to give *the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST!* 2 Corinthians 4:6.

**ISAIAH 45:8**

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

Is not this the LORD'S command? And ought not the faithful to form their earnest prayers upon it? Reader, I would say, for myself and for you, doth a gracious GOD in CHRIST command grace to drop as the dew upon the souls of his redeemed, and is JESUS himself come down us rain upon the mown grass? Oh! then for grace to say, "LORD, be it unto us according to thy word! Come, LORD, with all thy blessed influences upon our souls, and be thou to us all we need; *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all our glorying may be in the LORD!*" Psalm 72:6. Micah 5:7. 1 Corinthians 1:30. James 1:17

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**ISAIAH 45:9-10**

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! *Let* the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? (10) Woe unto him that saith unto *his* father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

How beautiful and striking is this figure of the potsherd, to shed the folly and danger of finding fault with GOD. Earthen vessels, struck one against another, will break; contentions among men are foolish; but contention against GOD, in any of his dispensations, of nature, providence, or grace, is madness itself. Equally senseless would be the expostulating of a child to its parent, concerning its being. What can a sinful father beget, but a sinful child; or a polluted mother bring forth, but pollution also? *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Precious JESUS! how blessed dost thou appear in every view, when, in the consciousness of our corrupt state, we feel the need of that fountain which the soldier's spear opened in thy side, *for sin and for uncleanness!* Zechariah 13:1.

**ISAIAH 45:11-12**

Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. (12) I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

Perhaps in all the Bible there is not a passage equal to this for showing the LORD'S graciousness at his mercy-seat. The expression seems as if the LORD had thrown the reins of government into the hands of his people, that they might not only ask, but command. We meet with very many passages, wherein the highest encouragement is given to poor

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petitioners in JESUS's name; but here the LORD saith, *Command me!* It is indeed a most blessed and high proof of the gracious manner with which GOD in CHRIST treats his people on his throne, and ought to be our constant encouragement, now we have such an advocate as JESUS with the FATHER, whom the FATHER heareth always, that we may come boldly to the throne of grace, to *obtain mercy, and find grace to help, in all time of need.* But, Reader! do not overlook what characters they are, of whom this is said, and to whom it is spoken: it is *concerning any sons*, saith the LORD. Yea, LORD! it is because, in JESUS, thy people are sons, that thou hast sent forth the SPIRIT of thy SON into our hearts, crying, *Abba, FATHER!* when a father, and especially GOD our FATHER, hears the voice of his child in prayer, calling in JESUS's name, what will he withhold? John 14:13, 14. 16:24. Galatians 4:6. Hebrews 4:16.

### **ISAIAH 45:13**

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.

Was there ever a more blessed and gracious proclamation made by GOD the FATHER, concerning the person, work, and glory of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, than what is contained in these words? To read this verse with reference to *Cyrus*, as some have done, is to enervate the passage sadly, and endanger the mind to overlook the one great object intended. For after allowing all that may be said of *Cyrus*, as GOD's instrument and servant, in delivering the Church from the oppressions they underwent in Babylon; still the temporal

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mercies then shown are, so inconsiderable, compared to the everlasting and eternal redemption from sin, death, and hell by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that they are not worthy to be mentioned. And surely it is to this, all along, that GOD the FATHER refers as the one great object of all salvation, which, is to glorify his dear SON. Reader! keep, I pray you, your eyes steadily fixed upon the glorious person of JESUS. Hear what GOD the FATHER, even the LORD of hosts saith, in this blessed verse; that it is he who hath raised him up, called him, appointed him, anointed him, and blessed him, as thy Redeemer. He, JEHOVAH alone, directed, ordered, and crowned with success all that CHRIST did in salvation. Behold the LORD JESUS, in all this, building his Church, and delivering all his people; and all *without money and without price*; and then fall down on thy knees, crying out, with the Apostle: *Thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift*; 2 Corinthians 9:15.

**ISAIAH 45:14**

Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, *saying*, Surely God *is* in thee; and *there is* none else, *there is* no God.

As the former verse contains the proclamation of JEHOVAH concerning the person and work of his dear SON, GOD-MAN Mediator; so in this, he as graciously proclaims the blessed consequences of his offices and labours. And we have lived to see in part, and to partake also in the blessings of this grace, when, as Gentiles, we have been brought by sovereign grace to call JESUS our LORD. And the hour is hastening, when *the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD*

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*and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever.* Revelation 11:15. Malachi 1:11. Psalm 72 &c.

**ISAIAH 45:15-17**

Verily thou *art* a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. (16) They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together *that are* makers of idols. (17) *But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

What a beautiful contrast is here drawn, between the LORD JEHOVAH, in his plan of grace and salvation, and the trumpery of idol-worship. Reader! you and I shall do well to keep in remembrance what the LORD saith in this sweet promise, of his people's salvation: *Israel shall be saved*, Put this down as a truth, eternally settled and fixed. Next, mark the endless and unceasing nature of it, like the LORD himself who hath promised: it shall be *with, an everlasting salvation*. Next, take special notice of the cause and method: Israel shall be saved *in the LORD*. Not in Israel's worth; not in Israel's labour; salvation is wholly *of the LORD*, and *in the LORD*. Lastly, behold the confidence which a conscious interest *in JESUS*, and salvation *by JESUS*, must beget; *Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end*. Was there ever anything more gracious! Did ever anything attach itself more earnestly to the very souls of men? What *four* huge volumes for a poor redeemed sinner are here given to him in a short verse, to read to his own heart, and to preach to other poor sinners around, forever? Blessed be JEHOVAH the speaker! Blessed be JEHOVAH the fulfiller! And blessed be JEHOVAH the Creator of faith in the heart of the hearer, in giving grace to believe the

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record that GOD *hath given of his dear SON*. See again the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> verses. Philippians 1:29.

### **ISAIAH 45:18-19**

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and *there is* none else. (19) I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

It is blessed to observe, when GOD is at anytime proposing mercies to his people, how the LORD introduceth his gracious promise with the declaration of his own glorious character, lest the greatness of the blessing proposed should overwhelm the mind and excite fear, as if the promise were too great to be believed. In this place, to encourage the seed of Jacob, who are always supposed to be a praying people, against any apprehension, and lest their conscious sense of sin should keep them back from the throne of grace; JEHOVAH takes to himself his own glorious distinction of character. He that originally created all things, will create grace in the heart of his people; and the prayer that he awakens in grace, he will hear, and answer in mercy. The Prophet, under the spirit of prophecy, describes the LORD JESUS CHRIST in the days of his flesh, as proving this blessed truth; Psalm 27:8. Hebrews 5:7-9. Reader! never lose sight of this in all your approaches to the throne.

### **ISAIAH 45:20-21**

Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save. (21) Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take

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counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me.

I have often read, and I hope with increasing pleasure and profit, the blessedness of the union here made, and by JEHOVAH himself, of his own glorious attributes, as manifested in the work of redemption: *A just God and a Saviour*. Here is, at once, an everlasting distinction made between the true GOD, and the whole tribe of dunghill-deities. Nothing, in all the code of idol-worship, proposed such an assemblage, as that of blending justice with salvation: and it is only in the person and work of JESUS, that such views are discoverable. In him, *mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, Psalm 85:10. So that the justice of GOD is strikingly set forth in punishing sin; and his salvation as blessedly set forth in pardoning the sinner. Reader! what comfort is there in this view of GOD in CHRIST, to a poor perishing sinner, under all the alarms of a guilty conscience! And how true is that scripture, which saith, *God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in JESUS*, Romans 3:26.

### **ISAIAH 45:22-25**

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. (23) I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. (24) Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. (25) In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

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If this gracious invitation of JESUS, to look unto him, were proclaimed every day from the house-top, yea, from heaven itself, it would not be more sure, nor certain, nay, not so much so as now it is, in the blessed word of GOD'S grace. And yet who is there that regards it? GOD the FATHER commends it, Isaiah 42:1, &c. The SON of GOD commends it, Isaiah 65:1, 2. GOD the HOLY GHOST commends it, John 1:29. But, alas! we may take up the words of the Prophet, and say, as he did, *who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* Isaiah 53:1. Precious JESUS! give to him that writes, and to him that reads, the hearing ear and the seeing eye, that we *may* hear the voice of the SON of GOD, and live; John 3:14, 15. And what at a blessed consequence is said in this scripture to result from such lookings unto JESUS, and living upon him: *Surely, shall one say*, yea, every one whom the LORD the SPIRIT hath brought off from all legal frames and self-righteousness; none but such *will* say it, and every one of this character *must* say it: *In the LORD have I righteousness and strength*. Yes; for it is *in* the LORD, and not in myself that I have it. For I have it not in any natural, not in any spiritual, not in any acquired strength: I have it not in anything wrought by me; not in my zeal; not in my endeavours; yea, not what is wrought *in* me; but wholly *in the* LORD. Oh! blessed distinction, between what some injudicious persons would fondly call *inherent* holiness, and the LORD'S *righteousness*. JESUS is indeed made of GOD to his people, *wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption*; but still it is JESUS that is all these, and is so made to his people; and not in themselves or their own attainments. Oh! the preciousness of JESUS, whose very name is *as ointment poured forth*. LORD! be it my portion, with all

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the seed of Israel, to be justified in thee, and by thee: and be thou my glory, that I *may go forth in thy strength, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only.* Psalm 89:16, 17. 71:15, 16.

## REFLECTIONS

PONDER over this lovely Chapter, my soul, again and again, not dismiss the sweet meditation, until the HOLY GHOST hath written the blessed contents of it in thine inmost affection. Behold the LORD'S love to Israel, in preparing the Church, during so many years, for their temporal deliverer; and calling him by his name, Cyrus, before Cyrus was even born. Then turn thy thoughts to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and contemplate the grace of GOD the FATHER, in the appointment and proclamation of him, the glorious spiritual deliverer of his redeemed, from all eternity. Thou, O blessed JESUS, hast indeed opened the two-leaved gates; yea, the everlasting gates of heaven and salvation, and made thy people joyful, and the loins of thine enemies to be smitten asunder! Thou hast made known thy sovereignty and power, and manifested that thou art GOD, and that there is none else beside thee, *a just GOD and a Saviour!*

And now, thou blessed LORD! having made peace by the blood of thy cross, to reconcile all things to thyself, dost thou open a new and living way by thy blood, and ever livest to keep it open by thine intercession? Yea, precious JESUS! dost thou so endear a throne of grace to thy people, as to assure us, that the works of thine hands are subject to the prayers of thy saints: that whatsoever shall be for thy glory and their good, they may command, and it shall be done! Oh! for grace to lie

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lower and lower in the dust before GOD, in proportion as the riches of thy grace are made manifest to the soul, that while the LORD exalts his people, they may humble themselves.

I dare not, LORD! dismiss this precious chapter, without first seeking for grace to convert thy command into a prayer, that while thou biddest me to look unto thee, my soul may feel the grace going forth into lively exercise, so to look to JESUS, as to have mine eyes enlightened, and to rest by faith upon JESUS, until my whole soul be warmed *into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST!* Blessed LORD! I do pray, that mine eyes, mine heart, my whole soul and body and spirit, yea, all the faculties thou hast given me, may bow in love, and grace, and praise, and prayer, before thee. Let all the earth witness for me; yea, all the powers of heaven, that to thee my knee bows; before thee my whole nature joyfully bends. *Surely in the LORD have I righteousness and strength.* In the LORD do all my powers find justification, and glory, in CHRIST here, and in CHRIST to all eternity. Amen.

## CHAPTER 46

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*The prophet here draws a fine contrast between the idol-gods, and the LORD GOD of Israel; and thence takes occasion to invite the people to the love of GOD, and confidence in him.*

#### **ISAIAH 46:1-2**

Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages *were* heavy loaden; *they are* a burden to the weary *beast.* (2) They stoop, they bow

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down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

*Bel* and *Nebo* were the names of two of the gods of *Babylon*. Probably from thence, one of the kings of Babylon took the name of *Belshazzar*, and another that of *Nebuchadnezzar*. But perhaps the former is a contraction of the word *Baal*, the well-known name generally given to an idol; and hence the LORD declared that he would take that name out of the mouth of his people. And, as if to endear himself still more, the LORD said he would be called not *Baali*, which signifies *lord*; but *Ishi*, which means *husband*. And was not this an allusion to gospel times, when the LORD of life and glory would take our nature, and become the husband of his people? Hosea 2:16, 17.

#### **ISAIAH 46:3-4**

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne *by me* from the belly, which are carried from the womb: (4) And *even* to *your* old age I *am* he; and *even* to hoar hairs will I carry *you*: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.

The LORD having, in the preceding verses, shown the wretchedness of idols, utterly unable to help themselves, and consequently incapable of helping others; in these blessed words, calls upon his people to behold him; and most blessedly sets forth the tokens and evidences of his GODHEAD, in grace and love, from the womb to the grave. Reader! do not hastily pass away from the meditation of what this sweet scripture teacheth, as it concerns yourself, and the LORD'S! dealings towards you, both in a way of nature and of grace. Did not the LORD carry you from the womb, yea, did he not form you there, and make all your members to be written

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before your creation? And when coming forth from the belly, was it not he that preserved you alive, and sustained the life he had formed; yea, and hath preserved it to the present hour? Think in how many providences, through how many dispensations, and how many dangers, he hath brought you? And, if you are able to trace the wonderful subject in grace; as well as in nature, think who it was that formed thee in the new creation in CHRIST JESUS, and now maintains and keeps alive, and will keep alive, the incorruptible seed, unto ripeness in glory, by CHRIST JESUS! Oh! who that knows the whole, in nature and grace, but will be ready to ascribe all to Him, to whom alone the glory is due; and thankfully make JESUS, what he is, the Alpha and Omega of all; in creation and redemption And oh! how sure it is, that the same LORD who has carried from the womb, both of nature and of grace, will carry on to old age and hoary hairs; and when heart, and strength, and powers, all fail, he will be the strength of his people's heart, and their portion forever! Psalm 73:26.

### **ISAIAH 46:5-7**

To whom will ye liken me, and make *me* equal, and compare me, that we may be like? (6) They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, *and* hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. (7) They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, *one* shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

Amidst all the folly of idolatry, there is one feature, in which the worshippers become a reproach to us: I mean, in that they spared no expense in their religious rites. This scripture saith *they lavished gold out of the bag*; and yet how many have I known, who not only *profess* the pure gospel of JESUS,

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but really and truly *possess* the power of it, who through the remains of indwelling corruption, cannot help being sparing in their bounties to their poor brethren! It is strange that it should be so: but the fact is undeniable. LORD! keep the heart of him that writes, and him that reads, from a covetous spirit! Oh for grace to delight in refreshing the bowels of the saints with the nether and the upper springs of JESUS's bounty; while JESUS gives us both liberally to enjoy. Reader! had not the LORD'S word said so, could it ever have been supposed possible, that man's fall would have so far blinded his reason, as that he should first make an image, and then fall down to worship the image of his own making? Was there ever a folly so great and glaring? Precious JESUS! to what a state was our nature universally sunk, when thy mercy prompted thee to come, and seek and save that which was lost!

### **ISAIAH 46:8-11**

Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring *it* again to mind, O ye transgressors. (9) Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (11) Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.

See, my soul, how JEHOVAH pleads with his people, and what sweet and condescending appeals he makes to their understanding, when enlightened by his grace! And do not overlook this precious account, which the LORD gives of himself, in the bosom of this scripture. *His counsel must stand*. Blessed be GOD for this! Embrace this solemn truth, in an especial manner, as it concerns the gospel of JESUS. Here,

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the LORD hath by *two immutable things, in which it is impossible for GOD to lie*, given to the heirs of promise strong consolation. *He will do all his pleasure*: yea, he hath not only commissioned a man, like a bird of prey, and called him *Cyrus* by name, to execute his purposes in the deliverance of his people from Babylon, but he hath called the LORD JESUS CHRIST for all the purposes of salvation, in delivering his people from hell, death, and the grave; and will deliver them with an everlasting salvation, world without end. Isaiah 45:13. Hebrews 6:17, 18.

**ISAIAH 46:12-13**

Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that *are* far from righteousness: (13) I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

I beg the Reader to ponder over these verses, and keep them in remembrance. Here is GOD's call to the unhumiliated in Zion, the unawakened, unregenerate of his people, if I mistake not: and this is the first class the LORD speaks to in this sermon. In the successive chapters, he speaks to several other characters, among his people, on the same subject. But this is to *the stout-hearted*: to these he proposed JESUS and his salvation. And observe, that JESUS and his salvation is for JEHOVAH's glory, agreeably to all our LORD taught; John. 17:12. If the Reader wishes to trace the beautiful connection of JEHOVAH's preaching on this as addressed to the several characters of his Church, before he comes to the passages themselves, he may find the subject carried on in a progressive manner, by consulting the scriptures in the way I have marked them. In these verses, the appeal is to the *stout-hearted*, the unconvinced, unawakened. In the 48<sup>th</sup>

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chapter, verse 12, it is to the *called*. In the 51<sup>st</sup> chapter, 1<sup>st</sup> verse, it is to the *followers* after JESUS. In the 5<sup>th</sup> verse of the same chapter, it is to those *who believe in the LORD*, but who, through the weakness of their faith, are fluctuating, and too apt to forget that JEHOVAH's *salvation is for ever, and his righteousness that which shall not be abolished*. And in the 7<sup>th</sup> verse of the same chapter, the appeal is to those who truly *know*, and as truly *live up to* their privileges, in having CHRIST formed *in their heart the hope of glory*. According to my view, I conceive that there is a beautiful gradation here pointed out in the divine life: and the Reader that is taught of GOD, will, I humbly believe, find much blessedness in the connection, and discover suitable directions, as here given by the LORD, for every state.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! I find it good to see the LORD'S hand, in every word of the LORD'S scripture. While in this chapter we trace the gracious purposes of GOD to his people, in setting forth the folly and weakness, as well as the wickedness of idolatry, we discover also his grace, and mercy, and love. Oh! how condescending is the LORD, in thus appealing, for the testimonies of his own truth and faithfulness, to the plainest evidences around them.

While this short, but interesting chapter, makes a general appeal to the Church at large, how blessedly doth it more immediately address the ancient believer! Methinks I would have our aged fathers in the Church very frequently peruse this precious portion, by way of forming one of their songs in the house of their pilgrimage: and as they read the gracious

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promises of a gracious GOD in CHRIST, compare what the LORD saith with their own experiences; until, like *Joshua's* appeal to Israel, they can, and do say, *Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD their GOD hath here spoken concerning them; but all are come to pass as it is this day.*

My venerable father! (if peradventure these lines should fall under The eye of one of GOD'S ancient believers) think, I beseech you, what a rich volume of promises is here brought into one view, for you; and how sure, if you know GOD'S CHRIST, the whole is *yea and amen in JESUS*. He that first called you from the womb of his grace, hath borne you to the present hour; and amidst all your growing infirmities, JESUS is *your JESUS* still. Friends may forsake you; your dearest and nearest relations you may be a burden to; yea, you may be a burden to yourself; but hear what JESUS saith, *Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you*. The same that JESUS was when he called you, the same is he now *to you, and for you; and the same will he be forever*. Oh! the preciousness, amidst all the changes in us, and by us, to live upon an unchangeable GOD in CHRIST! May the LORD give grace and faith in lively exercise to every believer, to give GOD the credit of GOD, and to gather up the feet in the bed of death, as good old Jacob did when dying, that he may cry out, with him, *I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD!*

## CHAPTER 47

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*The subject of this chapter is the destruction of Babylon. But the, Prophet, looking into gospel times, hath in view a much greater ruin than that of the Chaldean empire; even the universal ruin of Satan's kingdom, which, in scripture language, is called Babylon, The pride, cruelty, and enchantment, here spoken of, are all typical of the great apostate spirit's behaviour towards the Church of GOD.*

**ISAIAH 47:1-3**

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: *there is* no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. (2) Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. (3) Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet *thee as* a man.

If we read these verses with an eye to the history of Babylon, as a people, we shall find, that the threatenings here denounced were all literally fulfilled: Babylon, which had conquered all nations, was herself at length conquered. But we shall lose the whole beauty of the scripture, if our principal attention be not directed to the spiritual sense of what the LORD here delivers, by his servant the Prophet. For the sins of his people, the LORD was pleased to raise up this scourge for them in Babylon, and caused them to be led into captivity. The LORD doth so now. When his people break his laws, and keep not his commandments, it forms a part in the covenant, to visit *their offences with the rod, and their sins with scourges*. Nevertheless, they are his people still. Though in themselves rebellious, yet in JESUS, their glorious head, they are accepted. Hence the LORD will correct them; but when the correction is over, he will cast the rod away. Their enemies

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shall be accounted with: and in this account, JEHOVAH, their friend, meets their opposers, not merely with the strength and power of a man, but with that of GOD. Oh! how fearful the judgment to the enemies of GOD, and of his CHRIST! Oh! how blessed to the people of GOD, to have GOD for their friend!

**ISAIAH 47:4**

*As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.*

Here is a beautiful break of the subject, in the LORD'S address, to Babylon. The Church, as it were, hearing what the LORD had just before said, in his threatened judgments upon Babylon, breaks out in a devout exclamation concerning her LORD. She calls him by his name *Goel*, Redeemer; and saith of him, that he is the LORD of sovereignty; and, in his holiness, the LORD of righteousness to his people. Sweet views of JESUS! His GODHEAD secures the everlasting and eternal efficacy of his redemption; and in his mediatorial holiness, all his people are interested. The LORD of Hosts, and the HOLY ONE of Israel, become a suitable kinsman Redeemer, for the Church eternally to trust in, and to glory in.

**ISAIAH 47:5**

*Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.*

The subject is again resumed at this verse, and, under the image of Babylon, the silence and darkness, in which the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST shall be finally shut up, are set forth.

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**ISAIAH 47:6**

I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

I pray the Reader to remark, with me, how graciously the LORD speaks, even when describing the degeneracy of his people. Though they had rebelled, and though the LORD was wroth with them, yet he calls them still *his people*. Precious thought! The Apostle Paul makes a blessed observation upon it, Romans 11:1, 2; and the Prophet Isaiah hath another, which, shows the LORD'S care over his people, even when in their captive state; for though outcasts, yet were they still *the LORD's outcasts*; Isaiah 16:4.

**ISAIAH 47:7-15**

And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: *so* that thou didst not lay these *things* to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. (8) Therefore hear now this, *thou that art* given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I *am*, and none else beside me; I shall not sit *as* a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: (9) But these two *things* shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, *and* for the great abundance of thine enchantments. (10) For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I *am*, and none else beside me. (11) Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, *which* thou shalt not know. (12) Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. (13) Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from *these things* that shall come upon thee. (14)

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Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: *there shall not be* a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to sit before it. (15) Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, *even* thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

I include the whole of these verses in one reading, because the one great subject is the same. The enemies of GOD and of his Church carry with them a general feature, namely, every thing of hatred, and malignity to CHRIST and his Gospel. From the first forming of the Church, in Egypt, to the present hour, there is but one and the same plan manifested, and the reason is plain: the Devil's hatred to CHRIST and his seed is personal; so that, whatever else may mark the characters of men, the war is on this ground, universal and unceasing. It commenced at the fall, runs through all time, and will not cease as long as the world remains. I stay not to particularize the several relations, here given, of Babylon's sin and folly: the pride, and self-sufficiency against GOD; the confidence of never being moved; the use of enchantments and sorceries, are all so many of the characters, which in all ages mark the enemies of JESUS and his salvation. The Reader will do well, while reading this chapter, to keep in remembrance its spiritual sense; and it will much promote his improvement and apprehension of what is here said by the Prophet, if he will read with it, and compare, what the Apostle was commissioned to deliver to the Church concerning mystical Babylon, in the close of the canon of Scripture. Those portions mutually serve to illustrate each other. See Revelations 17, 18 and 19 to the end of verse 9.

## REFLECTIONS

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ONE of the most comprehensive improvements to be made at the close of this chapter, in the view of the very different termination set forth to the people of GOD, and to his enemies, may be summed up in the words of our Prophet: *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him!*

Reader! take a short view of both. Behold, in the representation of Babylon, the delicacy, splendour, pomp, and pleasure in which she rioted for a while: but behold, again, in a moment, in one day, what ruin followed! Such, but in an infinitely greater degree, is the state of all the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST. AS JESUS told some in his days, so in every age the same are discoverable: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the work of your father ye will do.* For the wretched wages of carnal honour, how unweariedly do they drudge in his service, wear his livery, speak his language, and promote the interests of his kingdom! And what can the end be but Death? *My soul: come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!*

Behold the people of GOD! How often harassed and oppressed by their foes! And when, by sin and rebellion, their Babylonish enemies bring them into subjection, how heavily do they sometimes groan, being burthened: who shall speak of their inward conflicts with sin and Satan, and an unbelieving heart? Who shall describe their outward fears? In all their pilgrimage state, what exercises do they experience from the many ups and downs through which they pass! Nevertheless, the LORD is still bringing them on, and bringing them through, and will at length make them more than conquerors, through his grace helping them. Reader! be it your portion and mine, to

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see that we are of this household of faith for then we shall go from strength to strength, amidst all the Babylonian conflicts of our warfare, till we come to appear before our GOD, our JESUS, in his Zion!

## CHAPTER 48

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*As the foregoing Chapter treated particularly of Babylon, so this hath a peculiar respect to the house of Israel. The LORD, in opening to the house of Jacob a view of their sins, plainly and fully shows, that all the blessings bestowed upon Israel were the pure result of grace.*

#### **ISAIAH 48:1-2**

Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, *but* not in truth, nor in righteousness. (2) For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts *is* his name.

The LORD opens the Chapter with a call upon his people: He graciously sets forth in what light they stood among the nations. In profession, they were indeed his people, and from the covenant relationship in which they stood to GOD, they denominated him as their LORD, and themselves as the holy city. But, in the midst of this high profession, and these distinguishing advantages, their hearts were not right with him, they had a name to live, but were virtually dead before GOD. Reader! think how prone, in all ages, the people of GOD have been to depart from him. Do you not, in the present

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hour, feel what Paul felt, and groan as he did? Romans 7:15, &c.

### **ISAIAH 48:3-8**

I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did *them* suddenly, and they came to pass. (4) Because I knew that thou *art* obstinate, and thy neck *is* an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; (5) I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. (6) Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare *it*? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. (7) They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them. (8) Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time *that* thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

Reader! mark, I beseech you, what a gracious expostulation of the LORD is contained in these verses. The LORD retraces the subject from the beginning. He gives his people to see what they were, and what he is. He takes them by the hand, as it should seem, and leads them into retirement, to consider how gracious he hath been, and how unworthy they have proved. And in the close of this expostulation, that they might behold how magnified his grace had been, he gives them to understand that there was nothing in all this ungrateful conduct of theirs which surprised him: for from the womb he knew how very treacherously they would be found. Reader! remark, that of all the views to overwhelm the soul in the contemplation of sovereign grace and mercy, this seems the highest and the best: for it comes with the fullest tide. When the LORD gives grace, in direct opposition, as it were, to our

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undeservings and *where sin aboundeth, that there grace should much more abound*; what shall we call this? And was not the LORD JESUS so given? Did our nature, universally speaking, desire a Saviour? Did we ask the blessing? Did we know we needed this unspeakable mercy? Yea, did we not, every one of us in heart and practice, if not in words, say, *we will not have this man to reign over us*? Reader! bring the subject home yet a little nearer, and make it personal: How were you engaged, when JESUS passed by and bid you live? Were you not in pursuit of things temporal, *making, as the Apostle speaks, provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*. Nay, since the LORD called you by his grace, how have you manifested your sense of his grace, and your obedience? Had the LORD treated you, as you have treated him, where, even now, would have been your portion? Hath JESUS continued his love amidst all your undeservings; and still continues it; yea, doth he say to thee, as to Israel, in this expostulating scripture, *I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb*? Surely, under such views, if any where, the soul will bow down to the very dust of the earth, in admiring and adoring the riches of grace, which takes occasion from human misery, to display divine mercy, and to constrain every child of GOD to exclaim, with the Prophet, *who is a GOD like unto thee*? Micah 7:18-20.

**ISAIAH 48:9-11**

For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. (10) Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. (11) For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

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Reader! as in the former paragraph I called upon you to mark the graciousness of GOD'S expostulation with his people; so here I pray you to observe, how the whole of sovereign grace and love is by the LORD himself traced up to its source: Never, never forget that it is for JEHOVAH's glorious *name's sake*, that the whole creation-work and redemption-work, hath been, and is, and will be accomplished, even to all eternity. The song of heaven sets this forth most fully: and the experience of the redeemed on earth is made to correspond as fully to the same. If God pardons sin, receives the sinner, and passeth by their iniquities, the reason is assigned: *Be it known to you, O house of Israel, that I do this not for your sakes, but for my great name's sake.* Revelation 4:9-11. Ezekiel 36:21, 22. If the reader would see two remarkable instances wherein the servants of the LORD availed themselves of this distinguishing character of JEHOVAH, to plead for pardon and forgiveness, and prevailed, I would refer him to Exodus 32:9-14, and Joshua 6:6-9.

### **ISAIAH 48:12-14**

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last. (13) Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: *when* I call unto them, they stand up together. (14) All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these *things*? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans.

Reader! observe what grace is, again and again displayed in every verse, as we prosecute this sweet Chapter. Though the LORD began by pointing out Israel's rebellion, and this was followed up with expostulation, yet when the LORD comes to speak of himself and his covenant relationship to his people,

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the cloud seems at once removed, and the brightness of his countenance comes forth in shining lustre and when taking to himself his great name, the glorious I AM, the *First* and the *Last*, and therefore giving being to all his promises, he bids Israel to hearken: Israel was his *called*, his *chosen*. How sweet, how very sweet, are such views of the unchangeableness of him and his purposes and promises in CHRIST, when the soul can discover an interest in the whole from an union and interest in JESUS! Revelation 22:13.

**ISAIAH 48:15-16**

I, *even* I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. (16) Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.

Though the whole passage is but a continuation of the same blessed discourse, in which GOD himself is the speaker; yet I stop the Reader under these two verses, to remark the peculiarity of what is said. If JESUS, under the spirit of prophecy, be here delivering these gracious truths to the Church, (as I think cannot be questioned) then will it follow, that all the three persons of the GODHEAD are here introduced as engaged in this blessed sermon. JESUS opened his gospel, and spoke not in secret, but openly to the people: so he received his commission, Isaiah 6:8-10; and so, in the synagogue, he declared the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH to be upon him; compare Isaiah 61:1, &c. With Luke 4:18, &c. And if JEHOVAH and his SPIRIT (as in those verses is said to have been the case) be thus sent, who will not see, as in the baptism of JESUS, all the three persons of the GODHEAD engaged in this act of grace, Matthew 3:16,17.

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**ISAIAH 48:17-22**

Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go. (18) O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: (19) Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me. (20) Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it *even* to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob. (21) And they thirsted not *when* he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out. (22) *There is* no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

How gracious the preface to all these sweet promises; and how sure they become, in the name of the great Promiser! Reader! let it be our earnest study and delight to come under the teaching of this almighty LORD, whose instructions are sure to profit us. He teacheth not as man teacheth: he teacheth powerfully, for his word comes with power: his teachings are infallible, for HE, the SPIRIT of truth, guideth into all truth; and what he teacheth will abide with his people forever. *I shall never*, said David, *forget thy word; for by it thou hast quickened me*; Psalm 119:93. But amidst all these blessed promises to the LORD'S people, how solemn is the termination of the Chapter to the ungodly! There is, there can be no peace but in JESUS; and the unawakened, the graceless, and the ungodly, rejecting the counsel of GOD against their own souls, and despising the blood of the cross for salvation, can find it in no other; Acts 4:12.

**REFLECTIONS**

READER! *stand still, and see the salvation of GOD!* Behold, as this Chapter most blessedly sets forth, *from* whom that salvation comes; *by* whom it is accomplished; *in* whom it is alone found; and *to* whom the whole glory results. The song of heaven, and the hymn of the church upon earth, are both tuned upon the same note: To JESUS the praise is given, for *he was slain, and hath redeemed us to GOD by his blood.*

But oh! amidst this pleasing assurance, how painful is the thought that neither the consciousness of grace freely given, in all that is past: nor the continuance of grace in all that is present: nor all the hopes and expectations of grace for all that is to come; are found sufficient in their persuasive pleadings, to keep alive in the soul, obedience and the dedication of the heart to the LORD. Thou knowest, LORD, that transgressors thy children would be from the womb; but this did not stop thy bowels of love from yearning over us in our lost estate. Precious JESUS! be thou to us still JESUS. LORD, teach us to profit; lead us by the way we should go: and grant that, amidst all our unworthiness, thy grace may never depart from us: but keep us by thine almighty power through faith unto salvation. And while to the wicked there is no peace; give us that peace, in thee and thy righteousness, *keeping the heart and mind in JESUS CHRIST Amen.*

## CHAPTER 49

### CONTENTS

*This most interesting Chapter contains the outlines of the covenant of redemption, in the solemn transactions between*

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GOD the FATHER *and* GOD the SON, *concerning salvation. This subject is carried on without interruption from beginning to end.*

**ISAIAH 49:1-3**

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. (2) And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; (3) And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

We find here some glorious speaker, calling upon the nations of the isles to attend to him, and declaring both the authority upon which he spoke, and the subject of his discourse. And if we make application of it to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as GOD-MAN Mediator, nothing can be more beautiful and interesting. He first demands attention; then speaks of the persons to whom his discourse was directed; and then of his authority, and the object of his call. And JESUS, and JESUS only, was and is all this; and of no other could it be said or spoken: GOD the FATHER is said to have given his dear SON *to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel;* Luke 2:32. And from the womb of all eternity, was JESUS called, yea, *in the volume of the book was it written of him.* If the Reader will compare what the beloved Apostle John saith of the book of the divine decrees, which was in the hand of him that sat upon the throne, and which none was found worthy to open but the LAMB that had been slain; he will be led perhaps to the sense of the passage, and discover that the Bible itself is but the transcript, in the revealed part of it, of what was written therein; Revelation 5:1-10. Psalm 40:6-8.

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And when the hour approached for the open revelation of JESUS, the angel declared his name, as we read, Matthew 1:21. But we must not stop here. GOD the FATHER, who *called* CHRIST to the work, is said to have *fitted* him for it. So the covenant terms ran, Psalm 89:19-24. Perhaps the *hiding* of CHRIST might refer to what Paul speaks of the mystery of redemption, *hid from ages and generations*, Ephesians 3:4-10. The *mouth* of JESUS, *like a sword*, hath reference to the power and sovereignty with which *he spake as never man spake*. The *word* of CHRIST is said to be *quick and powerful*, Hebrews 4:12. John 5:25. Psalm. 45:5. Lastly, GOD's *owning* him *in* the work, as well as *calling* him *to* the work, is most blessedly set forth in this passage: CHRIST, as Mediator and Surety, is JEHOVAH's servant, the Husband of his Church and people; and I hope the Reader will not overlook, what is as sweet a part as any, that CHRIST takes, in this passage, the name of his Church. It is an usual thing in life for the wife to take the name of her husband but JESUS, in his unequalled condescension, here takes the name of his wife, and is called *Israel*. Precious LORD JESUS! what humility was thine!

### **ISAIAH 49:4-5**

Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: *yet* surely my judgment *is* with the LORD, and my work with my God. (5) And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb *to be* his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

What a striking resemblance doth this bear to the preaching of our LORD, when upon earth! Who that reads in the Gospel of the contempt poured upon the person and office of JESUS, but must be struck with this description, John. 1:11. And how

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blessed is it to behold the promised acceptance of CHRIST'S person, however slighted by the rulers and pharisees. Reader! never forget *in* whom all redemption is: and *by* whom all acceptation is given to the persons and offerings of his people.

**ISAIAH 49:6**

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

I do not desire to strain any passage of scripture, beyond its plain meaning: but I would humbly ask the Reader, whether these words do not seem to convey as if the very heart of GOD the FATHER was going forth in love and delight upon the person of his dear SON, as the Mediator and Surety of his people. See those sweet scriptures, Psalm 2:8. John 10:7. And do not forget, whenever contemplating the glorious work of salvation, that JEHOVAH calls it HIS. Sweet and delightful thought!

**ISAIAH 49:7-9**

Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, *and* his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, *and* the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. (8) Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; (9) That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures *shall be* in all high places.

Was there ever a more striking, and decisive passage than this, in confirmation of the greatness and glory of his person and character, to whom the words are addressed? JEHOVAH first gives him his own glorious and distinguishing name: *the Redeemer of Israel, and his HOLY ONE*. And, Reader, do pray observe, how the Redeemer is called: *his HOLY ONE*; that is JEHOVAH'S HOLY ONE; for JESUS, in his mediatorial character, is the CHRIST; that is, *the sent, the anointed* of GOD. I hope you know your Redeemer in this sense. Peter did, and found it most blessed, Matthew 16:13-17. And if we read the words, his HOLY ONE, as Israel's HOLY ONE, it is still blessed; if CHRIST our Redeemer be GOD'S CHRIST; so is he his Church's also. Precious consideration! JEHOVAH next points to his wonderful humiliation; which, indeed, was such as was never before heard of: not only one man, for many despised him; but the nation at large abhorred him.

He was despised in his person, his offices, his perfections, his attributes, yea, in all things, as the most abject of men. See Matthew 27:43. John 9:29. His attributes were also contemned; though wisdom itself; yet said they, *how knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* John 7:15. His omniscience was reviled: *Prophecy, say they, unto us, thou CHRIST, when they had blindfolded him, who is he that smote thee?* Matthew 26:68. So again his kingly office: *If he be the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross!* And so also his priestly office: *He saved others, say they, himself he cannot save!* Matthew 27:39-44. Hear also what the LAMB of GOD saith of himself on this subject, Psalm 22:6-8. But what glory doth JEHOVAH promise shall follow? The presence of GOD the FATHER was assured to him, in the midst of all these

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taunts and reproaches! the issue of the travail of his soul was certain. And the LORD JESUS, as the whole of the covenant, hath accomplished the purposes, and is going on to the present hour to accomplish them, on the earth. See those scriptures, Zechariah 9:11. John 11:42. Isaiah 53:10-12.

**ISAIAH 49:10-12**

They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. (11) And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. (12) Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

How sweetly do these verses follow what was said before: JEHOVAH having guaranteed to the glorious Head of the church, everything needful for his personal safety and honour, here engageth to bless and take care of his people; and, as well through a life of grace, as in the kingdom of glory, their everlasting safety and happiness is secured. See Revelation 7:13, to the end.

**ISAIAH 49:13**

Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

This is a beautiful break in the Chapter, to call up even the inanimate parts of nature to celebrate, in sacred hymns, the glories of redemption: Heaven and earth shall sing of it, for both worlds take part in the triumphs of redeeming grace. Luke 2:13,14.

**ISAIAH 49:14-21**

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But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. (15) Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. (16) Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands; thy walls *are* continually before me. (17) Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. (18) Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, *and* come to thee. *As* I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them *on thee*, as a bride *doeth*. (19) For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. (20) The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place *is* too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. (21) Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where *had* they *been*?

The distress of Zion only makes way for the display of divine love; and if the people of GOD, in their several exercises (be they what they may) could but be brought to consider the unceasing and everlasting care of the LORD over his people, they would like Paul, *take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches for CHRIST'S sake*, knowing that when *most weak in themselves*, those are the very seasons for being *strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might*. 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10. Reader! I pray you take notice, what a very tender and interesting image the LORD here makes use of, to dry up the tears of Zion; and which, I beg the Reader to remember, is as much addressed to mourners in Zion now, as it was then when first delivered: *Can a woman forget her sucking child?* The figure is carried to the highest pitch of tenderness the imagination can conceive, in order to show the vast

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superiority of that love which GOD bears towards his Zion, his people. *A woman*, the tenderest part of human nature; and *a mother* also; yea, a *nursing* mother; and not to a child only, but to a *sucking* child, who is still hanging to her breasts, and depending upon her for everything; can such a person forget the infant, the son of her womb, which came forth from her own bowels, and is indeed part of herself: and the very fulness of her breasts requiring discharge still urging also to remembrance? Is it possible, saith the LORD, that she can forget either the child or herself? The LORD asketh the question, and answers it himself: Yea, *they may forget!* Yea her compassion may give way! Sickness, a fever, with loss of senses, death, or dying circumstances, may induce it; yea, some mothers, as hath been known, have destroyed the fruit of their womb, to hide their shame; and some, as the Prophet hath described in a time of famine, have sodden their own children for food, Lamentations 4:10. But, saith the LORD, though all natural feelings may be lost, the tender compassion of GOD for his Zion shall never give way! And how blessed are the promises that follow, to create faith in the hearts of his people? *Set me*, saith the Church, *as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. I have*, saith the LORD, *engraven thee upon the palms of my hands.* And how was this fulfilled when the hands and feet of JESUS were bored and fastened to the cross! Surely there can be no remembrance like this; no memento for the believer to look at, as well as his LORD, to ensure an unceasing attention to his wants, and to give every blessing that cross purchased. See Song Of Solomon 8:6. Zechariah 12:10. And how blessedly do all the promises follow these divine assurances, that the LORD's mercies upon Zion shall follow every wasting time with tenfold fulness, so as to

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surprise the people of GOD with the unexpectedness, as well as the greatness of salvation by JESUS. I beg the Reader not to lose sight, that in those unspeakable blessings, what is said, is spoken, first, to the person of our LORD, as the great Head of his Church; and then to his Zion, his redeemed in him; for such views abundantly heighten every blessing.

**ISAIAH 49:22-23**

Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders. (23) And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with *their* face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

Reader! while GOD'S mercies to the poor Gentile church are thus repeatedly brought to view, do not overlook the sweetness and fulness of them, as they respect yourself. Personal interest gives a relish to every mercy; in nothing more so, than our own interest in JESUS. And when we read these mercies, as promised to the LORD JESUS so many ages before his coming; and now feel and know them to be realized, so many generations after his return to glory; what an accumulation of evidence do they bring with them, *to the truth as it is in* JESUS! Oh thou precious LORD! both of Jew and Gentile! how fully hast thou confirmed thy promise, in thy one fold, under thyself the one true Shepherd! John 10:16. Ezekiel 34:23.

**ISAIAH 49:24-26**

Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? (25) But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be

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delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. (26) And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

The greatness of the blessings promised in this Chapter, being so wonderful in themselves, and so much beyond all possible expectation to the people, who were to be made happy in the possession of them, might well excite surprise, and occasion doubts how, and by what means, they should be fulfilled. If the subject be considered spiritually, both Jew and Gentile were, by nature and by practice, the lawful captives to sin and Satan; how then shall they be liberated? Poor sinners can neither purchase their freedom by price, nor by power. The LORD can only solve the difficulty: JESUS is their Redeemer, and he will accomplish the liberation of his redeemed by both. See those sweet scriptures which show the way, and when you have duly pondered the blissful subject, recollect that the whole is for the glory of JEHOVAH, as the whole is accomplished by himself; Isaiah 45:13. 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Hebrews 2:14. Revelation 5:9.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! I charge it upon you, as I desire to feel the full impression upon my own mind, that the subject, as well as the contents, of this most precious Chapter, be not dismissed, before all its blessed truths, under the divine teaching, be properly received and enjoyed in both our souls. The solemn transactions here recorded, of what passed, between our GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, and our most blessed LORD,

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concerning the recovery of our poor lost and fallen nature, are, in fact, the bottom and foundation of all grace and mercy, given us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began. All that we receive in pardon, in the regeneration of our nature, our adoption and high calling in CHRIST JESUS, our assurance of salvation in grace here, and glory to all eternity; all are the result of those covenant engagements, which this most blessed Chapter records, and which took place between the high contracting parties, before the fall of man, yea, before the foundation of the earth was laid. Pause then, and trace the wonderful subject through all its parts. Behold GOD the FATHER, in his love to our poor nature; who so loved us, as to give his only begotten SON, *to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. Behold GOD the SON, who so loved us, as to *give himself for us*. Behold GOD the HOLY GHOST, as testifying the same, in bringing the Church acquainted with her mercies, and not only revealing the glad tidings of salvation, but inclining the hearts of the children to the belief of the truth of JESUS, and making them *willing in the day of his power*. Oh! what everlasting praise, love, and adoration, have we now to offer, and shall have eternally to present, to the holy, undivided, THREE IN ONE, JEHOVAH, for these unspeakable mercies of GOD in CHRIST!

Reader! let us seek grace to receive the blessed truths contained in this Chapter, to live up to the faith, and in the enjoyment of them, during our whole continuance upon earth, until we come to realize the full possession of them in everlasting glory. Precious JESUS! may we behold thee as the whole of the covenant. All the obligations of it have been wrought by thee; all its blessings are *from* thee; and all the concerns of it, and of thy people's happiness, are entrusted to thee. Help me then, O LORD, to look more to thee in every

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blessing, as the author and procurer of it! There is more of thee in the most common mercies, than thy people are conscious of: thy death hath secured our life, thy cross hath purchased our crown! *To he be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

## CHAPTER 50

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*Notwithstanding certain parts, here and there, in this Chapter, which may, at the first glance, appear to have an historical allusion to Babylon and the captivity: yet the great and evident point in the whole hath reference to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. His person, offices, and character, are strongly marked.*

#### **ISAIAH 50:1-3**

Thus saith the LORD, Where *is* the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away. (2) Wherefore, when I came, *was there* no man? when I called, *was there* none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because *there is* no water, and dieth for thirst. (3) I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

The Prophet *Hosea* whose ministry was not many years before that of *Isaiah* hath made use of the same figure of the married state, to represent the Mediator's union with his people; and here the Prophet *Isaiah* adopts the same method. It is indeed, a very striking figure, and the LORD JESUS himself

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seems to delight in it. See Hosea 2. Jeremiah 3:14, 15. Matthew 22:2. It may serve to teach us some sweet and precious things. By the assumption of our nature the LORD JESUS hath shown, that the soul is a marriageable creature to CHRIST, and therefore capable of an union with him, and enjoyment in him, to all eternity. What a sorrowful thought then is it, that by sin we should at any time estrange ourselves from our LORD, our husband; and that our iniquities should act like a bill of divorcement! Precious JESUS! be thou our husband still, and perform the tender office of the husband and the friend, notwithstanding our backsliding; *for the LORD GOD of Israel saith that he that hateth putting away,* Malachi 2:16. I only add, that perhaps the expressions here denoted, concerning the LORD'S' *drying up the sea*, making the rivers a wilderness, and causing the fish to stink, hath respect to the display of his miracles in Egypt, for the deliverance of his people.

### **ISAIAH 50:4-9**

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is weary*: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. (5) The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. (6) I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. (7) For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. (8) *He is* near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who *is* mine adversary? let him come near to me. (9) Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who *is* he *that* shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

I should think it an unnecessary service to point out whom this account refers to. Everything here spoken is so directly descriptive of the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that it is hardly possible to lose sight of JESUS while reading what is here said. Of whom but JESUS could it ever be said, that he had *the tongue of the learned*? Who could say to the weary, *Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls*? Whose ear was *opened*, or *bored*, as JEHOVAH's servant, that loved his master, loved his wife and children, and therefore would not go out free? Of whom but JESUS could this have ever been said, to the full extent? Psalm 40:6, 7, compared with Exodus 21:5, 6. Who but JESUS gave his back to the smiters, and hid not his face from shame and spitting? And Reader, do not overlook as interesting a part as any, in this representation of JESUS; namely, that it was the LORD GOD JEHOVAH, who appointed thy Surety, to all this. Oh! what strength doth faith derive from the view, when, in the sufferings of CHRIST, we trace the hand of JEHOVAH appointing to all! It was this which crowned the whole, that CHRIST *glorified not himself to be made an high priest*: and in all he bore and suffered, it was *the LORD who laid on him the iniquities of us all*, Hebrews 5:5. Isaiah 53:6. Therefore how sure was CHRIST'S dependence for support from the FATHER, to carry him through the work; and how sure is our dependence and confidence in him, for justification, as the LORD our righteousness!

**ISAIAH 50:10**

Who *is* among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh *in* darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Here is the LORD JESUS; having the tongue of the learned, giving a word of comfort to the weary and exercised soul. Reader! pray observe how likely, yea, how proper it is, that one who feareth the LORD, may yet walk in darkness. But how blessed is the case of such an one, that, however dark his walk may be, JESUS is at the end to lighten it up, and in the mean time will be his light and salvation. Psalm 27:1.

**ISAIAH 50:11**

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass *yourselves* about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks *that* ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

We have several examples in the ministry of GOD'S servants, who, in their animated exhortations, adopt language like this. The Apostle Paul, after finishing a solemn discourse to his countrymen, on the subject of CHRIST'S redemption, makes use of the same, Acts 13:41; and what an awful darkness will that be, in which men must lie down for ever, if they refuse all light to walk by, but of their own kindling; despising the light of JESUS, who is *the light*, and *the life of the world!* Oh! for grace, that it may never be the condemnation of the writer, or reader, that *light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil!* John 3:19.

**REFLECTIONS**

LAMB of GOD! do I not behold thee, in this representation of the Prophet, *the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief?* And though thou didst set thy face as a flint, amidst all the despisings of men, when condescending to the deepest

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abasement; yet, LORD, thou hadst indeed the tongue of the learned, and now, thou knowest how to speak a word in season to weary souls, as thou didst then, when thine own soul was put to grief, and it pleased the LORD to bruise thee. Oh! speak to me that sweet word, in every season, which may make me rest with full assurance of faith on thy blood and righteousness!

Why, blessed LORD, was it, that thou, who art thyself the *light*, and the *life* of men, didst walk in darkness? Wherefore wast thou deserted of the FATHER, when, in that unequalled season of agony on the cross, it forced dolorous cries from thy soul? Was it, dearest JESUS, that thy people might know, from thy bright example, where to look, and in whom to confide? And wast thou for a time deserted, and in darkness, that thy people might not be deserted forever? Arise, ye poor benighted souls, who now walk in darkness! Look unto JESUS, and let him be your light, and your life, and your salvation! And while others are walking in the glow worm sparks of their own confidence, do ye behold the glory of the LORD risen upon thee, whose light shall no more go down, neither cause thee to lie down in sorrow, for the LORD JESUS shall be to thee an *everlasting light*, and *thy God thy glory!*

## CHAPTER 51

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*Here is another blessed Chapter, full of CHRIST, and the blessings of his gospel, the LORD is calling upon his people, under several endearing characters, to attend to him, as the only source of their hope and salvation.*

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**ISAIAH 51:1-2**

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged. (2) Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah *that* bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

In opening this Chapter, and listening to the call of GOD in this verse, I beg to remind the Reader of the observations at the close of the 46<sup>th</sup> Chapter, for this is but a continuation of the same gracious subject. Indeed, the Prophet may be considered, from the beginning of the 40<sup>th</sup> Chapter, to the close of his prophecy, to be preaching but one and the same sermon. The text is CHRIST, and the whole subject is CHRIST, and no other. In these verses, the people, who are seeking after the LORD, are spoken to, and particularly directed, with a view to find him, to consider what they are in themselves, that they may be the better prepared to know what the LORD is in himself, and what he is to his people. This divine teaching was what JESUS told his disciples, the HOLY GHOST would accomplish upon the hearts of the people. *He shall convince*, said JESUS, *of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* And this corresponds with what is here said, of looking unto Abraham and Sarah; that is, looking so unto them, as, in their nothingness and original sinfulness, to trace our own; and to let GOD have, what is his most just due, all the glory of our conversion. For Abraham, the great father of the faithful, was originally an idolater; and Sarah a daughter of Eve: and both were of that stock, of whom it is truly said, *there is none that doeth good, no not one.* Hence, therefore, when the LORD commands his people, who are following after righteousness, and seeking the LORD, to look back, and to look in, it is in order that they may look up to Him, from

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whom alone cometh *every good and every perfect gift*. Reader! you and I shall never be able rightly to value the LORD'S righteousness, until convinced that we have none of our own: then JESUS will be indeed precious as a Saviour, when we feel, and know, and are convinced, that we are poor lost sinners. Genesis 11:31. Romans 4:1-3. John 16:7, 8. 1 Peter 2:7.

**ISAIAH 51:3**

For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

This sweet promise comes in very blessedly, after the humbling views the LORD had bid the seekers after him to take of themselves. The LORD will give grace to the humble; and he that gives grace, gives also glory. It is He who wounds, and He who heals. James 4:6. Psalm 84:11. Deuteronomy 32:39.

**ISAIAH 51:4-6**

Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. (5) My righteousness *is* near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. (6) Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Here is another gracious call of the LORD, full of mercy and love, like the former; seemingly directed to those who have not only sought the LORD, but are joined in covenant to him,

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and know him. The Prophet Jeremiah hath described them under these characters, Jeremiah 50:4, 5. How truly blessed is the LORD'S proclamation to all such! GOD owns them for his people: to them belong the whole of gospel privileges; and as all the promises in CHRIST JESUS are their own, because CHRIST is their own; so his righteousness is theirs, even forever! And all these blessings are forever; never to be forfeited, never to be recalled. They begin in the LORD; and, like the ocean which sends out all its rivers and streams, and receives them back again; so what begins in the LORD ends in him. So saith the song in heaven, Revelation 5:9. Redemption *from* JEHOVAH is the first cause, and redemption *to* JEHOVAH is the end. Reader! doth not your heart leap for joy in the contemplation?

### **ISAIAH 51:7-8**

Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart *is* my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. (8) For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

Here is another gracious call of the LORD, in which the subject is carried to its height: for it is to such as have not only sought the LORD, and followed after his righteousness, but have also found him. And these are the people, who, according to my apprehension, both know CHRIST as the CHRIST of GOD, and live upon him. The LORD himself defines their characters: *The people in whose heart, saith the LORD, is my law: that is, CHRIST, the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth;* and in whose heart he is formed, and reigns, and rules, as *the hope of glory*. They walk in CHRIST, act every grace upon CHRIST, and perform every duty

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in the strength of CHRIST. JESUS is their all, for life, for strength, for grace, for salvation. Reader! is it thus *you know righteousness*? Are you of that people, in whose heart the LORD'S law is? If so, everything else is, as the LORD speaks, *moths* and *worms*. What are all the reproaches of men, if JESUS dwell within, and whispers peace? What are all men's despisings, if GOD saith, *Ye are my people*?

### **ISAIAH 51:9-11**

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. *Art* thou not it that hath cut Rahab, *and* wounded the dragon? (10) *Art* thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? (11) Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy *shall be* upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; *and* sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

This precious portion seems to be as in answer to what had been said before. The LORD had been giving exceeding great and precious promises to his people, and now his people, as with one voice, makes the LORD a thankful answer, in prayer and praise, that GOD would do so. It is the language of strong faith, offered up in CHRIST JESUS. For *the arm of the LORD* is CHRIST, Deuteronomy 7:19; hence, when the Prophet complains of the little success of preaching of the gospel, he calls it *the arm of the LORD*, Isaiah 53:1; and hence the Reader will also perceive that the Prophet is celebrating CHRIST in that *arm of the LORD*, which *cut Rahab*, and *wounded the dragon*; and *dried up the sea*, and led his people through. For who is meant by *Rahab*, but *Pharaoh*, the dragon, the leviathan; and what *sea* was this but the Red Sea? *This is he*, saith Stephen, *which was in the Church in the*

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*wilderness*, Acts 7:38. Reader, how blessed is it to trace CHRIST, in all the redemption of his people! See those scriptures, Habakkuk 3:8, to the end; Psalm 74:13, 14. And observe, in this latter scripture, how the sacred writer makes that triumph of GOD'S people over Pharaoh and his host, to be as meat to them in the wilderness; meaning, that in the experience of the LORD'S victory then, they found food to keep alive their faith, in all the after exercises they were called to. And what is the final song of triumph, but the same? Isaiah 35:10. Revelation 15:3.

### **ISAIAH 51:12-16**

I, *even I*, *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man *that* shall die, and of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass; (13) And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where *is* the fury of the oppressor? (14) The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. (15) But I *am* the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts *is* his name. (16) And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou *art* my people.

This is the LORD'S answer, agreeably to that promise, Isaiah 65:24. And observe how the LORD proposeth comfort to his people, even in himself. As if the LORD had said, "The deliverance at the Red Sea was great; but let your joy for that deliverance be in me, the giver." Redemption is blessed, but the Author of it is more so. The LORD is the only comfort, and the comforter of his people; and how childish is it to fear man, while the LORD is our refuge! The child-like fear of the

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LORD will drive out all fear of men or devils; just as the fire of the sun will extinguish the fire of the hearth. Oh! for a knowledge of this, in all the circumstances of life! 2 Corinthians 1:3.

### **ISAIAH 51:17-23**

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, *and* wrung *them* out. (18) *There is* none to guide her among all the sons *whom* she hath brought forth; neither *is there any* that taketh her by the hand of all the sons *that* she hath brought up. (19) These two *things* are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee? (20) Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God. (21) Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: (22) Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God *that* pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, *even* the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: (23) But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

How very beautiful and gracious is this! It seems as if the LORD would answer his people in their own words. The church had called upon him to *awake*; and now the LORD bids Jerusalem to rouse up herself, in his strength. The LORD puts her in remembrance how she had been exercised, and had tasted of the gall and the wormwood; but now, in redemption by CHRIST, she shall drink of it no more. And as a poor fretful sinner, until relieved by the redemption of JESUS, is entangled and unable to get free, like a bull in a net; so when the SON hath made the sinner free, he then is *free indeed!* Oh! the

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misery of sin! Oh! the rich salvation of JESUS! GOD be praised for his unspeakable gift! John 8:36. 2 Corinthians 9:15.

## REFLECTIONS

Oh! for grace to seek the LORD, and to follow after righteousness! Blessed the soul, that is thus taught of GOD; he will hearken unto the LORD. Let it be my portion, O LORD, so to do, and to be the follower of them, *who through faith and patience, inherit the promises*. And surely, blessed JESUS, I shall fix my eyes, and heart, and affections, all on thee, and prize thy rich salvation while I keep in remembrance the rock from whence I was hewn, and the hole of the pit from whence I was digged.

Oh! for grace, yet in larger, fuller portions, to know the LORD, and so to know him, as to live upon him by faith, until I arrive to the full and everlasting enjoyment of him by sight! Such are the privileges of thy people: LORD, let such be mine! Then shall I not fear the reproaches of men, nor regard their revilings. Occupied with higher objects, my soul will unceasingly be engaged in contemplating thee, and the fulness of that righteousness, which is forever, and thy salvation, which is from generation to generation. Awake then, O LORD, and cause me to triumph in thy strength; and oh! that, through thee; my soul may be perpetually awake to follow thee in the regeneration, that when thou comest to make up thy jewels, I may be found among *the redeemed of the LORD, which shall return and come with singing unto Zion, when everlasting joy shall be upon our heads, and we shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall fee away!* Amen.

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## CHAPTER 52

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*The LORD JESUS, by his servant the Prophet, is still comforting his Church; calls upon her to live upon, and rest in the full enjoyment of his free salvation; holds forth many sweet promises, and points to the loveliness of his servants, by whom he sends his gospel of peace.*

#### **ISAIAH 52:1-2**

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. (2) Shake thyself from the dust; arise, *and* sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

Was there ever a more gracious, a more encouraging invitation given for sinners to be made happy, than is here held forth, in the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? JEHOVAH had before commanded his people to take hold of his strength, to make peace with him; and promised that they should do so: and here the LORD showeth what that strength is, and how it is to be received. For what is the *strength* of Zion, but the salvation of JESUS; and what is the *beautiful garments* of Jerusalem, but his robe of righteousness? And who can put it upon the believer, but GOD the HOLY GHOST? Oh! how precious is it to see JESUS in everything! See Isaiah 27:5; and to the same amount, Job 23:3 to 6. John 16:13, 14. And when the Church of JESUS is thus clothed, thus adorned, as a bride for her husband, how perfectly free is she from all

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captivity, and all uncleanness; John 8:36. 1 Corinthians 6:11. Revelation 21:2. Ephesians 5:25-27.

**ISAIAH 52:3-5**

For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money. (4) For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. (5) Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day *is* blasphemed.

Reader! pause, and admire the beauty, as well as the grace, displayed in this scripture. The LORD had a right in his people, by creation, when they sold themselves to sin. When the devil broke into this our world, he came as a thief and a robber. The LORD did not lose his right by the devil's plundering, nor our apostasy; and, therefore, we were still his by right. Moreover, the sale we made of ourselves, was neither for his profit, nor our advantage. And, therefore, as the whole was an act of fraud, our redemption should be *without money, and without price*. But oh! how infinitely precious and invaluable was the purchase! See what the Apostle saith of it, 1 Peter 1:18, 19. And what a vassalage is sin! How do poor burdened sinners groan, when they come to feel the chains of sin, of Satan, of an awakened conscience, the terror of God's broken law and justice, and the dread of temporal and eternal death!

**ISAIAH 52:6**

Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* he that doth speak: behold, *it is* I.

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How very blessed and refreshing does this verse come in, after what went before! And, Reader, remark that this regard which JEHOVAH hath to his great name, is the best of all possible arguments for his people, when going to a throne of grace in CHRIST. See how Moses, how Joshua; dwelt upon it yea, observe how the LORD himself refers everything of grace which he purposeth, to this one glorious consideration; Exodus 32:9-15. Joshua, 7:5-9 Ezekiel 36:22, 23. Reader! do we truly know the LORD'S name, and is this gracious promise ours in CHRIST JESUS?

### **ISAIAH 52:7-10**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! (8) Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. (9) Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. (10) The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

What glorious tidings of salvation must they be, when the very feet of those who bring them, are accounted by the LORD himself to be beautiful! This is indeed good news from a far country; and when the soul that hears the joyful sound, knows by heart-felt experience, that JESUS reigneth in and over all his affections, this is *a joy unspeakable and full of glory*. I cannot dismiss this view of the beautifulness of the feet of JESUS's sent servants, without reminding the Reader how JESUS honoured them; see John 13:3-5; neither can I look at the servants, without still having my mind more fully led to the contemplation of the master. Reader! think how

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beautiful were the feet of JESUS when he came over the mountains of sin, in our nature, and published peace in his blood! Think how the feet of JESUS appeared when on Mount Calvary they were nailed, for us and our salvation, to the cross! Oh! thou unequalled pattern of everything beautiful and lovely! And how blessed are the promises that follow! Zion's watchmen shall see, eye to eye, when redemption here promised, was completed; and was it not so, when they saw JESUS, face to face, in the days of his flesh, when he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on him? John 2:11. It is not so now, in every instance, both in the Jewish and the Gentile Church, where the LORD hath made bare his holy arm, and the believing soul cries out, as holy Simeon, *Mine eyes have seen thy salvation* Luke 2:30. And will it not be so in that day, when the LORD shall *make up his jewels*, when *every eye shall see him*, and *he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe?* Revelation 1:7. 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

### **ISAIAH 52:11-12**

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. (12) For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel *will be* your rereward.

Probably the Prophet had his eye upon the deliverance of the people from Egypt; and it is probable also, that he connected with this view of what was past, the deliverance that was to come, when the Babylonish captivity, like the Egyptian should be over. But far greater prospects, no doubt, the Prophet had in contemplation, when he thus spake. The glorious redemption of poor sinners, by the LORD JESUS, called for this

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haste to depart, and to take nothing with them, when brought to see and feel their dreadful captivity in sin, and the pollutions of it. Oh! with what haste, like Lot's flight from Sodom, would men flee *from the wrath to come*, did they but know the things which make for their peace, and *before they are for ever hid from their eyes*. Reader! do not overlook how this sweet scripture declares the everlasting presence of JESUS with his people. The pillar of the cloud, and the pillar of fire, are still with all the redeemed. Exodus 13:21, 22. Matthew 28:20.

**ISAIAH 52:13-15**

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. (14) As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: (15) So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

The Prophet could not help following up what he had said in the preceding verse, of the LORD'S presence, with somewhat of the LORD'S person. And what a lovely, though short account, hath he given of him! How he speaks of his person, his visage, his form; and how of his conduct and humble demeanor! How he describes the treatment he should meet with, and his lamb-like deportment under it! Precious LORD JESUS! is it so? Was it so?—Is it said that Moses was exceeding fair; and that thou, Moses's LORD, hadst a form marred more than that of any man! LORD, teach me to distrust all I see in man, and seek for nothing of comfort or of hope, but in thee only! Romans 15:21.

**REFLECTIONS**

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READER! may it be your mercy and mine, that, while reading this blessed scripture, we may both awake, at the call of JESUS, and put on his beautiful garments of salvation, and find strength to our souls in his righteousness! May we have grace to shake ourselves from every defilement, and never let those souls of ours be again sullied with sin, after having been washed, and made white in the blood of the LAMB.

And do thou LORD, who hast redeemed us without money, fulfil all thy precious promises, which this chapter contains. Give us to know thy name, and the glories of it; and may we make use of it, by faith, for every occurrence. Thy name is WONDERFUL; and thou wilt perform wonders for thy people. Thy name is GRACIOUS; and thou wilt be most gracious, in pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. Thy name is the HEARER OF PRAYER; and thou wilt be found of all them that call upon thee. Yea, LORD! so full and blessed is thy name, in every situation of thy people, that whatever names our wants may create, thou, LORD, hast a name infinitely beyond the whole, and able to answer all. Oh! then, *cause me to know thy name, that I may put my trust in thee.*

And while I read with what pleasure my GOD himself beholds the feet of his servants, whom he sends to publish, in his holy mountain, tidings of peace; let me welcome the faithful messenger, in the name of the LORD: and, above all, may it be my constant delight to sit at the feet of JESUS, to hear the gracious words that proceed out of his mouth!

Blessed servant of JEHOVAH! let me never cease to look on thee, never cease to love thee, never cease to adore thee! Let the kings and great ones of the earth shut their mouths at

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thee; be it my portion *to behold thy face in righteousness, so shall I be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

## CHAPTER 53

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*This may very well be called the Chapter of Chapters, concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST; in which the two great features of his character are drawn to the full: the sufferings of CHRIST; and the glory that should follow. The Prophet, under the HOLY GHOST, most blessedly sets forth the LORD JESUS, under both.*

#### **ISAIAH 53:1**

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

The Gospel of CHRIST is a report, and full of glad tidings of good things; yet so very generally is it despised and scorned, that the question is here put, who hath believed it? Reader! when we consider who CHRIST is in himself, and how essentially necessary his salvation is to all men; it becomes a matter of wonder that all men, universally speaking, do not embrace it in transports of joy. But, on the other hand, when we consider how sunk and fallen our nature is, even to the total ignorance of our ruin, it becomes a matter of still greater wonder, that any should receive it. Nothing, indeed, but sovereign grace can accomplish it in the heart. It is the LORD, that must make *his people willing in the day of his power*; Psalm 110:3. Philippians 1:29.

**ISAIAH 53:2**

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

Reader! do mark the prominent features, which the HOLY GHOST here gives, of your Redeemer: then turn to the original, as he appears in the Evangelists, and compare the striking likeness. How did JESUS appear when he was born in the streets of Bethlehem? Was there ever a more tender, a more exposed *plan*? And, do remark, that this *growing up* is said to have been *before* JEHOVAH. And as his obscure birth hath nothing attracting in it, so neither had his person: a *root dry*; a form of *no comeliness*. Precious LORD JESUS was this the state thou wert pleased to make choice of, in coming to seek and save thy people?

**ISAIAH 53:3**

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

As his person was without attraction, so the treatment he received corresponded to it. So very ungracious was the general abuse and contempt of him, that he said himself, *I am a worm, and no man; a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people*; Psalm 22:6. And they who should have countenanced him, blushed to own him for a time, and *hid their faces from him*. What a subject of wonder and astonishment is all this!

**ISAIAH 53:4**

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

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Nothing can be more decisive than what this verse contains of the causes and ends of CHRIST'S sufferings and death. They were wholly as the surety and representative of his people; nor can anything be more satisfactory to the confirmation of the faith of the believer, than when we do esteem the LORD JESUS in this gracious character, as *stricken* and *smitten of GOD*, as the sinner's surety.

**ISAIAH 53:5-6**

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

It is most blessed and delightful, everlastingly to view JESUS, in all he did and wrought, as the sinner's surety. CHRIST is never to be looked at, or regarded as a private person, but as the public head of his redeemed; and to endear this view of CHRIST still more, it is blessed to trace the hand of GOD the FATHER in all that concerns redemption. Did JESUS bear my sins in his own body on the tree? Then he did it, that I might be made the righteousness of GOD in him. And it was GOD the FATHER, not himself, who laid those iniquities upon him. Reader! I know not whether you enter into a rich enjoyment of those precious things; but to see the hand of GOD the FATHER in all, is what gives stability and confidence to our trust, and demonstrates that our *faith is not found in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD*; 1 Corinthians 2:5.

**ISAIAH 53:7-9**

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (8) He

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was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Who that attends to these words, and beholds JESUS led forth to crucifixion can hesitate to apply them to the person of CHRIST, and to him only? Had *Isaiah* seen him led to Calvary; had he been present to witness the taunts and reproaches of the multitude; had he heard all that passed before Pontius Pilate, and seen the events which followed; surely it were impossible that he could have then described the person and character of the LORD JESUS more fully than he hath here done. The expression *being taken from prison and from judgment*, is uncommonly striking, and plainly confirms the doctrine of his propitiatory offering. For being cast into prison, and taken from judgment, fully proves that in all this JESUS stood as the believer's head, and not as a private character. Therefore, when he was *cast in*, the debt of his people was the cause; and his being *taken out*, is a plain proof that the prison keeper was paid, and the prisoner could no longer be left in confinement. *If the SON shall make you free, you shall be free indeed*, John 8:36. Making *his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*, received a literal accomplishment, in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the honourable counsellor; and his being crucified between two thieves, as literally fulfilled the Prophet's other prediction.

### **ISAIAH 53:10-12**

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his

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soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This *pleasure of* JEHOVAH, at the sufferings and bruises of JESUS, opens a sweet and consolatory thought to the faithful! So very great and important, in the sight of GOD the FATHER, are the bruises which JESUS received for his Church, that in the blessings of redemption, consequent upon them, the LORD JEHOVAH took delight to behold them, knowing that *by his stripes we are healed*. Not all the blood of beasts, on a thousand altars; neither all the services of angels and men, through endless generations, and forever, could do that which was done by the bruises and putting to grief, which JESUS sustained. Hete the soul-travail of CHRIST, which he felt, both in the garden and on the cross, to bring forth the blessed fruits of it, in the real conversion of sinners to GOD. CHRIST'S travailing pains for his people are until he is formed in the heart, the hope of glory. And the assurance that these points are to be accomplished, the promise of a seed to serve CHRIST is beautifully introduced, and declared to be so great, and so finished, that JESUS shall himself *be satisfied, and see of the travail of his soul*, in the multitude of sinners converted to the doctrine of the cross. Blessed promise to our glorious Head, and in him to all the seed; for all is *yea and amen to the glory of GOD the FATHER in CHRIST*; Psalm 72 throughout.

## REFLECTIONS

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MY soul! ponder well this blessed, this glorious, this divine chapter; and do not dismiss it, until the LORD hath both taught thee the many gracious things contained in it, and brought home all that is said of JESUS to thine own experience and joy. And when dismissing it from thy present review, dismiss it but for a short season, and let thy frequent return to it, in solemn meditation, testify how very precious every part and portion of it is in thy esteem.

Behold here, my soul, thy JESUS, under his twofold character, in which the SPIRIT of CHRIST, which was in the Prophets, did signify, when testifying of his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. And as thou passest over the several parts of the chapter, see whether thou art not constrained to cry out, in the same words as the LORD JESUS himself did, when he made the hearts of his disciples burn within them in the account: *Ought not CHRIST to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

And oh! thou precious JESUS! who art the sum and substance of this chapter, and of the whole Bible, give me to enter into an heartfelt enjoyment of the greatness of what is here related of thee, in the all-sufficiency of thy sacrifice, and of my personal interest in it. Yea, LORD! I see that thou hast, by the dignity of thy person, and the glory of thy work, made full satisfaction, yea, more than satisfaction, for all the injuries which sin hath occasioned among the works of GOD! The glory of GOD'S holy law, which sin had darkened, is more than restored by the perfect obedience of the LORD, our righteousness. And the image of GOD, which sin had defaced in man, is more than brought back to perfection in that nature which thou hast taken, in a pure and holy portion of it, and

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which, by being united to the GODHEAD, gives to all thine actions and sufferings the merit of the GODHEAD. Oh! for grace then to believe, and to stand in that belief, eternally secure, that GOD the FATHER'S covenant promise is and must be fulfilled: *Thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul, and be satisfied.* The dew of thy birth shall he as the womb of the morning. Thy people shall all be righteous in thy righteousness; and in thee and thy glory *they shall shine as the stars forever and ever.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 54

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*The LORD here comforts the Gentile Church, by showing her the fulness of her riches in CHRIST, and calling upon her to rejoice in the consciousness of her relationship to her LORD and Husband, her Maker. Many sweet and precious promises are contained in this Chapter.*

#### **ISAIAH 54:1**

Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

What a sweet thought is it for the believer of the Gentile Church to cherish and keep in view, that they who were aliens, and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, are not only brought nigh by the blood of CHRIST, but are more numerous than the original stock. JESUS himself is introduced as being astonished at the vast accession to his fold. Not that this was possible, but is only intended to represent, by a

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strong figure of speech, the joy of CHRIST over his redeemed; Isaiah 49:18-23. Reader! pause over the precious thought, that JESUS is the husband both of Jew and Gentile; Galatians 3:28, 29.

**ISAIAH 54:2-5**

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; (3) For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. (4) Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. (5) For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Every mercy, every blessing, runs from this source; JESUS is the husband of his people. His assumption of our nature is, to all intents and purposes the marrying of our nature. JESUS is no longer to be considered as a private person, but as the public head, surety, and representative of our nature; therefore all blessings and promises are made, and become yea and amen in him. Reader! see to it, that thou art graciously taught this most blessed of all truths, by GOD the HOLY GHOST; and then, from knowing thy union and oneness with CHRIST, take to thee all the blessings in CHRIST, which these verses express, and which become the sure privilege of all his people. Oh! the blessedness of seeing those mercies fulfilled, and fulfilling, in the earth!

**ISAIAH 54:6-8**

For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy

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God. (7) For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. (8) In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

These words form a gracious continuation of the same soul-reviving promises; and all in CHRIST. JESUS was, and is, the husband of his church from everlasting. By the fall, a bill of divorcement was, as it were, written, and she was put away. By the interposition of his grace in redemption, she is again brought home; and now never more to be separated from her first love, but with everlasting kindness, nourished and cherished, in grace here, and glory to all eternity. Proverbs 8:22-31. Hosea 2 throughout. Jeremiah 3:14.

### **ISAIAH 54:9-10**

For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. (10) For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

The LORD is here pleased to make use of two very striking representations, to show the unalterable nature of his covenant promises in CHRIST to his people, namely, the covenant made at the deluge, and the durableness of mountains. To this hour *the former* holds good; for though so many generations have passed, every day again proves GOD'S faithfulness, Genesis 8:21, 22; the *latter* may be more easily accomplished, by the removal of mountains, than that GOD'S promises in CHRIST should fail; Psalm 89:30-35.

### **ISAIAH 54:11-15**

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O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. (12) And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. (13) And all thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD; and great *shall be* the peace of thy children. (14) In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. (15) Behold, they shall surely gather together, *but* not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

Every believer in CHRIST, as well as the Church at large, should take comfort from these gracious promises and assurances; for while they are spoken to the Church in general, they are intended for the special and personal consolation of every individual believer. And most sweet they are! Tried and tempted souls are afflicted souls, tossed about like ships on the tempestuous waters; but there shall be peace in JESUS. The New Testament Church, like the Jerusalem above, shall be glorious in her LORD'S presence and favor, as those streets above are said to be paved with gold and precious stones. And, what is yet infinitely more sure to give comfort, all the children of grace shall be well taught, as well as well accommodated; for the LORD himself will condescend to become the teacher. And the consequence of this divine teaching is, that they shall come to CHRIST, and find all peace in him. Our blessed LORD himself was pleased to quote this passage, and apply it to himself, as concerning him and his gospel, John 6:45. Reader! do not forget to make application also of the blessed doctrine of our LORD upon it, and put down for thy comfort, what cannot be denied, that if thou art come to CHRIST, it is, and must be the sole result of divine teaching. Ephesians 4:20, 21.

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**ISAIAH 54:16-17**

Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. (17) No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

The gracious LORD, still going on to satisfy and silence the fears of his Church and people, here condescends to make use of another similitude, to testify the firmness and unalterable engagements of his covenant and his peoples safety. The smith cannot make a weapon to destroy without GOD'S permission; for both the smith and the weapon, the fire that forms it, and the iron formed, all are no other than creatures and instruments, and can act no farther than the LORD permits and appoints. Everybody, and everything, is subject to GOD'S control, and therefore can never act without his commission. And the LORD speaks of these watchings of his over his people, not as a thing limited to certain characters or situations only, but as the general inheritance of all his servants, whose righteousness is in JESUS. Isaiah 45:24, 25.

**REFLECTIONS**

READER! shall we not join this hallelujah, for redemption to the Gentile church, when we, as poor Gentiles, have, or ought to have, so much interest in it? Hath JEHOVAH indeed vouchsafed salvation, and granted repentance unto life, to the Gentiles also; and shall not we glorify GOD, for the unspeakable gift? Do you not know, have you not felt, hath not GOD the HOLY GHOST opened your eyes to see, that we were once afar off, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and

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strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and being without GOD in the world? And are we now brought nigh by the blood of CHRIST; married to JESUS, and made heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST? And shall we not sing the song of salvation to GOD, and to the LAMB? Oh! for grace to enter into the full personal enjoyment of this sweet scripture, and to take part with the Gentile Church, breaking out on the right hand and on the left, and to feel interested in all that concerns Zion.

And oh! thou blessed, glorious, gracious Husband of thy people! we would hail thee as our maker, redeemer, surety, husband, friend! Thou art indeed *the HOLY ONE of Israel, the GOD of the whole earth!* Thou art indeed, in one and the same moment, our *Ishi*, our JESUS; for thou hast said, *I am married unto you, saith the LORD; and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.* Bring all thy redeemed, LORD, where thou thyself art, to behold thy glory, for thou hast said, *where I am, there shall my servant be.*

And do thou, blessed JESUS, until thou comest to take all thy ransomed home, fulfil all those gracious promises, to our soul's joy. Noah's waters shall no more cover the earth, neither shall the LORD be angry with his redeemed in JESUS. Though mountains melt at thy presence, thy people shall behold thy face with joy. JESUS will teach, JESUS will comfort, JESUS will be the portion of his afflicted. Hearken, ye enemies of the cross, hearken to what our GOD hath said, in these sweet promises, and give over all your fruitless attempts to hurt his anointed. No weapon shall be formed to hurt them; for the smith, the maker of weapons is under the control of our GOD. Both the heritage and the righteousness of GOD'S

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people are in himself; how then can any fail? Be wise now, therefore, O ye enemies of my GOD, for he that is his peoples portion, will be his people's glory and defense. Let every foe hear, and tremble; whosoever shall gather together against any of CHRIST'S little ones, shall fall for CHRIST'S sake! Hallelujah! Amen.

## CHAPTER 55

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*We have here a continuance of the same blessed subject as before. As the Prophet had held forth CHRIST'S person, and then his Church; so here these blessed subjects are followed with gracious invitations, promises, and assurances of mercies in him.*

#### **ISAIAH 55:1-3**

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (2) Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. (3) Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.

The Reader will not fail to remark, in the very opening of this precious chapter, what an uniformity runs through all gospel proclamations. They are general, they are great, full, free, and extensive. Every one individually, both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, shall be welcome to CHRIST, if CHRIST be welcome to them. Yea, the LORD will answer *before they call*.

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If they do but thirst for JESUS, it is a proof that he hath made them willing in the day of his power; Isaiah 65:24. Psalm 110:4. John 7:37-39. How sweet and gracious is this? The *waters* they are called unto, mean the word, the ordinances, and the several means of grace in the gospel: and the sacred viands, *milk and wine*, mean the body and blood of CHRIST. JESUS is all this, and infinitely more than all: *For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*; Song Of Solomon 5:1. John 6:33-58. The method of purchase differs from all others in the world; it *is without money, and without price!* Sweet consideration, and blessed encouragement to the poor and needy, who have nothing to buy with, and nothing to offer. The reason is obvious: CHRIST, the pearl of great price, is not sold, but given: moreover, if he were saleable, who could purchase? See 1 Peter 1:18, 19. When all these things are considered, how delightful is the counsel of JESUS, Revelation 3:17, 18. I only detain the Reader with one observation more on this passage, just to remark, that as all these mercies in CHRIST are general, free, full, and extensive; so are they, in CHRIST JESUS, sure and everlasting; liable to no change, incapable of being lost or taken away; for they are *the sure mercies of David*; alluding to GOD'S covenant engagements with our spiritual David, the LORD JESUS CHRIST: compare 2 Samuel 23:5, with Acts 13:34. After such gracious declarations as these, what weakness and folly must it be to seek redemption in anything short of CHRIST, or in anything but CHRIST! This, in the language of this scripture, like the man that spends his substance for chaff, and not bread; and his labour for that which cannot satisfy.

### **ISAIAH 55:4**

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Behold, I have given him *for* a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

How sweet and blessed is this declaration of JEHOVAH, concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Here he is revealed under those distinguishing characters. And is he not *the faithful witness* in heaven? Called of GOD the FATHER, hath he not witnessed the whole truth of GOD, by his spotless life and holy death? Yea, doth he not now, by his blessed SPIRIT, confirm the whole, in the hearts, and lives, and consciences of his people? Is he not the leader, the captain, the commander, of his little army, in guiding, directing, strengthening, and making more than conquerors, all his chosen, through this wilderness, to his kingdom above?

### **ISAIAH 55:5**

Behold, thou shalt call a nation *that* thou knowest not, and nations *that* knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Reader! do observe, that as, in the former verse, JEHOVAH spoke *of* CHRIST, so here, now blessedly he speaks *to* him. And this promise is among the covenant engagements, that when he made *his soul an offering for sin*, he should *see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*; Isaiah 53:11.

### **ISAIAH 55:6-7**

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: (7) Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Oh! how blessed is it to see the earnestness with which the LORD pleads with his people. The gospel is called the *ministry*

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*of reconciliation*, 2 Corinthians 5:18; and this notion carries with it the state of man before the fall, as being a state of amity and friendship. We cannot be said to *return* to the LORD, but under the idea that there was a time when our nature was in friendship *with* the LORD; which was indeed the case when Adam came out of the hands of his almighty Creator, pure and holy. But when he fell, all his children fell in him, and with him. Hence, when redemption is proclaimed, in and by CHRIST, the recovery from sin to salvation is called *a return*. What a beautiful and gracious invitation, seen in this point of view, doth these verses contain; and how sure of acceptance in JESUS! Psalm 27:8. Ephesians 1:6.

**ISAIAH 55:8-9**

For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (9) For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Among a thousand testimonies in proof of this doctrine, as if to draw an everlasting line of distinction between the perfections of JEHOVAH and the character of all his creatures, this of grace and mercy in the thoughts and ways of GOD'S works! What an unmeasurable distance is this little globe from the unlimited heavens, and the unknown worlds with which we are surrounded! And yet these inconceivable disproportions are nothing, in point of opposition, to the pardoning grace of GOD in CHRIST, compared to the guilt of man. Reader! it is our contracted notion of things, which makes us limit the HOLY ONE of Israel. If the loftiest mountain were cast into the sea, the top of it would be lost, and totally covered; and the Prophet says that such is the fulness of

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grace and mercy in CHRIST, when GOD casts all our sins into the *depths of the sea* of CHRIST'S blood; Micah 7:18-20.

### **ISAIAH 55:10-11**

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: (11) So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

Here are more sweet images and similitudes, to describe the great and wonderful properties of GOD'S sovereign grace in CHRIST JESUS. How doth the snow and the rain from heaven come down? Often unperceived; often in large showers; sometimes gentle; always unsought for, and unasked. Such, then, is the grace of GOD; it waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men. *He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth: likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength*, Job 37:6. And oh! how blessed is it to observe, that this grace of GOD in CHRIST cometh as the rain from heaven! not only before we ask it, but before we know that we stood in need of it; yea, it cometh in opposition to all our undeservings and rebellions. Oh! LORD! how dost thou surprise thy people with thy grace? And how is the word of thy grace made prosperous in the souls of thy people, wholly from thine own almighty power! Micah 5:7. Psalm 72:6.

### **ISAIAH 55:12-13**

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands. (13) Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall

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come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.

Reader! do not fail to observe what a beautiful conclusion is made to this most gracious chapter! Surely, it is but just and right, that what begins in grace should end in thanksgiving! *Praise is comely for the righteous.* And how can any, and every redeemed soul do otherwise than shout aloud for joy, when JESUS is become his salvation? Such a blessed change is made from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto GOD, that it may well be compared to the removal of briars and thorns, when JESUS hath taken them all away, and planted himself in the heart, as the fir-tree and myrtle-tree of Lebanon. Isaiah 35 throughout.

## REFLECTIONS

AND is this gospel call to every poor thirsty sinner, whose soul is scorched in this dry and thirsty land of sin? Doth JESUS indeed send out his heralds, yea, come himself with the invitation? Do I hear him say, as he said in the last great day of the feast, *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink?* *What!* is the invitation so general, so great, so extensive, that to *thirst* only for CHRIST, is a sufficient qualification to find CHRIST? He doth not say, If any good man, any righteous man, any deserving man, thirst; but the proclamation from the court of heaven is simply, *if any man thirst!* Oh! for grace to hear and know the joyful sound, and that he who gives the call, may give also the thirst of soul, to come at the gracious invitation. Precious LORD JESUS! let it be the portion, both of him that writes, and him that reads, to receive, on our bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, the unspeakable gift,

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and come to the waters without money and without price. Like David, may we cry out, "Oh! that one would give me of these waters of our spiritual Bethlehem, even JESUS and his full salvation, to drink!" 2 Samuel 23:15.

Do thou, HOLY SPIRIT! give us, as poor sinners, to see, while reading this blessed scripture, that we are they that have indeed spent our time, and talents, and substance, while pursuing any thing but JESUS, as those who spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour in any righteousness but his, for that which cannot satisfy. Do thou, LORD, incline our ear, that we may hear, and come to JESUS, who is himself both the whole of the covenant, and the sure mercies of David. He saith himself, who is the *faithful witness* in heaven, that he will cause them that love him to inherit substance, and he will fill their treasures. And do thou help us, oh thou SPIRIT of all truth, to have such views of the freeness, fulness, and greatness of GOD'S rich mercy in CHRIST, as may remove forever all our contracted notions of sovereign grace, that we may come to Him, who hath abounding pardons for abounding sin, and can, and will, save to the uttermost all who come to GOD by him. And, LORD, let thy word, like the precious influences of heaven, have free course upon our souls, to run and be glorified. Fulfil thine own gracious promises; cause it never to return void, but to be blessed, and accomplish thy merciful purposes. And then shall we go forth here, during a life of grace, like the flourishing plants of the earth; and ere long be among the trees of the LORD'S right-hand planting, in the paradise of our GOD in heaven, in and through the glorious salvation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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# CHAPTER 56

## CONTENTS

*The subject of this Chapter is very different from that of the preceding: it consists of threatenings, mingled with promises; cautions to the watchmen of Israel, and an awful account of unfaithful shepherds.*

### **ISAIAH 56:1-2**

Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation *is* near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. (2) Blessed *is* the man *that* doeth this, and the son of man *that* layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

It is blessed to observe with what solemnity and authority the LORD introduceth his declarations. The LORD is speaking of his salvation by JESUS CHRIST, and intimates the nearness of his coming; in the prospect of which he enjoins the faithful to be on the look out for it, and pronounceth a blessedness on every one found in it, and who layeth hold upon it. I conceive that JESUS himself is here peculiarly referred to; and consequently, in him, the blessing reacheth to all his people.

### **ISAIAH 56:3-5**

Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I *am* a dry tree. (4) For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose *the things* that please me, and take hold of my covenant; (5) Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

The sorrow of Israel was great, if any family or tribe went childless; Jeremiah 22:30. And the reason, over and above the common affliction of barrenness in a house, was, because the prospect Israel looked to, of CHRIST coming out of that family, was thereby defeated. Moreover, by the law, any one that had a blemish was deprived of the honour of the priesthood, and admittance into the congregation of the LORD; Leviticus 21:17. But what a rich consolation did the LORD hold out in this scripture, in the view of the covenant, in and by CHRIST, of adoption into his family. What a fulness of all relations in one, is found in JESUS! He fills all, and supplies all, and makes up the want of all. And as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, how much more may we hear CHRIST speaking; *Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* 1 Samuel 1:8. Oh! for grace to have an union and interest in that everlasting name of CHRIST, by which his people are called, Acts 11:26.

### **ISAIAH 56:6-7**

Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; (7) Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

This is a repetition of the same promise, varying only in expression, under the gospel dispensation. Aliens and strangers shall be as fully instituted into the privileges of the Church, as the stock of Israel. All their offerings shall be accepted upon the New Testament altar, which is CHRIST, and in him, and for his sake, shall they be blessed; Malachi 1:11. Galatians 3:26-29.

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**ISAIAH 56:8**

The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

This, is a blessed verse, and full of blessings to the poor Gentile Church. Reader! Well may we of the Gentile Church prize it. The LORD JESUS sweetly explained this, John 10:16; and Paul hath described to what a wonderful extent this gathering shall be, Ephesians 1:10.

**ISAIAH 56:9-12**

All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, *yea*, all ye beasts in the forest. (10) His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant, they *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. (11) Yea, *they are* greedy dogs *which* can never have enough, and they *are* shepherds *that* cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. (12) Come ye, *say they*, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, *and* much more abundant.

Who, or what are meant by *beasts of the field*, and *dumb dogs*, may not be so easy to determine; but we cannot be at a loss to apprehend the meaning of the word *watchmen*. The passage is very awful, and closeth in a very awful manner. Those who minister in holy things, may well ponder over such a striking scripture, connected as it is with the characters here spoken of. The beloved Apostle hath marked their end, Revelation 22:15. Reader! let us turn our thoughts from the distressing view of unfaithful watchmen, to behold Him who is the true shepherd and watchman of his Church; he watches over it every moment; he keepeth it night and day, lest any hurt it; Isaiah 27:3. Precious keeper of Israel! do thou watch

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over me for good, and keep me by thine almighty power, *through faith, unto salvation*; 1 Peter 1:5. Psalm 121:4, 5.

## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED God! how truly refreshing to the soul of a poor dry barren believer, is the recollection of that covenant, which is everlasting and sure, and ordered in all things! What, though I have nothing; though I am nothing; yea, though I am worse than nothing; yet, convinced of an interest in this, I have riches, yea, durable riches, and righteousness, and a name better than sons and daughters. Children are uncertain comforts, and sure cares: but JESUS is a sure and abiding comfort, in which every promise is *yea and Amen*.

Grant, gracious LORD, that I may be among the gathered to CHRIST JESUS, that on that day, when he maketh up his jewels, I may be found among the number whom JESUS will own! And, LORD, keep me, keep thy Church, keep all thy redeemed, from unfaithful watchmen and shepherds. But do thou, in compassion to thy fold, give them pastors after thine own heart, who may feed them with true understanding and knowledge; and direct their souls to thee, that they may go in and out, and find pasture.

## CHAPTER 57

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*The subject of this Chapter is not unsimilar to the former. The HOLY GHOST, by his servant the Prophet, is reproving the unfaithfulness of the people. The close of the Chapter*

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*contains one of the most sublime and consolatory representations of JEHOVAH, in the greatness and graciousness of his character, that can be conceived.*

**ISAIAH 57:1-2**

The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth *it* to heart: and merciful men *are* taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil *to come*. (2) He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, *each one* walking *in* his uprightness.

The chapter open, with remarking the inattention of the world to the operations of GOD in his providence's. GOD'S faithful servants die, and the breach is not lamented as it ought; none considering that by so much grace as they possessed, that portion is taken from among men. Their prayers for Zion, those graces they exercised, and the supplications they put up for poor perishing sinners, cease with them. Here is cause for lamentation; for then it may be said, as by the Church of old, *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not*, Isaiah 63:16. But for them no tears need fall: could they speak to us, they would say, in language somewhat like that of JESUS, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to my FATHER*, John 14:28. Reader! cherish the sweet thought! Hast thou thy friends departed, who left a blessed testimony behind them, that they are gone to be with JESUS? Think where they now are, entered into rest! JESUS is their rest, and their refreshing; Isaiah 28:12. Matthew 11:28-30. Psalm 116:7.

**ISAIAH 57:3-9**

But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore. (4) Against whom do ye sport

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yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, *and* draw out the tongue? *are* ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood, (5) Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks? (6) Among the smooth *stones* of the stream *is* thy portion; they, they *are* thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these? (7) Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. (8) Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered *thyself to another* than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee *a covenant* with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest *it*. (9) And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase *thyself even* unto hell.

What a change is here! Oh! the awfulness of an unawakened, unregenerated nature! What a sad thought is it, that from generation to generation, the deadly seeds of sin thus bring forth, and blossom, and spread their baleful fruit! Look into the world, as it is in the present day, and compare what is here said, with what every serious beholder is compelled to be a witness to, among the great mass of men. Was there ever a period in the annals of mankind; when the sons of the sorceress, the despisers of GOD and of his CHRIST, came forward with a more impudent and uncovered face? And, as might well be expected, when the fountain of true religion is corrupted, the streams would break out in adultery and whoredom: was there ever a generation more marked than the present for general profligacy of life and manners? Blessed be GOD! the promise still continues fulfilled: and must and ever will be fulfilled; JESUS hath *a seed that serve him*, who are *accounted to the LORD for a generation*, Psalm 22:30. But while these are *the salt of the earth*, to preserve it from

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universal putrefaction; *the whole world*, as the Apostle said in his days, and it may be said with equal truth in ours, *the whole world lieth in wickedness*, 1 John 5:19. Reader! amidst the multitudes who flock to the standard of Satan, now erected, are you of the happy distinguished few, whom JESUS hath gathered and brought into his own fold? Read attentively that alarming scripture, Revelation 12:12. Read also that scripture, and consider how blessed it is to know that we have a personal interest in it, Colossians 1:12, 13.

### **ISAIAH 57:10-14**

Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; *yet* saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved. (11) And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid *it* to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not? (12) I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee. (13) When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take *them*: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; (14) And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

This, it should seem, is a representation of such awful characters as were before described, disappointed in the pursuit of their pleasures, pausing over their dreadful state, and yet, though confessing all to be vanity and vexation of spirit, still going on from bad to worse, until life is over, and they lie down in sorrow. So the LORD elsewhere describes them; and so the world daily finds them; Isaiah 50:11. Elihu hath drawn the most finished picture of such men, Job 35:9, 10: he represents them as crying out, and exclaiming continually under the vexation of a disappointed soul; but none of them cry out upon the LORD for deliverance. They are

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wearied in the greatness of their strength; but still they weary themselves for very vanity. Reader! mark from such characters what a dreadful blindness and captivity that must be, where sin forgeth such irons! But if the LORD removes the stumbling-block of a natural state, out of the way of his people (and none but the LORD can do it) the chain is then broken, and the poor deluded prisoner is free. Oh! LORD! in mercy look upon thine that are yet in the prison-house! Luke 4:18, 19, John 8:36.

### **ISAIAH 57:15-16**

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (16) For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls *which* I have made.

Reader! how blessed and lovely do these sweet verses come in, after what was said before! The former representation of our poor nature, was like a dreary wilderness, or the heath in the desert, that knoweth not when good cometh. But this is like the refreshing herbage, or the cooling stream, discovered in a weary land, where no spring was expected. I pray you read the verses again and again, that their full grace and comfort may be felt in your soul. When GOD saith thus, well may every poor broken-hearted sinner hear. See how JEHOVAH pledgeth his own divine perfections for the confirmation of his holy word; and do not overlook that most precious part, that though JEHOVAH inhabiteth eternity, yet doth he also dwell in the heart of the humble. Solomon was struck with wonder at the thought, that GOD would visit his house; but what would he have said, had he lived to see JESUS dwelling in a body of

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flesh? And what ought you and I to say, under a consciousness that our bodies are his temple? 1 Kings 8:27. John 1:14. 1 Corinthians 3:16.

**ISAIAH 57:17-19**

For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. (18) I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. (19) I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to *him that is* far off, and to *him that is* near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

Can there be a sweeter description than these words contain, of the graciousness of GOD, in his dealings, with sinners? The LORD corrects; the LORD hides his face; the LORD sends affliction. Wave follows wave, until the unthinking soul becomes humbled. But when at length the hand that smites, applies instruction to the stroke; and the LORD, who sends the rod, causeth the poor creature to *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*; then the cry goeth forth from the soul, *Save, LORD, or I perish!* But I beseech you, Reader, to remark in all this, that it is the LORD'S sole work, and wholly to the LORD'S own glory. The LORD creates, and new creates, both the heart and the lips. It is he that both wounds and heals. Oh! the blessedness of sovereign grace!

**ISAIAH 57:20-21**

But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. (21) *There is* no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

These words are as awful, as the foregoing were comfortable. But every day's experience showeth, that the one is as sure as the other. When GOD'S judgments and chastisements do

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not soften, they harden. The same heat which melts wax, makes the clay stoney. Alas! the heart that remains hardened under the calls of grace, will increase in obduracy, and, like the horse's hoof, with increasing years, become more callous. Well may every one cry out, in the prayer of the Church, *From all blindness of heart, good LORD, deliver us!*

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn, from this blessed chapter, to form a right estimate of the departure of the faithful. They enter into rest. They are taken away from the evil to come. And inasmuch as a state of rest surpasseth toil and trouble; a state of holiness, that of temptation; and victory is better than conflict; by so much ought believers to rejoice, when the souls of the faithful enter into their rest in JESUS. *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*

But what an awful state, as here described, is that of the unreclaimed sinner! And what a melancholy close to a life of sin and vanity, must be a departure under vexation of spirit! *Come not thou, my soul, into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.*

From such views of the horrible lives, and more tremendous deaths, of unawakened sinners, do thou, my soul, turn thy thoughts, to contemplate the wonders of grace, recorded in this chapter, concerning that High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. Oh! for grace to know, to feel, to enjoy, the blessedness here promised! LORD! I would say, do as thou hast said. Make my soul, by thy grace, suited for thyself: and then come and dwell in me,

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come and revive me; come and comfort me, that the bones broken by sin may rejoice.

Blessed be my GOD, thou hast indeed smitten for sin, and thou hast healed. GOD the HOLY GHOST hath convinced of sin; and it is the same GOD the HOLY GHOST that hath convinced of the righteousness of JESUS. Yea, LORD! it is thou that hast created indeed the fruit of the lips, and formed my heart anew in CHRIST JESUS. And to whom but to my GOD, in the riches of his sovereign grace, shall I ascribe the praise, that while to the unsubdued corruptions of sinners, there can be nothing but distress, and horror, and tempest, like the troubled ocean; I have peace with my GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD! Blessed, blessed forever be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

## CHAPTER 58

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*We must consider this Chapter only as a continuation of the same Sermon. It is full of reproof and instruction; and in the deficiency of all creature righteousness, the HOLY GHOST, by his servant the Prophet, indirectly points to CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 58:1**

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Let not the Reader overlook, to whom the Prophet is commissioned to preach, of transgression. It is to the LORD'S people. They were transgressors, but at the same time the

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LORD owns them for his people. Sweet thought! that however we fail in duty, JESUS fails not in love. Oh! how doubly painful is that rebellion, which is against a covenant GOD in CHRIST!

**ISAIAH 58:2-7**

Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. (3) Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. (4) Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high. (5) Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? *is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes *under him*? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? (6) *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? (7) *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Observe how possible it is to have a fondness for ordinances, but to be void of a spirit of grace in them. Outward observances are easily followed; but heart-renewing, heart-felt sorrow for sin, consists in somewhat more than these. A squalid face and sable garments, yea, abstinence from ordinary food, are no real marks of true fasting. How divinely hath the LORD JESUS dwelt upon this subject, Matthew 6:16-18.

**ISAIAH 58:8-12**

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before

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thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. (9) Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I *am*. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; (10) And *if* thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness *be* as the noonday: (11) And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. (12) And *they that shall be* of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

If we read these sweet promises with an eye to the gospel of JESUS, and interpret what is here said by this rule, they will appear most blessed. JESUS is himself the light of the morning, yea, of the morning without a cloud. Health and salvation, righteousness and peace, in him, union and communion, with all the blessings of the covenant, in CHRIST, will then appear to be what the Prophet hath described; and such blessed intercourse will be kept up, in prayer and praise, on our part, and gifts and graces bestowed, on the part of GOD, as may well come up to the character here given, that CHRIST is the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in. So that it forms a lovely view of CHRIST. Psalm 69:4.

### **ISAIAH 58:13-14**

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words: (14) Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

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I beg the Reader to pause over this passage, and mark the several expressions enjoined to the people of GOD, for the due and proper solemnization of the sabbath; and surely he will immediately conclude with me, that if in the Jewish Church, which was but a type and shadow of good things to come, this holy day was commanded to be observed with such sacredness; how much more ought the observance of the sabbath to be regarded in the Christian, when the whole sum and substance of the law is in CHRIST, and JESUS himself is the very sabbath of his redeemed, *formed In their heart the hope of glory?* The *turning away the foot* from all pleasure, may perhaps have an allusion to what Moses was commanded at the bush: intimating that in the sabbath we see CHRIST; and all approaches to GOD in CHRIST must be made in sanctity. See those scriptures, Exodus 3:4, 5. Leviticus 10:3. *Not doing our own ways*, and the like, means that over and above all sacredness of soul, there must be accompanied with it a conscious sense of sin, and a total renunciation of all self-righteousness. Oh! how precious is JESUS, in his sabbaths, in his ordinances, and in all the means of grace and salvation, when the soul is once conscious of wants and pollutions. How little do these men know even the very nature of the sabbath, who spend the smallest portion of these hallowed seasons, these blessed golden opportunities, in any pursuit but that of *the one thing needful!* How do all faithful souls mourn in secret in the view of those troops of sabbath-breakers of our poor bleeding land, for which the nation mourns, and which come forth every LORD'S day to their sport and pleasures!

## REFLECTIONS

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MY soul! listen to the call of GOD, by the Prophet, for he it is that speaks in his word, and by his word; and let a conscious sense of sin lead thee to seek salvation by CHRIST. And see to it, my soul, that while using all the means of grace, and following every sacred ordinance of the LORD'S appointment, with diligence, under the divine blessing, thou place no stress upon the means, to the forgetting of the end. For what are all ordinances, unless the GOD of ordinances be found and enjoyed in them? So that if, like Israel of old, thou shouldst draw nigh to GOD with thy mouth, and honour him with thy lips, while thine heart is far from him; will not this be to prevent the very design of everything that is sacred; and, instead of bringing thine heart to GOD, to lead thy heart from GOD? No, my soul! beg of GOD for grace, that thy fasts and thy poor services may be first seasoned by the HOLY SPIRIT, and that the glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST may be the grand object of pursuit and desire in every one. Oh! for grace to know these things, and to live in the heart-felt affection for them; for then, JESUS'S righteousness will go before thee, and *the glory of the LORD will be thy reward.*

And, my soul! see to it also, that what the Prophet hath so graciously marked of divine promises be in thy experience. *The LORD will guide continually*, it is said. *He will satisfy thy soul in drought. He will make fat thy bones.* Precious, precious LORD JESUS! be thou my portion, and, sure I am, I shall be well guided, well satisfied, and well fed, with the fatness of redemption. Yea, LORD, I shall be as a well watered garden, whose waters fail not. For thou art the Repairer of the breaches of our poor fallen nature, and the Restorer of paths to dwell in.

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And, LORD! help me to reverence thy sabbaths, to delight in, to love, and to esteem them, above all seasons; that, with one of old, I may say, and feel the full blessedness of the expressions, while I say it, *One day in thy courts is better than a thousand*. Yea, my ever blessed LORD JESUS, be thou thyself my sabbaths; for being thyself my sabbaths, my rest, my joy, and sole delight, upon earth, thou wilt be my heaven of sabbaths in the life to come. Amen.

## CHAPTER 59

### CONTENTS

*This Chapter opens with describing the nature and consequence of sin. The gracious interposition of JESUS, as a Surety and Intercessor, then follows. And the Chapter closeth with some sweet and precious promises, in consequence of the rich covenant of GOD in CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 59:1-2**

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (2) But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

What a blessed assurance does this Chapter open with; and, as if the LORD would have it particularly taken notice of, it is prefaced with a *Behold!* Very often, I believe, the people of GOD have found comfort from this scripture; and as it hath refreshed and sustained souls under sharp exercises; so will it continue to do, in all the remaining ages of the Church. And Reader! do not overlook the gracious revelation as it concerns yourself: If at any time the LORD hides his face, and his glory

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be for the moment eclipsed to our view, look diligently for the cause, and it will be found to originate in ourselves. It is our iniquities, our shyness to come to the LORD, and our deadness in coming, which makes a veil of separation. See Song Of Solomon 5:2, 3.

### **ISAIAH 59:3-15**

For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. (4) None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. (5) They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. (6) Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works *are* works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands. (7) Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. (8) The way of peace they know not; and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. (9) Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, *but* we walk in darkness. (10) We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; *we are* in desolate places as dead *men*. (11) We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but *there is* none; for salvation, *but* it is far off from us. (12) For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions *are* with us; and *as for* our iniquities, we know them; (13) In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. (14) And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. (15) Yea, truth faileth; and he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him that *there was* no judgment.

Here is a long and sad account of men's revolt and transgression, which fully explains what was said before, as well as accounts for the divine corrections which followed. Men may well wait for the light, and grope in darkness, when all the faculties are either benumbed with sin, or if alive are employed in the services of Satan, as here described; and how shall they know the way of peace, when their pursuits are all after sin? *There is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked,* Isaiah 57:21.

### **ISAIAH 59:16-18**

And he saw that *there was* no man, and wondered that *there was* no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. (17) For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance *for* clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. (18) According to *their* deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

I made but a short observation on the long passage before this, in order that I might enter upon the soul-relieving truth in the view of the LORD JESUS, which here succeeds the melancholy subject. *He saw that there was no man.* Whom is this spoken of, but of JESUS? Who was it saw the poverty and ruin of our nature, and determined to interpose for our salvation, but the LORD JESUS? Who, but he, could be both our Saviour and Intercessor? Precious LORD JESUS! it was, indeed, thine own arm that brought salvation; for the sins of thy people would have crushed every arm but thine, when, in the days of thy flesh, thou didst bear all the sins of thy redeemed in thine own body, on the tree! Oh! how truly lovely is it now, to behold thee, by faith, standing forth, the devoted head of thy body, the Church, and for her enduring the cross, and

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despising the shame! Oh! how truly blessed, to behold thee in thy priestly garments, and in a vesture dipped, in blood, triumphing over all the power of hell; and in our nature recompensing fury to thine enemies, and manifesting favor to thy chosen! And surely thy zeal to thy FATHER'S house, and to thy FATHER'S honour, may well, from the completeness of it, be compared to the covering of a cloke. Isaiah 63:1-6. Revelation 19:13. Psalm 69:9. John 2:16, 17.

### **ISAIAH 59:19-20**

So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. (20) And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

These words come in most blessedly, after the former, to show the consequence of CHRIST'S interposition, and the effects of his offices and labour: we have a similar prophesy by *Malachi* that such should take place; and in CHRIST JESUS all is *yea and amen*; Malachi 1:11. And it is among the sweet offices of the HOLY GHOST, to glorify JESUS, John 16:14. The Apostle Paul makes application of what is said here of the Redeemer coming to Zion, directly to the person of CHRIST, Romans 11:26. Reader! think how lovely our GOD our *Kinsman-Redeemer* is: and how ought all his brethren to be on the look-out for him, for the full accomplishment of this most blessed promise, when both Jew and Gentile shall be brought into *one fold, under one Shepherd*, John 10:16.

### **ISAIAH 59:21**

As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of

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thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

I know not with what views my Reader will regard this verse: But to me, I confess, it is as blessed a promise as any in the Bible. Indeed it forms a comprehension of almost every other. For is it not GOD the FATHER, speaking to the person of GOD the SON, in his proposed character of Mediator, in his rich promises concerning JESUS's redeemed? And doth not GOD, in his covenant-relationship, undertake to fulfil his gracious engagements, concerning the LORD'S people? And, as such, may we not, as the redeemed of the LORD, look up, and plead for the accomplishment? Nay, is it not intended, by the very engagement itself, that we should? Blessed LORD, I would say, do as thou hast said: let a blessed portion of that SPIRIT, which was on JESUS, without measure, be upon all JESUS'S seed and offspring, *according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST* John 3:34. Ephesians 4:7.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn from what thy GOD hath said, how to form conclusions, both of the LORD'S hand in helping his people, and of the LORD'S ear in hearing their prayers. If at any time the enemy triumph, and the LORD seem to hide his face, search for the cause, and trace thine iniquities to their source. Alas! what need have I, like *Ezra*, day by day, to take shame and confusion of face, because *mine iniquities are increased, and my trespasses grown up to the heavens*.

Precious LORD JESUS! what everlasting confusion would cover me, did I not behold thee, as this sweet Chapter represents,

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coming as the Advocate and Propitiation, the Redeemer and Intercessor, of poor perishing sinners! Thine own arm, O LORD, wrought out deliverance for thy people; for none of thy redeemed were competent to stand with thee. Take, LORD, to thyself all the glory, for thou alone hast wrought all the salvation, while all the blessed consequences of it are to thy people.

And do thou, most gracious GOD and FATHER, for thy dear SON'S sake, fulfil all thy promises in the soul of thy people. Put, LORD, thy blessed SPIRIT in us, and we shall live: and let the everlasting efficacy of CHRIST'S blood and righteousness, produce the everlasting blessings of both, among thy redeemed, from *henceforth and forever!*

## CHAPTER 60

### CONTENTS

*GOD the HOLY GHOST is here celebrating the glory and praise of CHRIST, and his Church in him; and showing what a vast accession of redeemed souls shall pour into the Redeemer's kingdom in the latter-day glory.*

#### **ISAIAH 60:1-3**

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. (2) For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. (3) And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

I beg to be understood as speaking with all due humility, on a subject so infinitely sublime and glorious; and rather as asking than deciding upon it; but I venture to say, it strikes me that the person here spoken to, is CHRIST, the glorious Head of his Church, and not the Church herself, as hath been generally supposed. We find, by comparing scripture with scripture, that GOD the FATHER many times before addresses GOD the SON as Mediator, in the several parts of this same Prophet's sermon. See Chap. 42:6, and 49:1-9. And there seems to be a blessed propriety in the glorious Head, and not the Church, being thus addressed, when the Gentiles are said to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising. This was literally and truly done, when JESUS came as the light and the life of men; and hence the Evangelist recorded the truth, *that the people saw a great light*, Matthew 4:12-16. And John recorded also that his people were made *kings and priests to GOD and his FATHER*, Revelation 1:6. But Reader, do not forget one blessed truth contained in these verses, namely, that the glory here spoken of, is the glory of JEHOVAH. CHRIST and his salvation are uniformly said, in all the scripture, to be JEHOVAH's *glory*: GOD the FATHER proclaimed this, Isaiah 49:6, and GOD the SON, as Mediator, confirmed it when on earth, John 17:1 to 5.

**ISAIAH 60:4-7**

Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side. (5) Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. (6) The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.

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(7) All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

What a blessed and soul-reviving thought is it, amidst the melancholy prospect all around, of sin and sorrow, in the present miserable state of things, that the kingdom of JESUS is neither weak nor small. The promise is absolute: *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*. Some of all nations, all tongues, all people shall come to him. In JESUS, the New Testament altar shall they be all accepted. I only detain the Reader to remark, that this passage alone, if there were no other, would be sufficient to determine, that the deliverance of the Church from Babylon (as some would fain have it) could not be in the Prophet's view, when he penned this scripture. It is true, many people of different countries, joined themselves with Israel on their return; but neither Israel herself, nor all the scattered remnants of the people that joined them, could warrant expressions like these. See Ezra 2:64.

### **ISAIAH 60:8-9**

Who *are* these *that* fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? (9) Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

Reader! pause, I pray you over these sweet verses. Can there be a more delightful thought, than that of souls flying to CHRIST, as doves, who by instinct take shelter in their houses? Mark what JESUS said, John 12:32; and do not overlook how the glory of JEHOVAH in covenant, as GOD, is folded up in the

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blessed relation. Yes! CHRIST'S glory is his FATHER'S honour; and it is the most blessed of all thoughts that GOD the FATHER is glorified in his dear SON, in the instance of every individual soul redeemed; John 13:31, 32.

**ISAIAH 60:10-11**

And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. (11) Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that *men* may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and *that* their kings *may be* brought.

How beautifully do we find the Redeemer's glory and his Church's happiness blended. Here the prosperity of the Church is particularly spoken of, but all with an eye to CHRIST. Psalm 72:10.

**ISAIAH 60:12**

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, *those* nations shall be utterly wasted.

Here JESUS is evidently spoken of, agreeably to that prophecy, Psalm 72:11; and the LORD himself very solemnly confirmed the same truth, Luke 19:27.

**ISAIAH 60:13-18**

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. (14) The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. (15) Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through *thee*, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. (16) Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of

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kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. (17) For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. (18) Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

In what lofty language, of the most blessed import, and under what gracious similitudes, doth the LORD speak of the glories and happiness of the Church! But let the Reader carefully remember, that it is all in JESUS. Without an eye to him, none of these things could be said.

### **ISAIAH 60:19-22**

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. (20) Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. (21) Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. (22) A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

The very blessed things here spoken of, evidently refer to the Church above, and we must look forward to the full accomplishment of them in the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth forever. By comparing what is here said with what the beloved Apostle John saw in vision (and which he was commissioned to deliver to the Church) we are taught what a blessed state that will be, when CHRIST is all in all, and hath brought home his Church to his kingdom above. See Revelation 21 throughout. I do not think it necessary to enlarge upon the beautiful similitudes here

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chosen, to represent the glories of the Church of CHRIST; but would beg of the Reader to remember *from* whom all those glories result, and *in* whom they all center. It is JESUS, the life and the light of his redeemed, whose presence also is the light and the glory of heaven. It will be much more profitable both for him that writes and him that reads, to consider the fulness of the blessing contained in that one view of JESUS, in which he is called *thy* GOD *thy* glory; than to attempt to describe from these figures, in what that blessedness will consist. *All tears wiped from all eyes: to be led to fountains of living waters,* and the people of JESUS to be *all righteous;* these expressions, no doubt, imply a state of endless felicity; but our present unripe faculties are not competent either to the description or discovery. One assurance we have, and that is enough for all: our whole happiness will arise from our union with JESUS, our communion with JESUS; and our communications from JESUS. LORD! be thou my portion; for in thee I have all.

## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! how shall I refrain, while reading this sweet chapter, from having my whole soul led out in longing desire after thee, and calling upon thee in thine own words, to arise, and shine upon my soul, and let thy glory be seen upon me? Do not I know, that thou, and thou only art the source and fountain of all saving light, and life, and knowledge? Gross darkness had indeed covered our whole nature, until that thou, the Sun of righteousness, didst arise on our benighted souls, with healing in thy wings! And both now in time, and hereafter to all eternity, all thy redeemed

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derive everything from thee, for grace, and for glory. Gentiles may well come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising, for without thee all is darkness and as the shadow of death. Not all the lights of heaven and heavenly bodies, nor all the moons and stars of earthly ordinances, can give light or warmth, without thee. Oh! hither come to JESUS, ye sons and daughters of this benighted world; awake, ye that sleep, and arise from the dead, that CHRIST *may give you light*.

And oh! my blessed GOD and FATHER! how shalt I praise thee, and love thee as I ought, for this blessed, this glorious, this unequalled gift of thy dear SON? Oh! carry on the great design, and let not the gates of thy Zion be shut, day nor night; that men may bring to our *Shiloh* the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought: until the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea; and all shall know, that thou, the LORD JEHOVAH, art our Saviour and Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob! Amen.

## CHAPTER 61

### CONTENTS

*Another Chapter, full of CHRIST, in which, under the spirit of prophecy, the LORD JESUS is the preacher. Some precious promises are added, respecting the Church.*

#### **ISAIAH 61:1-2**

The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent

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me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; (2) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

Had the shadow of a doubt existed as to whom this blessed scripture applies, the LORD JESUS would have fully removed it, when, in his visit to the Jewish synagogue on the sabbath, he read it, and declared its accomplishment. See Luke 4:14 to 21. But, over and above this precious testimony, I pray the Reader to remark under what features of character he is described by the Prophet; and then I beg of him to look at the original, as he appeared in the days of his flesh. See those scriptures, Isaiah 11:1-3. Matthew 3:16, 17. John 1:29-34.

#### **ISAIAH 61:3-4**

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. (4) And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

Every office of tenderness distinguished the person of CHRIST. So gentle, so gracious, and so full of compassion, was he to be, that even the *bruised reed* he should not break, nor quench the *smoking flax*. Hence all noticed the meekness of the LAMB of GOD, and every feature witnessed who he was.

#### **ISAIAH 61:5-7**

And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien *shall be* your plowmen and your vinedressers. (6) But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. (7) For your shame *ye shall*

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*have* double; and *for* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

As the LORD JESUS was so well known to his people, by the tenderness of his Person and Character; so his Church had her features from her connection with her LORD, by which she was to be known also.

### **ISAIAH 61:8**

For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

This verse seems to have no immediate connection with what went before, nor with what follows. I find, in an old Bible, the translation rendered somewhat different; *For I the LORD, which love right, and hate robbery (though it were offered me) shall make their work, of faithfulness and make an everlasting covenant with them.* From which reading it should seem, that what is said here, of the LORD'S loving right and hating robbery, is only descriptive of his distinguishing excellencies of character; that He who is so known to his people hath made, and will make their works faithful in himself; and in his everlasting covenant. But I leave the Reader to consider what sense is the most probable.

### **ISAIAH 61:9**

And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they *are* the seed *which* the LORD hath blessed.

This is a blessed promise, and hath a sure fulfillment in the gracious will and pleasure of our covenant GOD!

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**ISAIAH 61:10-11**

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels. (11) For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

I see no reason to limit this Song of joy and exultation to the Church. We shall have very blessed views of the Church's LORD and Saviour, if we accept the words as first spoken by CHRIST, and next as adopted by the Church, from her conscious union with CHRIST, and an interest in all that belongs to him. When GOD the FATHER gave CHRIST his Church, it is said, that it was his heart's desire, and that his glory was great in his salvation. See Psalm 21:1-6. It is always blessed, yea, it is twice blessed, first, to behold CHRIST, in everything of salvation, and then his Church, as in him.

**REFLECTIONS**

BLESSED LORD JESUS! while I read this Chapter, methinks I would beg for grace and faith to be in lively exercise, that I might figure to myself, my GOD and Saviour, thus speaking to my soul, and to the souls of his people, in the same gracious words, as thou didst in the Jewish synagogue in the days of thy flesh. Surely the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH was upon thee then, when thou wast anointed to preach the gospel to the poor; and surely now thou hast finished redemption work, and art returned to glory, thou wilt send down, according to thy promise before thy departure, the SPIRIT upon thy people, that all may bear thee witness, while receiving those gracious

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words which still proceed out of thy mouth. Thine arm of power is the same, and thy love is the same, all the purposes of thy salvation are the same; and thou art now daily, by the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the broken in heart, proclaiming liberty to poor captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Hail! thou Almighty Saviour of poor lost sinners.

And oh! ye ministers of my GOD! behold in JESUS, what ought to be your plan of ministration. Sent by him to act as under-pastors in his name, shall not the meekness, the gentleness of CHRIST, be your pattern and example? Did the SON of GOD come to preach good tidings to the meek and will not ye, who have felt in your own souls the blessedness of those tidings of salvation, gladly go forth, and preach the gospel to every creature. Did JESUS bind up the broken in heart, and open the prison doors to them that were bound; and will not ye tell every poor broken-hearted sinner, whom ye meet with, that there is salvation for them in his name? Was JESUS mild and gracious; not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; and shall not the servant of the LORD, *be apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if GOD peradventure, will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth?*

Ye followers of JESUS! whose seed are known among the Gentiles, and your offspring among the people, behold, here, what is said of your LORD; yea, what he saith most graciously of himself; and put in your humble modest claim, that he may comfort all who mourn, and give unto you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Blessed LORD JESUS? cause all thy people,

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thy redeemed, to rejoice in thee, as thou hast rejoiced in the salvation of JEHOVAH! And while thou art clothing all thine, with the garments of thy salvation, and covering them with the robe of thy righteousness; cause them to live to thy glory, and let their righteousness and praise in thee *spring forth before all the nations*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 62

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*The Prophet is at prayer: and GOD is in the confirmation of his promises in CHRIST, and the glories of the Church in her Husband and Saviour, are most joyfully set forth and celebrated.*

#### **ISAIAH 62:1**

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth.

They were happy times, when the LORD'S servants burned with an holy zeal for their LORD'S honour; and the Church of Zion, whose name hath been from all eternity engraven on the LORD'S hands, had the first affection in the people's hearts. Whoever was the person here spoken of that felt so ardent a concern for Zion, we must not over-look the Person of him whose zeal for his FATHER'S house *did eat him up*. Psalm 69:9. Precious LORD JESUS! what were thy prayers for, in which thou didst spend whole nights, but for thy Zion! Who shall describe them? Luke 6:12.

#### **ISAIAH 62:2**

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And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

How much the HOLY GHOST seems to dwell upon the Church; beauty and loveliness, in various parts of his word: See Song Of Solomon 4:7. Isaiah 65:15. And was not this scripture fulfilled, when the Redeemer informed John of the blessings of the Church in him? Revelation 3:12.

### **ISAIAH 62:3**

Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

The Church is her LORD'S glory: so the Apostle was commissioned to inform the Church, 2 Corinthians 8:23. And when John saw the LORD JESUS in a vision, he beheld on his head many crowns, Revelation 19:12. Reader? It is CHRIST'S coronation day, when any poor sinner is brought to ascribe the sole glory of his redemption to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, JESUS hath then another crown.

### **ISAIAH 62:4-5**

Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. (5) For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *so* shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *so* shall thy God rejoice over thee.

*Hephi-bah*, signifies *delight*; and *Beulah* means *union and marriage*. The joy is, that the soul is a marriageable creature, and that the LORD JESUS, in his assumption of our nature, hath married us, and made us one with himself. Sweetest of all thoughts, my soul! *thy Maker is thine Husband: the LORD of*

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*hosts is his name*; Isaiah 54:5. Well might the Apostle speak of it as a great mystery, Ephesians 5:32.

### **ISAIAH 62:6-7**

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, *which* shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, (7) And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Here we see, in whose appointment ministers are, and what ought to distinguish the earnestness of their labours. What can be more blessed, and what service so honourable, as to be always engaged in speaking from GOD to the people, and bearing the people, in the arms of faith and prayer, before GOD?

### **ISAIAH 62:8-9**

The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn *to be* meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: (9) But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

I beg the Reader to observe, how very sweet and frequent those promises are, scattered here and there, all over scripture which speak of GOD'S absolute engagement to bless his people; and let him not for a moment forget, that they are all *yea and amen in CHRIST*.

### **ISAIAH 62:10-12**

Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. (11) Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward *is* with

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him, and his work before him. (12) And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

The gospel way is a *high way*, and was all along to be so marked; and the LORD promised that it should be so plain, *that the way faring men, though fools, should not err therein*; Isaiah 35:8. And the character of the LORD'S people was also as plainly sketched. They were to be a *peculiar people*; a people that should *dwell alone*, and *not be reckoned among the nations*. JESUS undertook to search them out, in all places, whither they had been driven, in the cloudy and dark day. Reader! it will be always profitable to discover, in our own experience, the sweet testimonies to these truths.

## REFLECTIONS

OH! for a portion of that holy zeal, which inflamed the minds of the faithful of old, when they preferred Zion, and her interests, above their chief joy! But now, alas! it may be said, in the language of the Prophet, *Zion hath none to guide her, among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any to take her by the hand, of all the sons she hath brought up*. Alas! what a day of languishing is Zion now in! Oh! that the LORD would take to himself his great name, and come forth in his own glorious cause, conquering and to conquer; that those sweet promises might be fulfilled, when *his land should no more be termed forsaken, nor be found desolate*; but that Zion's *walls* might become *salvation, and her gates praise!*

And oh! ye watchmen, whom our GOD hath set upon the walls of his Jerusalem, see to it, that ye hold not your peace, day

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nor night! Speak to the people for GOD and his CHRIST; and speak to our GOD, for his people in CHRIST. Ye know the vast, the infinite importance of your situation, and the awful responsibility in which the service of the sanctuary placeth you. Like watchmen, therefore, do ye not only watch over your own souls, but over the souls of the people. Look well to their state, to their order, and discipline. Mark well how others walk *with* CHRIST, and *in* CHRIST. See the tendencies of the LORD in his word, in his providence, in his grace, to his Church and people. *Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people.* Observe, and tell the people of the motions and advances of the enemy upon the ramparts of Zion; and above all, look up with holy earnestness and importunity to the Great King of Zion, and wrestle with him in prayer, that *when the enemy cometh in like a food, the SPIRIT of the LORD may lift up a standard against him.* Blessed LORD JESUS: make thy Zion, thy Church, as thou hast here said, *the holy people, the redeemed of the LORD, and as a city that thou hast sought out, and which shall never be forsaken!*

## CHAPTER 63

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*This is a most blessed Chapter, descriptive of the victories of the LORD JESUS CHRIST over his enemies, and the triumphs of his love and grace in redemption.*

#### **ISAIAH 63:1**

Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the

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greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

I cannot enter upon this Chapter, without first looking up, to bless GOD for it. Never surely was there a more glorious description of the Person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; than what is here given to the Church, in the language of prophecy, so many years before the coming of CHRIST. Some writers, in order to lessen the force of the precious things, as referring to CHRIST, would tell us, that the writing is no more than an account of the triumph of Israel over *Babylon*, when, by the destruction of that kingdom, Israel was delivered from bondage. But this is altogether impossible. The mighty Conqueror here described, is said to come from *Edom*, with dyed garments from *Bozrah*. Now these places lay to the *south* of Jerusalem: whereas *Babylon* is always spoken of, through the Scripture, as the *North* Country. See Jeremiah 31:8. Nothing, therefore, can be more plain, than that the victory here spoken of, is CHRIST'S personal conquest of salvation, in which, as the scripture saith, of the people, *there was none with him*. *Edom* and *Bozrah*, are mentioned, probably in allusion to the ancient enmity of *Esau*, the head of the house of *Edom*, against *Jacob*, his brother. For from *Abel* and *Cain*, uniformly down through the whole race, in the separate and distinct seed, *he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit*, Galatians 4:29. But I pray the Reader to look over all lesser considerations, and to follow the Prophet in what is here said, with an eye to CHRIST alone. And may He that guided the Prophet's pen, guide the heart both of the writer and the Reader of this *Commentary*, that we may behold JESUS blessedly represented through the whole. The prophet opens the Chapter with a

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question, as one surprised at what he beheld. He sees one coming towards him, under a character that he could not explain to himself. He beholds him coming up as from war, not tired, nor weary, but travelling in great strength; and yet his garments are like those of the most menial servant, who had come up from the wine-press, an office always performed by the lowest of the people. The Prophet, struck with the view, asketh, *who is this?* To which the LORD, in great grace, instantly gives answer, *It is I, mighty to save; and speaking in righteousness.* The Prophet could not but perfectly understand, by those characters, who it was. None but JESUS, the promised Saviour, could be *mighty to save*; for salvation is in no other. And this became the fulfillment of GOD'S covenant in his promises, and manifested JEHOVAH'S faithfulness, Deuteronomy 7:9. Reader! how blessed is it to see, in one and the same scripture, the faithfulness of GOD the FATHER, and the perfect righteousness and complete salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

**ISAIAH 63:2**

Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

The Prophet, encouraged by the gracious and condescending answer he had received, ventures now to go further in his enquiry, and asketh, how it is that One so great and glorious, should appear in an office so mean and humble? And this, Reader, is, and will be, among all the redeemed, the everlasting subject of wonder, praise, and joy, to all eternity. Oh! the condescension of the LORD JESUS, in emptying himself of his glory, and taking upon him the form of a servant! Surely, by this debasement, and by the obedience and death

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he wrought in the Person of the Mediator, the law of GOD hath been more honoured and glorified, than could have been done by the unsinning obedience and death of angels and men, to all eternity.

**ISAIAH 63:3-6**

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. (5) And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. (6) And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Here the LORD JESUS CHRIST graciously gives a full and satisfying answer to the Prophet's question, and in it explains most blessedly, to the Church's joy, the subject of his personal triumph in redemption. The wine-press which JESUS trod, was the wine-press of the wrath of GOD, into which our nature deserved to have been thrown, and, but for JESUS's interposition, must have been thrown, and remained for bruising to all eternity; Revelation 14:19. Well might the LORD JESUS add, in this account, that *of the people there was none with him*. For the sins he bore, when he was made sin for us, had they been laid upon his people, would have crushed the whole race in ruin forever! Sweet thought! He who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, wrought out the whole of redemption! On him the LORD laid the iniquities of us all. And, Reader! If JESUS's own arm wrought salvation, will you not give him, most cheerfully and thankfully, the whole praise? And do observe, the day of vengeance to CHRIST'S enemies is

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come, when the year of his redeemed arrives. For while he saves his people from their sins, he treads down, with everlasting destruction, sin, death, hell, and the grave. Both these views were in his heart from everlasting; and JESUS alone accomplisheth the sacred purposes of his own, and his FATHER'S will. How sweetly, therefore, may every redeemed soul, take up the Prophet's song, and say; *Sing, O ye heavens! for the LORD hath done it! Shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein! for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!* Isaiah 44:23.

### **ISAIAH 63:7-9**

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. (8) For he said, Surely they *are* my people, children *that* will not lie: so he was their Saviour. (9) In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

The subject is here changed, as well as the Person speaking. The Prophet, probably contemplating what had passed, begins to celebrate the divine goodness, and especially with an eye to the Church's mercies in time past. It is worthy to be observed, how often the redemption of the church from Egypt, and the blessings in the wilderness, are alluded to, in different parts of the word of GOD. The HOLY GHOST thus taught the Church to exercise faith for all that was to come, in recounting the LORD'S goodness for all that was past; and certainly nothing contributes more to the accomplishment of this end. Psalm 77:3-12. Who can read the account, here

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given, of JESUS taking part in all the affliction of his people in the wilderness, without having their hearts led forth in love and praises to the Redeemer?

### **ISAIAH 63:10-14**

But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* he fought against them. (11) Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, *and* his people, *saying*, Where *is* he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where *is* he that put his holy Spirit within him? (12) That led *them* by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? (13) That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, *that* they should not stumble? (14) As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

Was there ever a more affecting representation of the natural unamiableness of the human heart, and the tender graciousness of the LORD JESUS, than what these verses set forth? Precious LORD, may I never lose sight of it! that while it induceth humility of soul, I may still recollect, thine unequalled compassion to poor sinners! I need not detain the Reader, to remark the scripture, to which these verses refer. The LORD'S leading his people through the wilderness, cannot be overlooked.

### **ISAIAH 63:15-19**

Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where *is* thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? (16) Doubtless thou *art* our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting. (17) O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, *and* hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake,

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the tribes of thine inheritance. (18) The people of thy holiness have possessed *it* but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. (19) We are *thine*: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.

Reader! do you want a specimen of prayer? Here is a most blessed one; in which both supplication and praise, holy pleadings and waitings, are most beautifully blended. And what an unanswerable argument for being heard, is made use of, in reminding GOD of his Covenant. Those are the strongest pleas in prayer, when we are enabled to tell the LORD, what the LORD hath first told us; that all blessings are in JESUS, and that whatsoever we ask in his name, *believing, we shall receive*, John 16:23, 24.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! ponder well the blessed things contained in this Chapter; and while the Prophet, in the name of the Church, is humbly enquiring, who CHRIST is, and in what garments he appears; do thou see whether thou canst answer the enquiry, to thy joy, in the most satisfying tokens of thy Redeemer's Person and righteousness. Who is this, that cometh up with salvation, but the LORD, mighty to save he is One with JEHOVAH, in the divine nature; and no less one with us in the human; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. His name is indeed *wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty GOD, the Everlasting FATHER, the Prince of Peace!* Surely, LORD, thine own arm brought salvation, and of the people there was none with thee; and though in all things it behoved thee to be made like unto thy brethren; yet, in redemption-work, thou trodest the wine-press of the wrath of GOD alone. And amidst all our rebellions, and forgetfulness of thee, never didst thou forget

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us, or forego our interests. In all our afflictions, thou wast afflicted. Thy love, and thy pity, allowed of no abatement, for thou wast always *JESUS: the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*. Oh! then LORD, let nothing of the waywardness of thy children, thwart the gracious designs of thy love; but remember that we are but dust, and let thy strength and thy zeal, and the sounding of thy bowels, never be restrained. We throw ourselves upon Covenant relationship, and beseech of thee, our GOD, to remember that most blessed promise, in which thou hast said, *I will not turn away from them to do them good and I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me!*

## CHAPTER 64

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*This Chapter is one continued strain of prayer, from beginning to end. It is to the same amount in supplication, as the conclusion of the former chapter, and contains the fervent cries of the Church for the divine manifestations.*

#### **ISAIAH 64:1-4**

Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, (2) As *when* the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, *that* the nations may tremble at thy presence! (3) When thou didst terrible things *which* we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. (4) For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Here is a most fervent, animated prayer, in which the Church petitions her LORD, that by the sovereignty of his grace, and the outpouring of his HOLY SPIRIT, he would so come forth, and come down in the midst of his people, that the mountains of sin and unbelief might melt before him. Reader! depend upon it, when grace enables the Church, or the individual believer, to go forth in such awakening cries of soul; the LORD, who thus prepares the heart for mercy, is near at hand, in mercy to meet and bless his people.

**ISAIAH 64:5-7**

Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, *those that* remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. (6) But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (7) And *there is* none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

To the earnest cry of the soul, that went up in the preceding supplication, the humbling of the soul, in the deepest self abasement of spirit, which here follows, becomes a most suited addition, in prayer. Nothing surely can be more express, in token of heart-felt contrition, than what is here said. The uncleanness, and the witherings of the leaf in a wintry day, are strong figures to intimate the unworthiness of our most holy things. And, Reader! think, I beseech you, if the heavens are not clean in GOD'S sight, and if he charge even his angels with folly, *how shall man be just with GOD?* Oh! precious, precious JESUS! how sweet a relief to my soul is the recollection, that the perpetual and eternal efficacy of thy blood and righteousness taketh away the iniquity of our most

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holy things! For if, as is most true and just, our very righteousness is filthy in the view of GOD, then will it follow, that our prayer sins, our sacramental sins, our ordinance sins, need cleansing in CHRIST'S blood. Oh! how blessed, and to the praise of GOD my FATHER'S grace, is it, that both person and offering find acceptance in JESUS the beloved!

### **ISAIAH 64:8-12**

But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand. (9) Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we *are* all thy people. (10) Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. (11) Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. (12) Wilt thou refrain thyself for these *things*, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

How beautiful is the connection between the opening and close of this prayer, and indeed the whole, of the Chapter from beginning to end! Surely, every faithful follower of the LORD JESUS, who knows himself to be, in himself, what this prayer expresseth; and desires, in that conviction to lie as clay in the hand of the potter, will look up, in and through the LORD JESUS, and the fullness of his propitiation and advocacy, and rest in humble waitings oh the LORD, until the hour of deliverance come. *Wilt thou refrain thyself? Wilt thou hold thy peace? Wilt thou be silent from the throne, when JESUS'S name is pleaded?* will be the finishing and irresistible argument of every prayer. It is as if the soul of the believing pleader should say, "will GOD forget his covenant engagements? Shall the efficacy and merit of JESUS'S blood and righteousness cease, and the helping of our infirmities in prayer, by GOD the HOLY GHOST, be no more available?" Sweet

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and unanswerable pleas, these, to be sure of finding grace and mercy in due time of need.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let us learn from this Chapter, how we are to pray, and what we are to pray for. Surely, the HOLY GHOST hath caused this prayer of the Church; which he awakened by his grace, to be recorded and handed down through all ages of the Church, as a standing pattern of what words we are to take, and to come with before the LORD: And how sure that the LORD will hear the prayer he awakens in grace, and answer it in mercy.

Blessed SPIRIT of grace and supplication! thou who didst thus teach the Church; LORD, I beseech thee, teach me! For unless my soul feels thy sweet influences in an hour of prayer, too well I know, that my poor soul will be indifferent and unawakened to the employment, and cold and lifeless in it. But if thou, LORD, wilt graciously set me to pray, sure I am, thou wilt give me a spirit in prayer; And then shall I call upon a gracious Covenant GOD in CHRIST, and neither the mountains of sin in my poor nature, nor the hills of unbelief in my soul will stop the gracious communications from above; but JESUS will be glorified in causing his grace to shine upon my soul; and GOD will manifest himself, as a prayer-hearing GOD, to my humble petitions in JESUS. *Then shall I run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast enlarged my heart.*

## CHAPTER 65

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*We have here much, yea very much of CHRIST, and they who would read this Chapter profitably, here need of much of the SPIRIT of CHRIST to instruct them in it. JESUS, in the person of his servant the Prophet, in speaking of the call of the Gentiles, and of the sad obstinacy of the Jews. Towards the close of the Chapter we have a cluster of the richest gospel promises.*

**ISAIAH 65:1**

I am sought of *them that* asked not *for me*; I am found of *them that* sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation *that was* not called by my name.

We have abundant cause to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST, that he would not leave the Church to her own conjectures, concerning the person to whom this scripture referred, and by whom, under the spirit of prophecy, it was spoken; but by his servant, the Apostle Paul, hath opened to us the glories and graces of the LORD JESUS as folded up in it, and thereby he hath handed to us as it were a key to unlock the blessed contents of the whole Chapter; See Romans 10 throughout. Hence we are authorized to draw this conclusion, that it is CHRIST, and not Isaiah who was found by poor Gentiles, who in a state of nature could never have known JESUS, nor have asked for him. Oh! the riches of preventing grace! Reader! well may you and I rejoice in the consolation, who were not called by JESUS's name; Ephesians 2:11 to 22.

**ISAIAH 65:2-7**

I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good, after their own thoughts; (3) A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon

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altars of brick; (4) Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable *things is in* their vessels; (5) Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. (6) Behold, *it is* written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, (7) Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

This is the lamentation of JESUS over his ancient people, the Jews. And what a sad history of rebellion, from the beginning, when GOD formed them into a Church, to the time of their rejecting the LORD of life and glory, do the scriptures furnish concerning them! Reader! it is a blessed relief to a gracious soul, longing for the Redeemer's kingdom to come with power and glory on the earth, to recollect that sweet promise, which must, and, we hope, is not now far off to be fulfilled, when the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, Isaiah 59:20. Romans 11:26.

### **ISAIAH 65:8-10**

Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and *one* saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing *is* in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. (9) And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. (10) And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

With an eye to this gracious promise, the HOLY GHOST here sets forth, under the similitude of a poor apparently dry and fruitless vine, how the mercy for Israel is preserved, and how at length it shall be accomplished. To all human observation,

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the vine brings forth nothing; but there is one who looks on and knows all, who takes notice of a cluster in which the new wine is found. *My beloved*, (said the Church, speaking of JESUS) *is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi*, Song Of Solomon 1:14. Sweet consideration! JESUS in our nature, became the preservative of our poor blighted nature, all along from the fall. For though not then openly appearing in substance of our flesh; yet the Church subsisted in him, *the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world*, Revelation 13:8. Colossians 1:17. Hence therefore, He that looked on, and who could this be, but He that felt so highly interested in the preservation of his Church and people, as to become, from everlasting, the Church's Husband, Head, and Surety? said, *Destroy it not; there is a blessing in it*. JESUS, the promised seed, is in it, and must come out of it for its salvation. And hence JEHOVAH saith, *For my servant's sake, I will not destroy them all*. There *is* a remnant according to the election of grace; and hence *Sharon* and *Achor* shall flourish and open a door of hope to poor transgressing Israelites, to make one fold with the Gentile church. Here shall they lie down, and in CHRIST'S pasture shall they be fed. The Reader will not forget, as a farther confirmation of those blessed promises, and in proof that the eye of the LORD, at the time of delivering them, was looking on the very spot where JESUS, in after ages, should open the gospel, and give testimony to those truths that *Sharon* was near to *Joppa*, on the west, and *Achor* lay to the eastward, near Jordan, the sacred river, where the LORD JESUS entered on his ministry.

**ISAIAH 65:11-12**

But ye *are* they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the

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drink offering unto that number. (12) Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose *that* wherein I delighted not.

These verses contain an awful confirmation of what every day's experience continues to prove, that *all are not Israel, which are of Israel*, Romans 9:6. In every Church, under every ordinance, the same word, the same gospel, how often is it found, that what becomes to some *the savour of life unto life*, to others, becomes *the savour of death unto death!* what quickens some, kills others! Hence the Apostle declares himself and his few faithful companions to be in one and the same moment a savour of death and of life. Solemn consideration! Reader! what know you of this immense difference? See Acts 28:23, 24. 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.

### **ISAIAH 65:13-16**

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: (14) Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. (15) And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name: (16) That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

Reader! do not hastily pass over the review of these verses. They are like the pillar of cloud in the camp, which, while giving light to Israel, became darkness to, their foes, the Egyptians. Who can read what is here said, but with a mingled feeling of joy and trembling? You will soon discover

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your personal interest in the blessing here spoken of, if you can say, as the verse here expresseth it, that in blessing yourself in the earth, that is in all that concerns you while sojourning upon earth, your blessings, in nature, in providence, and in grace, are all in JESUS. For this is to bless ourselves in the GOD of truth, when, from knowing him to be *the way, and the truth, and the life*, and knowing ourselves to be united to him, and members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, all our springs of all blessings, and of all spiritual life, are in him! Reader! what sayest your experience to this statement?

**ISAIAH 65:17-18**

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. (18) But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

These blessed promises are fulfilled in a gracious sense, when sinners are made new creatures in CHRIST JESUS; and more fulfilled in that upper and brighter world, which John saw in a vision; Revelation 21:1-5.

**ISAIAH 65:19-20**

And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. (20) There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed.

How truly blessed is it to see and remark the happy change wrought in the circumstances of mankind, by the gracious effects of the gospel of peace. And what tends to heighten and endear those blessings, is, that in every renewed heart,

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where a saving change wrought, the auspicious consequences are instantly induced, whether in infancy or old age. The infant in nature is an old man in grace; for all are one in CHRIST JESUS: whence the sinner, though he were to live a hundred years twice told, and yet live out of CHRIST, and without CHRIST, and then dies at last, dies in the same state of condemnation in which he was born, *and the wrath of God abideth upon him*, John 3:36.

**ISAIAH 65:21-23**

And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. (22) They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. (23) They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they *are* the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

Everything and every event shall be blessed to the blessed in CHRIST. For it is this which secures their mercies: they are the seed, the offspring, the children, of Him, who is blessed of the LORD, and are therefore, as the days of a tree, where seed is in itself, so are they, in CHRIST JESUS in the tree of Life, in the paradise of GOD! Revelation 20:2, 3.

**ISAIAH 65:24**

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

I have read this verse by itself, purposely to make it, beauty and grace, and blessedness. This scripture promise hath refreshed and encouraged the souls of very many, and thousands have been enabled to set their seal to the truth of it. And what a rich thought is it, that even before we call, or

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before we go to the throne, the answer is prepared, and come forth. GOD will be before-hand with his people. And wherefore? because JESUS is thine; and in his blood and righteousness all his redeemed are accepted. Daniel 9:22, 23.

**ISAIAH 65:25**

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust *shall be* the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Such will be, and must be, the eventful blessed circumstance induced in the heart of every one, on whom a saving change hath been wrought by the glorious gospel of JESUS, that all, in whom the SPIRIT of CHRIST is, will *live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit*. The minds of men will be changed, and the power of Satan will be so lessened, that the most uncouth and rugged tempers, like the savage natures of the wolf and the lion, will be softened to the gentleness of the lamb; and GOD's holy mountain, his Zion shall both fill the earth, and become the blessing of the earth; and none shall any longer hurt or destroy, for CHRIST shall reign and rule forever. Revelation 21:3, 4.

**REFLECTIONS**

READER! let us pass by all lesser considerations, to attend, with heart-felt joy, to the many precious things said in this Chapter, concerning CHRIST and his Church: for surely every promise here is, richer and more valuable than a pearl, and all the gold of Ophir.

And, first, may GOD the HOLY GHOST, who hath given such blessed views of the LORD JESUS, give us grace to behold, and

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take home to our own hearts, what is said of and by the LORD JESUS, that *our meditation of Him may be sweet*. And let us not fail, while hearing CHRIST, in such repeated endearments of character, crying out, *Behold me! Behold me!* so to look up, and indeed behold him, as to be saved by him! For surely, such repeated calls to behold CHRIST, must argue a dead heart if we regard them not. GOD the FATHER hath commanded it, *Behold!* (he saith) *my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth!* GOD the HOLY GHOST saith also, by his servant John the Baptist: *Behold the LAMB of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world*. And the LORD JESUS himself; with reiterated invitations of grace, enjoins the same, when he saith, *Behold me. Behold one!* Reader! what are your apprehensions and views of these things? Isaiah 42. John 1:29.

When we have duly pondered over the subject, as it concerns JESUS, and our knowledge and enjoyment of him, let us next consider the many gracious calls and promises given to the Church in JESUS, in this chapter, as it concerns the Church. And oh! for grace here also to receive every promise, and to act faith upon all GOD'S covenant promises in CHRIST as the sure earnest of the SPIRIT in the heart. Never, surely, was there a more blessed cluster of promises brought together, for the Church continually to feast upon, than what the HOLY GHOST hath set before us in this Chapter. Let us see to it, my brother, that we accept them in this point of view, and remember, that they are not *yea and nay*, but of GOD in CHRIST are all *yea and amen*; certain, unquestionable, and sure. LORD, I would say, both for myself and Reader, cause

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them to be all *yea and amen*; to thy glory and our exceeding great joy in CHRIST JESUS forever.

## CHAPTER 66

### CONTENTS

*The Prophet is here come to the close of his Prophetical writings, and a blessed close he makes. The Chapter seems to be but the continuation of the same subject as the former; full of consolation to GOD's people, and marking all their mercies in CHRIST.*

#### **ISAIAH 66:1-2**

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest? (2) For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit*, and trembleth at my word.

Stephen, in his address to the Jewish Council, made a quotation from hence, and in direct application, to their characters. But what a very blessed and condescending way was this, of JEHOVAH's speaking! And what unheard of, unexplored, yea, unknown mercies, must be contained in the bosom of this astonishing declaration of the LORD! Though the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, yet will he condescend both to look to the man of a contrite heart, and even dwell in him. Paul the Apostle seems to have followed up his earnest address for the Church on this very ground, and perhaps from this authority, Ephesians 3:14 to the end.

**ISAIAH 66:3-4**

He that killeth an ox *is as if* he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, *as if* he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, *as if he offered* swine's blood; he that burneth incense, *as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. (4) I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose *that* in which I delighted not.

I should apprehend that by the killing of an ox, here spoken of, is not simply meant the act of killing the beast, but with an eye to sacrifice. And if I do this in the idea of an offering, I do thereby set at nought the great sacrifice of the LORD JESUS; and this would be what the Apostle calls crucifying him afresh, and putting him to an open shame. There is an uncommon degree of expression in those words, *as if he slew a man*; meaning the man CHRIST JESUS. Whoever looks to sacrifices, since the sacrifice of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, by way of acceptance, doth to all intents and purposes virtually declare that he fears CHRIST'S sacrifice was not all-sufficient, and therefore he adds this by way of making up the deficiency. And such, by the way it may be observed, is, more or less, the danger of mingling anything of our own with the perfect offering body of JESUS CHRIST, which was offered once for all.

**ISAIAH 66:5**

Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

What a vast difference is found in the minds of men under the word! To some, how blessed; to others, how uninteresting! Reader! do not forget who it is that maketh men to differ, 1 Corinthians 4:7.

### **ISAIAH 66:6-9**

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies. (7) Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. (8) Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. (9) Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut *the womb*? saith thy God.

Perhaps the voice here spoken of, means the voice of the gospel: and the effects of it follow. Quick was the success, when the HOLY GHOST came upon them that heard the voice. JEHOVAH inquireth whether such things were ever heard of before? And the Apostle Paul asserts, that when the LORD thus works by his word, and in his word, souls shall be constrained to confess, that GOD *was in that word of a truth*; 1 Corinthians 14:25.

### **ISAIAH 66:10-14**

Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: (11) That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. (12) For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon *her* sides, and be dandled upon *her* knees. (13) As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. (14) And when ye see *this*, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the

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LORD shall be known toward his servants, and *his* indignation toward his enemies.

All these are so many blessed promises, with which the Church was to be distinguished in gospel days, when the LORD had brought home his holy word with power to the heart. Ordinances were to become blessed; JESUS alone should be blessed, and her people in her; and so endeared should the people be to the LORD, that is, JESUS'S tenderness over them should be like the tenderness of a mother! We do not find this image of the mother's tenderness frequently made use of in scripture; but when it is, the LORD makes it most gracious indeed. See Isaiah 49:15.

### **ISAIAH 66:15-17**

For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. (16) For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. (17) They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one *tree* in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

The LORD is here speaking of his judgment upon sinners, who despise his ordinances, and corrupt and pollute them. Mingling ought with them they become a pollution; Exodus 20:25.

### **ISAIAH 66:18-24**

For I *know* their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. (19) And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, *to* Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, *to* Tubal, and Javan, *to* the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they

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shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. (20) And they shall bring all your brethren *for* an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. (21) And I will also take of them for priests *and* for Levites, saith the LORD. (22) For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. (23) And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. (24) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

The call of the Gentiles, the gathering of the Jews, the formation of a kingdom of priests and Kings the wonders to be accomplished in redemption, and the awful state of those who finally reject the gospel, seem to be the several outlines of the subjects, with which the Prophet folds up, and concludes his inspired scripture. The images of the worm that dieth not, and the fire not to be quenched, our LORD himself, three times in one Chapter, makes use of, when delivering his solemn truths, Mark, 9:44, 46, 48. And very evident it is, from the declarations of both the Master and his servant, that an awful termination must, and will follow the rejection of such great salvation, while mercy, peace, and grace, will be to them who come, *from one new moon to another, to worship the LORD in beauty of holiness*, and are found in CHRIST *to the praise of the glory, of his grace, who hath made his people accepted in the beloved*, Ephesians 1:6.

## REFLECTIONS

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READER! let us pause over the close of Isaiah's prophecy, and observe with the humblest reverence and godly fear, how the Prophet in folding up his ministry, calls the Church in this last Chapter, once more, finally and fully, to the contemplation of JEHOVAH. With what a solemn close; *Thus saith the LORD*. As if, with an indelible seal, the whole was to be left upon the minds of the people. As if the Prophet had given in his commission, with reminding them, that what he had delivered, was all in the name, and by the authority: of Him that was, and that is, and that is to come! And observe how he speaks of his distinguishing character: *The heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool*. GOD'S throne is indeed everywhere, but in an eminent special manifestation of himself, as the Prophet was commissioned to set forth. His throne is in the person of CHRIST. It is there that he promiseth to come and meet and bless his people. CHRIST is, and was the mercy-seat; and in him, and from him, he communeth with *the man that is poor, and of a contrite spirit*, His dwelling is in CHRIST; his ordinances are in him; the whole of his mercy, grace, goodness, love, as displayed to poor fallen man, are all in him. And therefore to slight JESUS is to slight GOD in CHRIST; to kill an ox in sacrifice, is as if the sinner crucified the SON of GOD afresh, because he thereby intimates as if the one offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST, once for all, had not forever perfected them that are sanctified. Pause, Reader, over the solemn view, and let us learn to bless GOD, more and more for his unspeakable gift!

And oh! thou blessed, eternal, glorious JEHOVAH! give us grace to hail thee, in thy threefold character of person, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; and give us grace to accept all thy gracious

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purposes of salvation, thus brought home and unfolded to us, in and by JESUS CHRIST. Truly, LORD, we may, and do cry out, in the words of this scripture, *who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?* Shall the earth bring forth in one day? But, in truth and indeed, LORD, in that one memorable day of JESUS'S incarnation, a nation was born in him at once; and therefore shall not every poor sinner, in his new birth in CHRIST, say, Oh! LORD! thou hast indeed *brought to the birth*, and caused *to bring forth*. Thou hast caused *to bring forth*, and *not shut the womb*, oh our GOD! we will therefore rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her in her glorious King; and we will in him, and his name, milk out the breasts of her consolations, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory!

Farewell, Isaiah! farewell, thou servant of the most high GOD while we bless thy LORD and Master, because he hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, we would love thee, as the instrument of so much good to his Church and people, as it hath pleased the LORD, by thy preaching and writings, to accomplish; and in thine own words, we would say, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy GOD reigneth!* Thou art entered into his rest. Thou hast found, according to thine own prophecy, that JESUS is the rest, *wherewith he causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing.* And He that gave thee, and the Patriarchs and Prophets, faith to live and die in the full enjoyment of faith, *not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them:*

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will give us grace and faith now to be *the patient followers of them, who through faith and patience now inherit the promises!*

Oh! thou *to whom give all the Prophets witness!* Do thou, blessed LORD JESUS, give witness by thy HOLY SPIRIT in our hearts, to their word; that *seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, we may lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and that we may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto thee, the Author and finisher of our faith!* Amen.

# THE PROPHET

# *JEREMIAH*

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE are now about to enter upon the inspired writings of *Jeremiah*. This book of GOD very properly follows that of *Isaiah*; not indeed according to the order of time, for several of the other Prophets placed after Jeremiah ministered in the Church of GOD, between the period of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* in their services; but from the particular and especial nature, of their distinct commissions. *Isaiah* was directed in the view of gospel days, to bring glad tidings of good. *Jeremiah* was commissioned with tidings of evil. *Isaiah* is therefore, and not unsuitably, called the *evangelical* Prophet, and *Jeremiah* the *mournful* Prophet.

The Reader is called upon, at the very entrance of *Jeremiah's* writings, to notice his commission and authority. The LORD declared to him at his first call, that before he came forth from the womb, he had ordained him *to be a prophet unto the nations*. So that *Jeremiah's* warrant stands unquestionable. It also pleased the Great Head of the Church, to extend the labours of *Jeremiah* to a more than ordinary length. He speaks of beginning his services, in the thirteenth

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year of *Josiah*, the son of *Amon*, king of *Judah*: and we know, that those services continued to the time that *Nebuzaradan*, captain in the king of *Babylon's* army, carried away *Israel* captive to *Babylon*: a period of between forty and fifty years.

The general scope and tendency of *Jeremiah's* prophecy corresponded to the times in which he lived. The Church was then sunk indeed most awfully. And the LORD was preparing for his people the chastisement of a *seventy years* captivity. *Jeremiah* laboured therefore under such distressing views in prospect of the evil he lived to see accomplished: so that the one object of his ministry, was to call the people to repentance. Hence we find the usual strain of his sermons, is reproof and expostulation. Here and there, however, the Prophet was led by the HOLY GHOST, to speak most fully and blessedly, of the Person, Work, and Offices of him that was to come, *to bring his prisoners out of captivity, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD*.

The era of the Church, in which this blessed book of prophecy was written, seems to have been about six hundred years before the advent of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. I only detain the Reader here, as in the entrance upon our perusal of every preceding book, in calling upon him to join my

spirit in prayer, before the high throne of GOD in CHRIST, that an unction from GOD the HOLY GHOST may be upon both Writer and Reader, while going over these sacred records: that while it is promised in the Prophets, *all the children shall be taught of the LORD*; we may be proved to be the children of GOD in being taught of him. And as our ever adorable LORD, graciously marked the true evidences of divine teaching, in

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that all that were taught of the FATHER of coming to him; we may be of the happy number, who came to him, *to whom give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission Of sins.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONTENTS

*The Chapter opens with the account of Jeremiah's being called to the ministry. He is instructed by two visions. The LORD'S commands to him, and his promise to be with him.*

#### **Jeremiah 1:1**

The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that *were* in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

The Prophet opens the Chapter with his name and family. Jeremiah's name is not without signification, for it implies, being *raised by the LORD*: and he was eminently so, as the sequel of this chapter showeth. He mentions his family also and place: perhaps, by way of proof, that he was of the priesthood order. *Anathoth* was a small city or village, a little distance from Jerusalem.

#### **Jeremiah 1:2-3**

To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. (3) It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

Having given his name, and family, and place of abode, he now mentions his commission, and the time of receiving it. So that the whole period of the Prophet's ministry, like the contents of a book, is here marked in the first leaf of his writings. If the Reader will be at the pains of enquiry, he will find, that the whole period of Jeremiah's ministry was somewhat more than forty years.

### **Jeremiah 1:4-5**

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (5) Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

I have often read this Chapter with particular pleasure, and marked with much emphasis what is contained in these verses: for in them we find the most decisive testimony, to that distinguishing attribute and perfection of JEHOVAH, his foreknowledge and ordination. Who that reads these verses, can, for a moment question, the purpose, counsel, and will of the LORD? *Known unto GOD are all his works from the beginning.* And to suppose otherwise, would be to deny GOD's sovereignty and eternal wisdom. Hence our LORD, in his FATHER'S with-holding discernment from the wise and prudent, and revealing himself to babes, refers all into this one cause, as an unanswerable conclusion; *Even so FATHER, for so it seemed good in thy sight,* Matthew 11:25, 26. I beg the Reader to pause over the subject, and as he ponders the vast thought, let him ask his own heart, whether the same sovereign power that ordained *Jeremiah* for a Prophet, and *Paul* for an Apostle from the womb, hath sanctified and revealed his SON in the Reader's soul, to the purpose of

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salvation, *through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS?* Galatians 1:15, 16.

### **Jeremiah 1:6-10**

Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I *am* a child. (7) But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. (8) Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. (9) Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. (10) See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

Reader! do not fail to remark, how humbling grace is in the soul. Before the Prophet was conscious of the work wrought in him, the blessed effects were made to appear, in a lowliness suited to the mercy. *He giveth grace to the humble.* And let the Reader further observe, how the LORD removed the Prophet's fears by the sovereignty of his grace. It is remarkable, that each of the Prophets, *Isaiah Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, at their introduction into their prophetic office, were ordained by an outward visible *sign*, as well as by the inward, illuminating, and confirming grace. Isaiah 6:6, 7. Ezekiel 3:1-3. And what confidence did these gracious ordinations inspire in the minds of all? I hope the Reader will not, while looking at the ordination service of Prophets in the Old Testament, overlook and pass by the ordination of the Apostles under the New. Behold JESUS in that interesting season, when sending forth his disciples to teach and to preach in the synagogues. Luke 10:1-20. So again, after his resurrection, John 20:21, 22. So again in the moment of his departure, Luke 24:45 to the end. Matthew 28:18 to the end. And Reader! is it not so

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now? Can there be any ordination truly blessed, except JESUS commissions? Oh! that every one that goeth forth into the ministry, might know, like *Jeremiah* his warrant, and be convinced, that the same Almighty SPIRIT which sent forth Barnabas and Saul to the work, sends forth all his faithful servants now to the labouring *in the word and doctrine!* and accompanies them with his presence, Acts 13:2, 3, 4.

### **Jeremiah 1:11-16**

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. (12) Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it. (13) And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof *is* toward the north. (14) Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. (15) For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. (16) And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

The LORD was pleased, we find, both by word and by vision, to confirm the Prophet in his new appointment. And the LORD which raised up to the Prophet's mind these images, took care to instruct his mind how to interpret them, that nothing of divine teaching might fall to the ground.

### **Jeremiah 1:17-19**

Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. (18) For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the

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princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. (19) And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

How needful must faithfulness be in the service of the LORD? And where the LORD gives grace to his poor servants to be faithful, he will give strength to bear them up against all their foes. An *iron pillar* and *brasen walls*, are strong figures, to intimate, that the arrows of the enemy with all their fury will be thrown against them. But as iron pillars and brasen walls are simply for defense, and not for injury: how beautifully do those similitudes teach, that the servants of the LORD are not to strive and repel carnal attacks, with the same weapons, but to be like their Master, *who when reviled, reviled not again*. The LORD hath undertaken his servants cause, and he will recompense vengeance on his and their enemies, Deuteronomy 32:43.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let us, as we enter upon the subject of Jeremiah's ministry, and especially while we behold him thus divinely called, and divinely appointed; gather the several interesting instructions such an history furnisheth, for our own personal improvement, and mark, in what an endearing point this scripture speaks to us.

See Reader in the first place, the love of GOD over his people, in thus raising up a faithful servant, even in the worst of times, to speak of grace and mercy; when the rebellions of his people merited nothing but punishment. Behold! in the next point of view, the LORD'S predilection of *Jeremiah* and the

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blessedness of being thus, set apart as he was, for the service of the LORD from the womb. Mark, moreover, how the LORD that called him distinguished him with his favor, and what he set him apart to, he fitted him for. And lastly, fail not to observe, how the LORD undertook to carry him safely, from all his enemies, and to defend and preserve him in all his exercises.

And while we thus behold all these blessings in the case of the Prophet *Jeremiah* let us be on the lookout, that in every minute circumstance that concerns the Church of JESUS now, and the special interests of every individual believer, the LORD is still carrying on the same gracious purposes, and both ordaining and sanctifying the whole of events to his own glory and his Church's welfare.

JESUS was the great Prophet to the nations, and to our nation surely, where we trust the LORD hath a Church. Oh! that all his sent servants, did but know and feel, as *Jeremiah* knew and felt, and in the service of their LORD became more anxious to win souls than to gain a kingdom. Reader! it will be your mercy and mine, if, before we close our meditation on this sweet Chapter, we can find the LORD'S purpose concerning ourselves, as fully confirmed in grace as his was, and under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we may discover, such evident proofs of our calling and election, in all that concerns our everlasting welfare, that we may enjoy the full sense of that blessed scripture, in which JEHOVAH saith, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

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## CHAPTER 2

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*The Prophet is here entering upon his ministry. He begins with expostulation: and he carries it on, in a way of reproof and correction through the whole chapter.*

#### **Jeremiah 2:1-3**

Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (2) Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown. (3) Israel *was* holiness unto the LORD, *and* the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.

I pray the Reader to observe, the graciousness of GOD's dealings with his people, even when he is about to reprove them. He puts them in mind of their past affection, and when matters were different with them, from what they now are: and this serves to heighten to their view his grace, and the unreasonableness of their backsliding. Reader! mark how the LORD takes notice of the smallest affections of his people. What could the LORD say more sweet and gracious than what is here said: *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.* Oh! thou gracious LORD! Should any poor backslider of thine, read this blessed scripture; oh give the poor soul grace to discover herefrom, how the bowels of thy love yearn over precious souls, in their wanderings, and that thou lost remember them still. See Chap. 31:18-20.

#### **Jeremiah 2:4-8**

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Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel: (5) Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? (6) Neither said they, Where *is* the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt? (7) And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. (8) The priests said not, Where *is* the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after *things that* do not profit.

Having put his people in mind of what had passed; and given them to understand that the LORD had not forgotten the smallest tendencies of their affection towards him; he now begins to remonstrate with them for all their ingratitude and rebellion. And in order to give the greater force to his complaint, he challengeth them to show cause, if anything in him could have left them the least apology. Reader think what an aggravation it is to all our transgressions, that they are against the best of all friends, the kindest of all relations. I know not what *you* feel in the review; but for myself, I scruple not to say, that the self-loathing, I sometimes experience, in the recollection of what passeth in a fallen nature, is to me abundantly increased, from the consideration, that our offences are all directed against God. It would be impossible to offend in any single instance, had we not first, for the time, lost all reverence and affection also for the person of JESUS. Every expostulation therefore seemeth to speak in the words before us, as though JESUS stood and said; *what iniquity have you found in me, that you*

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*are gone far from me?* If JESUS thus speaks, surely it cuts to the heart.

### **Jeremiah 2:9-11**

Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead. (10) For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. (11) Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit.

Observe Reader! the LORD is still pleading. It is the day of grace, not the hour of judgment. And of all the sottish sins of Israel surely, this exceeded the whole, that after knowing the one, true, and only LORD of heaven and earth, they actually took up with idols. A thing hardly to be believed possible. Why the poor ignorant nations around, were never known to change their dunghill gods, for other dunghill gods; if Egypt worshipped the cat; they never could be prevailed upon to make an exchange for any other idol; such was their veneration from father to son. But Israel, the LORD'S chosen, the LORD'S people, and to whom the LORD had made himself known, by signs and wonders, and a mighty stretched out arm: Israel took up with dunghill gods also, and worshipped they knew not what! Oh! what a degraded state is man brought to, by the fall?

### **Jeremiah 2:12-13**

Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. (13) For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Reader! this is not the first time that we meet with such appeals to heaven, and to other parts of the inanimate creation: for if man will not hear, to whom shall respect be had? Isaiah 50:2. Deuteronomy 4:6. But do not overlook the LORD'S tenderness for his people, in the very moment of charging them with such wonderful folly. The LORD calls them *his people* still. Precious thought! In JESUS they are beheld, and in JESUS beloved. Romans 11:28. The figure of a cistern, and that a *broken* cistern, which never can hold water, is uncommonly striking, by way of showing the folly of taking up with any creature comfort, to the forgetfulness of the infinite and eternally satisfying fulness of the Creator. To leave GOD in CHRIST, and to take confidence in man, are two mother evils, which bring forth thousands from their womb.

### **Jeremiah 2:14-30**

*Is* Israel a servant? *is* he a homeborn *slave*? why is he spoiled? (15) The young lions roared upon him, *and* yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant. (16) Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head. (17) Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way? (18) And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? (19) Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that *it is* an evil *thing* and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear *is* not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts. (20) For of old time I have broken thy yoke, *and* burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. (21) Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? (22) For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, *yet* thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD. (23) How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way

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in the valley, know what thou hast done: *thou art* a swift dromedary traversing her ways; (24) A wild ass used to the wilderness, *that* snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her. (25) Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go. (26) As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, (27) Saying to a stock, Thou *art* my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. (28) But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for *according to* the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. (29) Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD. (30) In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.

I include all these verses under one view, as the doctrine is one and the same, though varied with several similitudes. But the whole is intended to show, to what a degenerate state the Church was reduced; how the rebellion of the people naturally became their own correction; and yet, in the midst of all, the LORD still watched over Israel for good, and although suffering them to be cast down, would not cast them off. Isaiah 27:2-5.

### **Jeremiah 2:31-37**

O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee? (32) Can a maid forget her ornaments, *or* a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number. (33) Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways. (34) Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these. (35) Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent,

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surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. (36) Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. (37) Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.

Never surely, was there afforded a more lively instance of the gracious purpose of GOD'S unalterable love to his people, than what this Chapter affords, from beginning to end. The LORD sends the Prophet in the opening, to tell the people of GOD'S remembrance of Israel's first-love: and in the close of the Chapter, the LORD tells them, that though they shall not prosper in their confidence, yet he thereby intimates, that grace shall at length prevail. Through the whole, and every part of the prophet's sermon, we discern, with clear marks all along, that the LORD hath mercy in store, and *will not cast away his people whom he foreknew*, Romans 11:1-5.

## REFLECTIONS

PAUSE my soul over the Prophet's sermon, and remark how graciously the LORD pleads with his people for their good; how reluctant the LORD seemeth to give them up, and with what gentle expostulations he reasons with them, on his patience and their determined obstinacy.

Look through the history of the Church then, and look to the Church now: and ask and see, whether we are in better circumstances than they, or more deserving? Did ever Zion languish more than in the present hour? Were ever the interests of JESUS less regarded? Where shall we direct our attention to find any that prefer the prosperity of the Church

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above their chief joy? My soul! what sayeth thine own personal experience to this statement? While thou lamentest in secret, the little conquests of JESUS'S grace in thine own heart; canst thou say, as one of old did, in beholding the sorrowful state of the Church around thee: *rivers of waters run down mine eyes because men keep not thy law. Alas! who is grieved for the affliction of Joseph.*

Oh! thou great Head of thy Church, and of thy people! Oh! LORD JESUS! take to thyself thine own glorious cause, and come forth by thy HOLY SPIRIT, in the midst of thy Church! Remember LORD when *Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the first-fruits of his increase.* And as all Israel's holiness was in thee, and is in thee forever: do thou LORD stir up to thyself an holy zeal, in the hearts of thy people. Thou knowest LORD, that were we *to wash with nitre and take much soap,* still would *our iniquity be marked before thee. Take away therefore LORD all our iniquity, and receive us graciously, and turn to thyself a people with one consent, to call on the LORD: so shall thy name be praised from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same; and the name of our LORD JESUS shall be great among the Gentiles.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 3

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*This Chapter is a continuation of the same sermon as the former. Added to what was there said, in a way of expostulation, the LORD is pleased to follow it up, with invitations, and of the most gracious nature.*

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**Jeremiah 3:1-3**

They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. (2) Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. (3) Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

It is the uniform custom of human life, that, if a woman prove unfaithful to her husband, and the thing be notorious and publicly known, by her open departure from him, never is she permitted to return to him again. There are none such compassionate husbands among men as to allow it. But, saith the LORD, with me things shall not be so. I will receive my Church, though she hath set up her idols in every place of her iniquity. Reader! do pause I beseech you, and admire the abundant grace of the LORD. In all things, *his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts*. JESUS indeed seems to take occasion from the unworthiness of our poor fallen nature, to display and magnify the riches of his grace. Isaiah 55:8, 9. Romans 5:20, 21. The *Arabian* in the wilderness is a fine image, to illustrate the earnestness with which Israel had revolted from the LORD. It had been, not the casual inadvertency of temptation, but the deliberate purpose and contrivance of the heart.

**Jeremiah 3:4-5**

Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou *art* the guide of my youth? (5) Will he reserve *his anger* for ever? will he keep *it* to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.

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This is a most beautiful and gracious observation of the LORD'S, to show, what might be reasonably expected, from the overwhelming kindness of the LORD. When grace becomes more abundant, it overpowers our sin, disarms the sinner, and constrains him, as the Prodigal in the parable, to return to his Father. Luke 15:17-19.

### **Jeremiah 3:6-10**

The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen *that* which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. (7) And I said after she had done all these *things*, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw *it*. (8) And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. (9) And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. (10) And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.

It should seem, that this is the opening of a new sermon; perhaps it was preached at a different period from the former: but the subject is the same. A sad account is given of both kingdoms, Judah and Jerusalem. The Reader will not fail to recollect, that the division of the nation continued as it had long been, at this time, when the Prophet Jeremiah exercised his ministry. Ten tribes had revolted from the house of David, and became formed into a separate kingdom. But in one point they both agreed: namely, in their rebellion against God. How graciously the LORD takes occasion from the treachery of the one, and the backsliding of the other, to recommend the exceeding riches of his love and forbearance. The figure of a

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divorce is uncommonly striking, and it should seem, that the LORD was pleased with it, both to represent his love and union with our nature; and the incorrigible hardness and insensibility of the human heart. *Hosea* that had been prophesying to the Church some ages before, dwelt very largely in representing Israel's unworthiness, under the same figure. *Hosea* Chapter 1, 2, and 3.

### **Jeremiah 3:11-14**

And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. (12) Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; *and* I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I *am* merciful, saith the LORD, *and* I will not keep *anger* for ever. (13) Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. (14) Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Nothing can more highly illustrate the riches of grace, than what is here said, on the subject of divine mercy. Israel was about to go into Babylon, and there the Prophet is particularly directed to proclaim the invitation of mercy. The LORD had made a provision for the recovery of his people in all ages: for he had long before caused it to be recorded, that in all places, whether they were scattered for their sins, they should call to remembrance their trespasses, and if there their unhumiliated heart then accepted the punishment of their iniquity, that then the LORD would remember his covenant, and have mercy upon them. Leviticus 26:40, 41, 42. And do not Reader, for a moment lose sight of the wonderful condescension expressed by the LORD, in acknowledging his alliance with his people.

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Yes! JESUS hath indeed married our nature, And will not hate his own flesh. Oh the unequalled grace and mercy, of our glorious EMMANUEL! Isaiah 54:5. Ephesians 5:25-32.

### **Jeremiah 3:15-18**

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. (16) And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit *it*; neither shall *that* be done any more. (17) At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. (18) In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.

Reader! doth not your heart go forth, At the reading of those blessed promises, with an earnestness of desire, that the LORD would fulfil them, and give his people pastors indeed according to his own heart! Oh! that the LORD would send forth faithful, disinterested ministers, in his Churches, and among his people. If this were once the case, Judah and Israel, Jews and Gentiles, would walk together, and all would be of one heart and of one mind, in the service and fellowship of the LORD JESUS! Galatians 3:26 to the end.

### **Jeremiah 3:19-21**

But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me. (20) Surely *as* a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. (21) A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping *and* supplications of the children of Israel: for

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they have perverted their way, *and* they have forgotten the LORD their God.

A difficulty here seemeth to have arisen in the views of such unspeakable mercy; how shall the LORD, consistent with his divine perfections, take home to his favor sinners so ungracious? And none but GOD himself can remove the difficulty. The privilege of adoption in CHRIST, is the only possible means by which the LORD can pardon sin, and receive the sinner. This JEHOVAH hath provided. And he that hath provided the means, will take care it shall be effectual to the end. Reader! think of our adoption privileges, in CHRIST JESUS, and bless the glorious author of them. Galatians 4:6. Romans 8:14--17.

### **Jeremiah 3:22-25**

Return, ye backsliding children, *and* I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou *art* the LORD our God. (23) Truly in vain *is salvation hoped for* from the hills, *and from* the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God *is* the salvation of Israel. (24) For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. (25) We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

The LORD still causeth his grace to triumph over the unworthiness of his Israel, until at length, the heart is subdued and overcome. What a sweet and blessed conclusion is made to the subject, and to the chapter together! And what it was with Israel then, so is it with all the praying seed of Israel now when CHRIST is seen, and known, and felt by his HOLY SPIRIT in the heart, such will be the language of every child of GOD: *truly in vain is salvation looked for elsewhere: in*

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*the LORD shall one say, have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that believe in him shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. Isaiah 45:24, Acts 4:12.*

## REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! how can I read in this Chapter the unfaithfulness of Israel, in departing from thee, who hast been the kind and loving husband of thy Church forever; without calling to my recollection my baseness and unfaithfulness also. Surely thou art, as, thou hast said in this Chapter, married to us, not only in the assumption of our nature, but in the particular and personal union with every individual soul of thine, whom by thy SPIRIT thou hast made *willing in the day of thy power*. And notwithstanding the lowness of our birth, our loathsomeness by nature, and unworthiness by sin! still hath the LORD of life and glory made us one with himself, that we might be *heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST*. And is it possible for me to call to mind, that after such unheard of condescension on the part of the SON of GOD, as to marry our nature, and to unite every individual person of his people to himself, that, I like a treacherous wife, departing from her husband, should depart from thee? Oh! LORD! what an awful state must our nature be reduced to by the fall! And doth my GOD and Saviour, notwithstanding these horrible provocations, doth he really say: though *thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me, saith the LORD* Oh! for grace, to feel the full influence of such constraining love, and to cry out with an

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earnestness suited to the affection: *behold we come unto thee, for thou art the LORD our GOD!*

And do thou LORD! fulfil all those sweet and gracious promises, Do thou heal all our backslidings: do thou do, as thou hast said, take us *one of a city, and two of a family, and bring us to Zion*. Put a spirit of adoption into our hearts, O LORD; and both provide the means for our recovery by grace, and give us strength to make use of them, that we may henceforth call thee Father, and thou mayest put us among the Children. And LORD! let that gracious word of thine be accomplished; let our Pastors be of thine own giving, and men after thine own heart; that we may be indeed fed with knowledge and understanding. Precious LORD JESUS! send to us the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter, to teach us, and guide us, and to lead us, into all truth. Then shall we indeed know, under his divine teaching, that thou alone art *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof* Amen.

## CHAPTER 4

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*This Chapter, in the opening, is an address to Israel. The subject then relates to Judah and Jerusalem. Both are to one and the same amount; namely, GOD'S gracious call to his people, to return to him, from all their backslidings.*

#### **Jeremiah 4:1-2**

If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove. (2) And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth,

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in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

Is there not here a sweet breaking out, in pointing to Him who is the LORD our righteousness? For in whom are the nations to be blessed, but in JESUS; or in whom can they glory? I pray the Reader to compare the passage with those scriptures, and then judge for himself. Psalm 72:17. Isaiah 65:16. Jeremiah 23:1 Corinthians 1:30.

### **Jeremiah 4:3-9**

For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. (4) Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings. (5) Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities. (6) Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction. (7) The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; *and* thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant. (8) For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us. (9) And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, *that* the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.

The Prophet here opens his commission to the men of Judah and Jerusalem; and in the prospect of the Babylonish captivity, now hastening, admonisheth them to seek the LORD. The Prophet, like a faithful preacher, dwells upon the same subject, as the LORD preached to him, at his ordination. See Chap. 1:14 to the end. The Lion from the thicket is a strong

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figure, to set forth the fury of the Enemy. And when the LORD gives the authority, what a roaring Lion indeed, is every foe. Precious JESUS! thou art the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and while thou art for us, more are they, than all that can be against us. Revelation 5:5. 2 Kings 6:15-17. If the heart of all men fail in their own strength: those whom thou hast made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER, will faint not, whilst thou art their strength and their portion forever. Revelation 1:6.

### **Jeremiah 4:10**

Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

I read this verse alone, in order, by praying over it, to seek instruction from the LORD, for the right apprehension of it. *Jeremiah* could not mean to charge the LORD, with either the cause or the consequence of the people's deception. The lying prophets, such as *Hananiah* (see Chapter 28.) by preaching peace, had deceived them: and as he presumed to come to the people in the LORD'S name, as well as Jeremiah, they might be said in this sense, to be deceived by the LORD. And if for their rebellion, the LORD gave them up to believe a lie; though the deception was their own, yet GOD'S judgment was in it. Certain it is, that there is no *evil in the city, but the LORD hath done it*; that is, permitted it. Amos 3:6. But while the sovereignty of the LORD is still the same, the evil of transgression is the sinner's, James 1:13. Ezekiel 14:1-11.

### **Jeremiah 4:11-18**

At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of

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my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse, (12) *Even* a full wind from those *places* shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them. (13) Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots *shall be* as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled. (14) O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? (15) For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim. (16) Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, *that* watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. (17) As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD. (18) Thy way and thy doings have procured these *things* unto thee; this *is* thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

Under those strong images, of a dry wind and a full wind, and a whirlwind, are set forth the judgments of the LORD. But under all, I pray the Reader to observe, how the LORD fully proves, that the evil is in his people, the remedy is in the LORD. Hosea 13:9.

### **Jeremiah 4:19-22**

My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. (20) Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, *and* my curtains in a moment. (21) How long shall I see the standard, *and* hear the sound of the trumpet? (22) For my people *is* foolish, they have not known me; they *are* sottish children, and they have none understanding: they *are* wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

I hope the Reader will pause over these verses, and remark the concern of the Prophet. And when he hath done this, let him ask himself what ought to be the concern of the LORD's

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prophets: I mean his ministers in the present hour, over the coming, and to come, distresses of our Zion. Was there ever a period in history, so much like the one Jeremiah here complains of, as the present? Did ever Jeremiah's prophecy suit the Church more than now? And is it not a pity, yea, a sad concern, that so many are at ease in Zion, while her best interests, and the glorious gospel of JESUS, are so little regarded. See Joel 1:13. Amos 6:1-6.

### **Jeremiah 4:23-31**

I beheld the earth, and, lo, *it was* without form, and void; and the heavens, and they *had* no light. (24) I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. (25) I beheld, and, lo, *there was* no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. (26) I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place *was* a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, *and* by his fierce anger. (27) For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. (28) For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken *it*, I have purposed *it*, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it. (29) The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city *shall be* forsaken, and not a man dwell therein. (30) And *when* thou *art* spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; *thy* lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life. (31) For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, *and* the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, *that* bewaileth herself, *that* spreadeth her hands, *saying*, Woe *is* me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

There is somewhat uncommonly solemn and striking, when the LORD by his servants, as in many parts of scripture, calls upon the heavenly bodies, and the inanimate parts of nature,

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to lament by their appearances, the degeneracy and rebellion of his people. The weeping of the clouds, and the blushing of the sun, are strong figures to this amount. Isaiah 1:2. Deuteronomy 32:1. What a gracious and affectionate appeal, the LORD makes in the close of this Chapter. *When thou art spoiled what wilt thou do?* Oh! for grace, that sinners in the present hour would lay this question of the LORD'S to the heart, until the same cry as the man of Tarsus issued from the heart; LORD! *what wouldst thou have me to do?* Acts 9:6.

## REFLECTIONS

STAND still my soul, and ponder over this Chapter, and look up for the divine teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that none of the words here contained may fall to the ground. Were there ever more striking evidences given of the grace and long-suffering of the LORD? Were there ever more decisive testimonies manifested, of the obduracy and impenitency of man? May we not take up the LORD'S own words, and say: *What could have been done more to his vineyard, that he did not unto it?* Precious LORD JESUS! oh for some gracious accompaniments of thy HOLY SPIRIT, with thine holy word in the present hour, that thine Israel now, may never despise the riches of thy goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, but know and feel that the goodness of GOD *leadeth to repentance.*

Ye ministers of my GOD! learn from this statement of sorrow in the Prophet, to put on bowels of mercies, and to feel true soul concern for the present desolations of the Church of JESUS. Blind Watchmen, and blind Guides cannot become interested for the saving knowledge of CHRIST, in others, who

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are destitute of it themselves. But do ye who know JESUS, unceasingly tell of his preciousness to all around. Let Zion which is so dear to JESUS, be dear to you. And as you know that her name is engraven on the palms of *his* hands: let her interests be always uppermost in your heart. Hath JESUS taught you? oh commend him as a Teacher to all that are ignorant. Hath JESUS saved you from your sins? commend him as a Saviour to other poor sinners. Hath JESUS made you willing in the day of his power? pray to Him that the day of his power may be manifested in many a heart. Zion will again flourish in the church of JESUS if the love of JESUS, and a regard for the interests of his Church, flourisheth in the hearts of his ministers and people. Compassionate Redeemer! let it no longer be said of any of those who call themselves ministers of the gospel: *all seek their own, not the things which are JESUS CHRIST'S.*

## CHAPTER 5

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*The same subject is prosecuted through this Chapter, as formed the contents of the former. Here is the call of God upon a degenerate people, joined with gracious promises and invitations of mercy.*

#### **Jeremiah 5:1-2**

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. (2) And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely.

If we read these verses with a gospel comment, the amount of them will be similar to what the Apostle made on one of the Psalms of David. See Psalm 14:2, 3. Romans 3:10-26. But Reader! cannot you and I find a man that hath executed righteousness and judgment in the earth? Is there not *one* man in this our spiritual Sodom, to stand in the gap, and turn away the wrath of heaven? Pause. *What think ye of CHRIST?* Oh! thou whose name is *Wonderful!* Yea blessed JESUS, thou art he *whom thy brethren shall praise, and all thy father's children bow down before thee.* Genesis 49:8. Genesis 18:22 to the end. Isaiah 9:6. Hosea 2:16.

### **Jeremiah 5:3-5**

O LORD, *are* not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, *but* they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. (4) Therefore I said, Surely these *are* poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, *nor* the judgment of their God. (5) I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, *and* the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, *and* burst the bonds.

Was there ever a more decisive testimony than what these verses afford, of the universal corruption, ignorance and ruined state of all men, as well rich as poor, and which the fall hath induced in the circumstances of mankind? *All have sinned, and come short of GOD's glory.* Romans 3:19.

### **Jeremiah 5:6-9**

Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, *and* a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, *and* their backslidings are increased. (7) How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have

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forsaken me, and sworn by *them that are* no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. (8) They were *as* fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. (9) Shall I not visit for these *things?* saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

How striking the expostulation? How unanswerably just the appeal? Do not fail to observe, Reader, that the LORD doth not simply speak of one nation, or of another, but it is *this* nation, *this* people, this very seed; Israel, the LORD'S Israel. And do not the words come in with peculiar, yea personal direction, to our Israel, in the present hour? Did they ever suit the Church, since the days of Jeremiah, more pointedly than now?

### **Jeremiah 5:10-13**

Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they *are* not the LORD'S. (11) For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD. (12) They have belied the LORD, and said, *It is* not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine: (13) And the prophets shall become wind, and the word *is* not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.

Mark Reader, I pray you, in those days as now, how the LORD mingles compassion with punishment. *Destroy*, saith the LORD: but make not *a full end*. *There is a blessing in it*. Isaiah 65:8. Oh! how sweet to consider, to what cause the salvation was then, as now, referred.

### **Jeremiah 5:14-19**

Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. (15) Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it *is* a mighty nation, it *is* an ancient nation, a nation whose language

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thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. (16) Their quiver *is* as an open sepulchre, they *are* all mighty men. (17) And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. (18) Nevertheless in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you. (19) And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these *things* unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land *that is* not yours.

Reader! do as the Psalmist did, after reading these verses, and say, *I will sing of mercy and judgment*. And let your song as his was, be dedicated to the LORD: for to the LORD alone the praise and glory is due. Psalm 101:1. And do not overlook the sweet *nevertheless* the LORD puts in. Yes: there is this blessed *nevertheless* in the Covenant. In JESUS his people are pardoned, though as JESUS'S children, justly corrected for their sins. The LORD hereby proclaims his holiness, and his utter displeasure against sin, while sparing the sinner. Psalm 89:30-35.

### **Jeremiah 5:20-24**

Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying, (21) Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not: (22) Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? (23) But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. (24) Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

Reader! observe how graciously the LORD goeth on to expostulate, and to reason with his people. Both Israel and Judah shall hear. And by what strong appeals from his omnipotency, he calls them to consideration. But alas! until the LORD that calls, gives the grace, to hear, all preaching is in vain. What the LORD hath here said of the sea, and the waves, and the appointed weeks of harvest, is in reference to his Covenant after the flood: to which we of the present hour, can set our seal, as well as those in the days of Jeremiah, Genesis 8:22.

### **Jeremiah 5:25-29**

Your iniquities have turned away these *things*, and your sins have withholden good *things* from you. (26) For among my people are found wicked *men*: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. (27) As a cage is full of birds, so *are* their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. (28) They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. (29) Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

The complaint in those verses ends with the same solemn and just enquiry, as we had before. I have often thought, and I see no reason to alter the sentiment, that never was there a scripture more suited to the present times than this; and never was there any period of the Church more parallel than the days of Jeremiah to the opening of the nineteenth century. in numberless events going on, we may hear a voice of grace, accompanying seasons of exercise, the LORD making as it were this enquiry. Another Prophet is found addressing the Church much in the same way. Hosea 11:7-9.

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**Jeremiah 5:30-31**

A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; (31) The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it* so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

Pause Reader over this horrible thing, as it was found in the days of Jeremiah: and then ask, if the annals of the Church's history, hath ever heard or seen the like. Are there any Prophets or preachers prophesying falsely now, in holding up the merit of good works, and speaking peace, when there is no peace, to unawakened, unregenerated sinners? Are there any such to be found, who rule in the minds of men by such false allurements to ruin; and are cherished by them to their hurt? And are those doctrines false and ruinous as they are, yet so delightful to their minds, that they love them, and would hate every one that would attempt to undeceive them?—Let these points be considered as they ought. And if things are found to be so, as that they are in numberless instances: how pointed and unanswerable is the question that closeth all: *what will ye do in the end thereof?* What can all such do, but lay down in sorrow. From all false guides, and errors, and delusions, which tend to fill the mind with vanity, and hide CHRIST from the soul; *good LORD deliver us!* Isaiah 50:11.

**REFLECTIONS**

MY soul! seek and take relief from the sad relation of things in this Chapter, in what it holds forth of the general, yea, universal corruption of men and things both of prophet, priest, and people: in the view of Him, who is indeed the Holy One, the LORD our righteousness. Behold! thy GOD and FATHER

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hath said, that if a man can be found that seeketh the truth and executeth judgment the LORD will pardon the iniquity of his people. Go then my soul, go to thy GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, and tell him that JEHOVAH himself first found Him, and thou hast found One also, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens! Tell him (for thy GOD and FATHER loveth to hear of Him and his dear name) that he is all this and more, and not only so in himself, but so to all his people. Then plead both JESUS'S righteousness, blood, and sacrifice, as the sure means of thy acceptance, and the Father's own authority in appointing the same: and this will be to find pardon; mercy, and peace, in the rich salvation by JESUS CHRIST. Oh! the blessedness of being found in him, who is one with us, and who was made *sin and a curse for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.*

And while my soul thou findest relief from the sins and trespasses, both within thee and without thee, in such views of the LORD JESUS; see to it, that thou art humbled to the dust, under a sense of the crying sins of Zion all around thee. Surely, never did Zion lay lower, than in the present hour! Never was Zion in more desolate and languishing circumstances! Oh! that the LORD would take to himself his own great name and power, and go forth, as *a mighty man, and stir up jealousy like a man of war.* Precious JESUS! the cause is thine, the work is thine, and the glory thine. Oh! then, go forth conquering and to conquer, and turn *the hearts of the father's to the children, and the children to the father's:* yea, let all the people praise thee, O LORD, that thou mayest

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never visit in indignation, nor take vengeance *of such a nation as this*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 6

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*This Chapter is as the former, and but a continuation of the same sermon. It contains the LORD'S expostulation with his people for their sins and transgressions.*

#### **Jeremiah 6:1**

O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.

There is somewhat particular, and worth notice in this personal direction to *Benjamin*. Distinguishing mercies are sweet mercies. *Beth-haccerem* means *the house of vineyards*. The Church is called, *a vineyard of red wine*. Isaiah 27:1, 2. I do not say as much, but I would humbly ask, may not the expression without violence be supposed to refer to CHRIST as the defense?

#### **Jeremiah 6:2-9**

I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate *woman*. (3) The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch *their* tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place. (4) Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out. (5) Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces. (6) For thus

hath the LORD of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this *is* the city to be visited; she *is* wholly oppression in the midst of her. (7) As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually *is* grief and wounds. (8) Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited. (9) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grapegatherer into the baskets.

I venture to think, that if we read these verses with an eye to the Church in JESUS, they will be found very interesting. Who is the speaker here, that likens Zion to a comely and delicate woman? May it not be JESUS? And doth not JESUS frequently do so? See Song Of Solomon 1:8-15. Song Of Solomon 2:2. Ezekiel 16:14. The afflictions and exercises, which are threatened, are all suited to the Church. Hosea 2 throughout.

### **Jeremiah 6:10-15**

To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear *is* uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. (11) Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with *him that is* full of days. (12) And their houses shall be turned unto others, *with their* fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD. (13) For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one *is* given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. (14) They have healed also the hurt *of the daughter* of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace. (15) Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

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All these are so many gracious expostulations suited to the state of the Church, in all her seasons of affliction. I need not enlarge on them. They express that deadness, that leanness of soul, that bondage, and indifference to ordinance; the children of GOD, are at times but too well acquainted with. See Song Of Solomon 5:2, 3. Revelation 3:2.

### **Jeremiah 6:16**

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*.

This is a beautiful verse, read with an eye to CHRIST: who is both the *new and the living way*; and also the *old path* to dwell in, being *the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world*. JESUS CHRIST *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. And who but JESUS is the rest of the soul? See all those scriptures. John 14:6. Revelation 13:8. Hebrews 13:8. Matthew 11:28-30. Isaiah 28:12. Psalm 116:7.

### **Jeremiah 6:17-21**

Also I set watchmen over you, *saying*, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. (18) Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what *is* among them. (19) Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, *even* the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it. (20) To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me. (21) Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.

In what strong terms doth the LORD set forth the folly of outward things, as the incense and the cane, when there was no inward offering of the heart. What are all acts of religion, when there is no regeneration? Isaiah 1:11-17.

### **Jeremiah 6:22-30**

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. (23) They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they *are* cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion. (24) We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail. (25) Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy *and* fear *is* on every side. (26) O daughter of my people, gird *thee* with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, *as for* an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us. (27) I have set thee *for* a tower *and* a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way. (28) They *are* all grievous revolvers, walking with slanders: *they are* brass and iron; they *are* all corrupters. (29) The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. (30) Reprobate silver shall *men* call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.

The last of these verses throws a light on the whole passage, by way of explanation, on the principles of the gospel of CHRIST. All men are as reprobate silver, until the Great Refiner and Purifier of silver hath brought them through the furnace of his regenerating and renewing SPIRIT. All in themselves are forever rejected, until chosen and accepted in JESUS. Ephesians 1:4-7.

## REFLECTIONS

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LORD JESUS! look upon thy Church, thy vineyard, thy Benjamin, beloved: and place her in times of danger, in the *Beth-haccerem* of safety in thyself. Remember thou dear LORD, what thou hast said, and what thou hast promised, and say still: *I the LORD do keep her. I will water her every moment, lest any hurt her. I will keep her night and day.*

And surely thou blessed LORD! if thou hast likened thy Church to a comely and delicate woman: it must be so from being comely in thine eyes, from the comeliness thou hast put upon her. Precious LORD JESUS! though I am in myself black, yea, full of spots; but if comely in thine eyes, it is thy robe of righteousness hath made me so. Oh! for grace to eye thee, and love thee, and to be living upon thee, and to thee as the LORD my righteousness!

Do thou, Almighty Refiner and Purifier of thy Church and people: sit by me as my Refiner, that men may no longer call me reprobate silver, when thou hast refined me as silver is refined, and tried me as gold is tried. Oh! LORD GOD! by the fire of thy blessed SPIRIT, consuming all the dross of my corrupt affections, and with thy special influences refining and purging away all the seam of a nature foul and spotted, do thou so cleanse me for thyself and thy glory, that I may offer to my LORD an offering in righteousness, and be so purified like the sons of Levi, to be among thy priests, in thy salvation forever!

## CHAPTER 7

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*Here seems to be the opening of a new Sermon of the Prophet's: but the same subject. The Prophet reproves Judah, and admonisheth to return to the LORD.*

### **Jeremiah 7:1-7**

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, (2) Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all *ye of* Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. (3) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. (4) Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, *are* these. (5) For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; (6) *If* ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: (7) Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

It appears by the subject of the Prophet's sermon, that the men of Judah, while destitute of vital godliness, were much taken up with the form of it: and though without the love of GOD in their heart, prided themselves in belonging to the temple of the LORD. Reader! they did that which men of no religion have in all ages been much disposed to do, satisfied themselves with the outside forms of religion. And this the LORD calls *lying words*. What an awful delusion! To be fancying ourselves something, when in reality we are nothing. Such the LORD JESUS hath described concerning the Church of *Laodicea*. Happy would it have been had this spirit of delusion died with the departure of the *Laodiceans* See Revelation 3:14-17.

### **Jeremiah 7:8-15**

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Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. (9) Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; (10) And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? (11) Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD. (12) But go ye now unto my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. (13) And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; (14) Therefore will I do unto *this* house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. (15) And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, *even* the whole seed of Ephraim.

From what is said in these verses of men talking as if delivered to do evil, it should seem, that there were in the Prophet's days, as well as in ours, persons who took occasion from the doctrine of free grace, to contend for the heresy of fatality: and by reducing men to the character of mere machines, would do away all the consequences of evil. But as this is levelled against the sovereignty of GOD, so is it refuted by the word of GOD. All men are by nature disposed since the fall, not delivered, but disposed to evil: and grace only it is that makes the whole difference between one man and another. To tell GOD therefore, in justification or apology for ourselves, that we are delivered to do evil, is to charge GOD foolishly, and to make him the Author of our sins. The LORD in a fine strain, most plainly and fully refutes it. Is my house, are my ordinances, or my word, are these things ministers to this purpose? Nay, do you not remember, how little respect was had to place, or person, that even *Shiloh*, I forsook, and

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retired from it, in consequence of the corruptions of the people, in times of worship. See 1 Samuel 4:4-11. Reader! think how truly deplorable that state must be, which is trusting to a name to live, while virtually dead before God?

### **Jeremiah 7:16-19**

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee. (17) Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? (18) The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. (19) Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: *do they* not *provoke* themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

Here is a very solemn scripture indeed, in which the LORD forbids his servant even to pray for the people. And there is another solemn scripture suitable to be read together, Ezekiel 16:42. When the LORD commands his faithful servant not to pray for sinners: and when the LORD ceaseth to correct, punishment is not far off; LORD keep us from these sore judgments!

### **Jeremiah 7:20-30**

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched. (21) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. (22) For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: (23) But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. (24) But they hearkened not, nor inclined their

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ear, but walked in the counsels *and* in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. (25) Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*: (26) Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. (27) Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. (28) But thou shalt say unto them, This *is* a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth. (29) Cut off thine hair, *O Jerusalem*, and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. (30) For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

I pause, not to interrupt the Reader in the progress of these verses, they are all to the same amount as the former. How pathetically the Prophet mourns the obstinacy of his people! Surely ministers ought to have tender feelings of compassion for the state of sinners.

### **Jeremiah 7:31-34**

And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded *them* not, neither came it into my heart. (32) Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. (33) And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray *them* away. (34) Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

*Tophet* had been a remarkable place on several occasions. It was called *Tophet* because it had been a place of slaughter. And it had been a charnel house, or sepulchre for burying in; and also a place of sacrifice. See Joshua 15:8. 2 Kings 23:10. Isaiah 30:33. Psalm 78:60. The close of the Chapter is very affecting. There can be no cause for spiritual joy where the voice of the Bridegroom is not heard in his Church. His absence makes a gloom, let the surrounding circumstances otherwise be what they may.

## REFLECTIONS

I PASS by every other consideration in this Chapter (though there are many which would be highly profitable to regard) to attend to one, yet more eminently striking, suggested in meeting that wonderful word, *Shiloh*, which I never meet with in the holy volume, without having my whole soul led to the contemplation of Him from whom it is derived. Yea! blessed JESUS! when I consider thee as the *Shiloh*, the *Deliverer*, the *Saviour* of thy people; thou art increasingly dear, and increasingly precious, to be beheld, and in these seasons more especially, when thy immense value becomes more striking, from the view of profligacy and corruption all around. And though places, or persons, derive no sanctity, unless from thee, yet the *Shiloh* will be forever the blessedness of his redeemed, and their portion forever.

While I meet with this glorious and distinguishing name, *Shiloh*, but once in the whole book of GOD, when spoken of a Person, and that Person CHRIST, and this in the prophetic language of the dying patriarch Jacob: yet when found elsewhere, and connected with it, the recollection of Him in

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his glorious character, as the *Shiloh*; surely it makes the heart of the believer glad, and fills the soul with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let me never hear of *Shiloh*, or read of *Shiloh* without holy joy. JESUS will be the *Shiloh*, to gather all his redeemed unto himself, that *where he is, there they shall be also*. And what though *Tophet* is ordained of old, and his believers must pass through a valley of humiliation, more than that of the son of *Hinnom*: yet JESUS will be with them. *Shiloh* will bring them *through*, and bring them *out*; and bring them *in*, to his everlasting kingdom. Hail thou glorious *Shiloh*! to thee, shall *the gathering of the people be!*

## CHAPTER 8

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*The Prophet is going on with the same Sermon, in the same strain and on the same subject. The Chapter is made up of reproof and lamentation.*

#### **Jeremiah 8:1-3**

At that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves: (2) And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped: they shall not be gathered, nor be buried; they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth. (3) And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

It is more than probable, that the ransacking of the sepulchres of the kings of Israel and Judah by the enemy, was more in their view to find treasure, than to show contempt. David's grave we are told by an ancient historian, *Hicarnus*, had three thousand talents of gold and silver in it. But what designs soever the enemy had; the LORD'S overruling it, was for punishment. What could have been more humbling, or more distressing! And indeed we are told the effect wrought by it, was dreadful? so that death rather than life, became the wish of the people. Reader! let us learn from it, how awful it must be, to have GOD for our enemy? When he permits the enemy to govern; alas! how truly tyrannical they govern!

### **Jeremiah 8:4-7**

Moreover thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; Shall they fall, and not arise? shall he turn away, and not return? (5) Why *then* is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. (6) I hearkened and heard, *but* they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. (7) Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.

Was there ever a more beautiful figure chosen to depict the extreme folly of the human understanding, than in the contrast here drawn between the inconsiderateness of man, and the thoughtfulness of the birds of passage. How stated, how regular, how constant, to the season of emigration, are those fowls of the heavens? But poor fallen senseless man, never of himself seeketh the change of climate from the

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perishing things of time and sense, to the everlasting love and mercy in CHRIST JESUS!

### **Jeremiah 8:8-22**

How do ye say, We *are* wise, and the law of the LORD *is* with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he *it*; the pen of the scribes *is* in vain. (9) The wise *men* are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom *is* in them? (10) Therefore will I give their wives unto others, *and* their fields to them that shall inherit *them*: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. (11) For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace. (12) Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. (13) I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: *there shall be* no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and *the things that* I have given them shall pass away from them. (14) Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD. (15) We looked for peace, but no good *came*; *and* for a time of health, and behold trouble! (16) The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein. (17) For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which *will not be* charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the LORD. (18) *When* I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart *is* faint in me. (19) Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: *is* not the LORD in Zion? *is* not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, *and* with strange vanities? (20) The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. (21) For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. (22) *Is there* no balm in Gilead; *is there* no physician

there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

I bring the whole of this beautiful Chapter, from this verse to the end into one view, for the sake of shortness, and from necessity; but otherwise nothing could be more desirable than to dwell upon each verse. Taken in one mass, it contains the gracious expostulation of the LORD, with his people: blessed as they were, with every means, but destitute of the desired end. And how beautiful the Chapter closeth. *Gilead*, was a place remarkable in the land for loveliness, and for health and fertility (see Jeremiah 22:6.) and therefore the question becomes the more striking, as it was intended: *Is there no balm in Gilead: no Physician there?* Reader! spiritualize the passage, and the beauty of it will still be more blessed. There is balm in Gilead, and there is a Physician there. For JESUS'S blood and righteousness is an everlasting, never failing balm: and JESUS himself is there an Almighty, All-present, and All-sufficient Physician, whereby all the diseased in our nature may have in him an healing. If it be asked, why then are we not recovered? JESUS himself answereth; *ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* John 5:40. Here is the cause. The evil is in man, not in God. Sinners reject the counsel of God against their own souls, and refuse to hear *the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely!*

## REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD my soul, from the perusal of this Chapter, what a poor, ignorant, unthinking, and improvident creature is man! The birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, do, by instinct, what man by reason, now in his fallen state doth not

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do. If the winter approacheth, the swallow seeks a warmer climate. If a storm falls, the cattle flee to the barn, or to the hedge for shelter. But neither the winter of life, nor the storm of threatened judgments, prevail upon the sinner, void of grace, *to flee from the wrath to come.*

But is not the LORD in Zion? Is not her King in her? Shall there be balm in Gilead, and yet no remedy be applied? Shall JESUS indeed, the great Physician be there; and the health of his redeemed not be recovered? Oh! let thy name, thou dear LORD, be as ointment poured forth, that by the quickening and regenerating influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, such views of our misery, by reason of the fall, may open before us, and such a sense of thy suitability to all our wants may appear, and become desirable; that apprehending thee by faith, in thy Person, work, and offices, and in all thy relations, righteousness, and grace, our souls may find a recovery. Speak blessed LORD to my heart, to my conscience; and while thou speakest, in the same tender words as of old, to the diseased; *wilt thou be made whole?* Oh! give me grace and faith, in lively exercise, to answer and to believe, and to depend upon thy sovereign, power to heal. Oh! let me know thee by that precious name, JEHOVAH ROPHE! And let me hear thy gracious voice as to Israel, saying, *I am the LORD that healeth thee!* Amen.

## CHAPTER 9

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*This Chapter opens with the cry of the Prophet over the sins and calamities of the people. Jeremiah having poured out his soul upon this occasion, and wept before the throne, prosecutes his Sermon, in calling upon the people to hear the LORD'S decrees concerning them.*

### **Jeremiah 9:1-6**

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! (2) Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they *be* all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. (3) And they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD. (4) Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. (5) And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, *and* weary themselves to commit iniquity. (6) Thine habitation *is* in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.

How blessed is it to behold faithful ministers, who enter into a deep concern for their people. What a beautiful portrait is here undesignedly drawn of Jeremiah. How endeared is that servant of the LORD, or ought to be, who takes part in all that concerns Zion. But Reader! while looking at the servant, let us not overlook the Master. Yea, blessed JESUS! doth not my meditation take wing and behold thee in thine unequalled sorrow over Jerusalem? Luke 13:34.

### **Jeremiah 9:7**

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?

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I read this verse alone, in order that we may not lose the beauty and the blessedness of it. What a delightful representation is here made of the LORD'S pity for his people? Doth it not seem as if the LORD was looking round for a way for them, and waiting to be gracious? He appears as if he said, *How shall I give thee up?* Isaiah 30:18. Hosea 11:8, 9.

### **Jeremiah 9:8-16**

Their tongue *is as* an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: *one* speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait. (9) Shall I not visit them for these *things?* saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? (10) For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through *them*; neither can *men* hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone. (11) And I will make Jerusalem heaps, *and* a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant. (12) Who *is* the wise man, that may understand this? and *who is he* to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth *and* is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through? (13) And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; (14) But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: (15) Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, *even* this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. (16) I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them.

It is blessed to remark, that in all the LORD'S chastisements, he hath one uniform object in view for their reform. All his dispensations are to bring his people back to himself. Hence the wise among them are called upon to consider; and the

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wormwood and gall given them are, that from the bitterness they find in the effects of sin, they may be brought to recollect the sweet dispensations of the LORD. Hosea 2:6, 7. Luke 15:14-19.

### **Jeremiah 9:17-22**

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning *women*, that they may come: (18) And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters. (19) For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast *us* out. (20) Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation. (21) For death is come up into our windows, *and* is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, *and* the young men from the streets. (22) Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcases of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather *them*.

Perhaps these mourning women means true weepers, and the cunning women those which were counterfeit. And the counterfeit would have found cause to change their cries into real sorrow, had they foreseen the greatness of the calamities coming upon them. Death entering into the windows, became an affliction, light, and patiently to be borne, as it related to the present life, compared to what the Prophet described, of the miseries at the siege, and in the captivity. See Lamentations 4 throughout.

### **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: (24) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that

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he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

These precious verses seem to come in like a parenthesis: and yet not to be used with a parenthesis, being so precious, in the midst of a gloomy description of a degenerate and rebellious people. The blessed truths they contain can need no comment. JESUS is both the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD, and the riches of GOD. And in the knowledge and understanding of Him, there is enough to glory. And we are sure, that GOD the FATHER glorieth, and taketh delight in the glory of his dear SON. Matthew 3:17.

### **Jeremiah 9:25-26**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all *them which are* circumcised with the uncircumcised; (26) Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all *that are* in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all *these nations are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart.

It is blessed to see the Old Testament truths corresponding with New Testament doctrines. Both the circumcised and the uncircumcised are all one in CHRIST JESUS. And without him, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, availeth anything. Galatians 6:15. Galatians 3:26 to the end.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! look at the Prophet in his tender concern for Israel! Look at the LORD GOD of the Prophets in his unparalleled compassion over our nature, and then ask, what must be the hardened state of the human heart, in the contemplation of

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the sins and sorrows of life, unmoved and unconcerned? Oh! who that beholds the vast domain of Satan's empire, but must cry out, *oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!* Precious LORD JESUS! though my habitation is in the midst of deceit, and I am constrained to dwell in the midst of *Kedar*, yet LORD, do thou melt my soul, and try me, and in thy faithfulness, cause me to be found faithful!

Where shall I find relief in such views of the general, yea the universal, depravity of human nature, but in thee, who art the LORD my righteousness? Thou art indeed the wisdom, the power, the grace, the goodness of GOD, and art made so to all thy people. Henceforth, LORD! grant that I may never glory but in thee. Thou wilt be wisdom to me, for in thee are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* Thou art my might, for thou art *my light, and the strength of my life, and my portion for ever.* And thou art riches, yea *durable riches and righteousness.* And all these art thou made of GOD to thy people, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* Never then blessed JESUS may I henceforth glory but *in thee, the LORD my GOD.*

## CHAPTER 10

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*In order to reprove the folly of idolatry, the Prophet is in this Chapter drawing a statement between the glory of JEHOVAH and the shame of idols. The Chapter concludes with some observations on the ill conduct of foolish pastors.*

#### **Jeremiah 10:1-16**

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Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: (2) Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. (3) For the customs of the people *are* vain: for *one* cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. (4) They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. (5) They *are* upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also *is it* in them to do good. (6) Forasmuch as *there is* none like unto thee, O LORD; thou *art* great, and thy name *is* great in might. (7) Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise *men* of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, *there is* none like unto thee. (8) But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock *is* a doctrine of vanities. (9) Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple *is* their clothing: they *are* all the work of cunning *men*. (10) But the LORD *is* the true God, he *is* the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. (11) Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even* they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. (12) He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. (13) When he uttereth his voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. (14) Every man is brutish in *his* knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image *is* falsehood, and *there is* no breath in them. (15) They *are* vanity, *and* the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. (16) The portion of Jacob *is* not like them: for he *is* the former of all *things*; and Israel *is* the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts *is* his name.

This is most striking sermon, and very highly finished, in which the Prophet, in the LORD'S name, asserts his divine

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nature and sovereignty: and then displays the folly of idols. The words are so plain, that they can need no comment. *Isaiah* had it in commission, to preach to the same amount: and he hath done it in the most sublime manner. *Isaiah* 44:9-21. And let the Reader observe in the close of this paragraph, how sweetly the LORD speaks of the Israel of GOD: as the LORD'S portion and the lot of his inheritance. The Reader will find a parallel passage *Deuteronomy* 32:8, &c. and again, *Deuteronomy* 33:26 to the end.

### **Jeremiah 10:17-25**

Gather up thy wares out of the land, O inhabitant of the fortress. (18) For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find *it so*. (19) Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this *is* a grief, and I must bear it. (20) My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they *are* not: *there is* none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains. (21) For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered. (22) Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, *and* a den of dragons. (23) O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps. (24) O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing. (25) Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate.

The Prophet gets back again to his old subject. The prospect of the Babylonish captivity so affected the Prophet's heart, that he could harp upon no other string. And observe, how the man of GOD gives vent to his full heart of sorrow in prayer. Reader! it is the only relief this, to a soul whose

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*sighing cometh before he eateth.* Where shall the afflicted find consolation but at a mercy-seat? Into whose bosom shall an overcharged mind pour its contents, but into that of JESUS? LORD help me in such moments, to say and do, with one of old; *when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.* Psalm 61:2.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I not fail to gather improvement from such views as these scriptures afford of the low and abject state to which men are reduced by the fall. Did not the word of GOD prove it, surely it would be incredible, that any persons, much less nations, should be guilty of idolatry. There seemeth no temptation to the thing itself. Moreover reason revolts at it. And yet, as if to show the horrible state into which our nature is sunk, all men are by nature idolaters, not to images, at least to sin and Satan; to divers lusts and pleasures, and in short, to anything, and to everything; which is made a rival with GOD, for the obtaining the rein of our ruling passion. LORD! undertake for us, and though other lords beside thee have had dominion over us, yet henceforth may we make mention only of thy name.

Under such circumstances of evil everywhere around; and conscious, as this Chapter most strikingly sets it forth, that the way of man is not in himself; neither in men that walketh to direct his steps; let mine eyes LORD be unto thee! Be thou the source and fountain; the first cause and final end, of all my hopes and views; my expectations and joys, then shall I be sure to be kept from idols, and to be distinguished from all the worshippers of them around, who call not upon thy name,

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and know thee not. Precious JESUS, thou art indeed my life, both natural, spiritual, and eternal. Maintain LORD in me, the life thou hast begun. Carry it on, refresh it, strengthen it, under languishings: revive it under sharp and trying dispensations. Be thou thyself the source and spring; the Author and the finisher; the everlasting object and delight; the cause *for* whom, and the effect *in* whom, all is made perfect. Yea LORD, be thou *the strength of my heart and my portion for ever*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 11

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*The Prophet is prosecuting the same important, but unthankful office of reproof, through this Chapter. The close of it discovers a conspiracy formed against Jeremiah by the men of Anathoth.*

#### **Jeremiah 11:1-5**

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, (2) Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; (3) And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed *be* the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, (4) Which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God: (5) That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as *it is* this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.

The Prophet produceth very frequently his commission from the LORD, by way both of establishing his authority, and

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enforcing their attention. The subject here is to remind Israel of GOD's covenant, and their breach of it. And the Prophet's Amen at the close of it becomes a confirmation, and his hearty good will towards it. Reader do not fail to remark, how pleased the LORD is with his covenant: and how in many parts of his holy word, he takes delight in bringing it forward. Neither forget, to whom that covenant referred, and in whom it had its completion. Isaiah 42:6, 7.

### **Jeremiah 11:6-8**

Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them. (7) For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. (8) Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do; but they did *them* not.

It should seem, that the Prophet was here sent into the streets to preach, as perhaps before he had been in the assembly.

### **Jeremiah 11:9-13**

And the LORD said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (10) They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. (11) Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. (12) Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. (13) For *according to* the number of thy

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cities were thy gods, O Judah; and *according to* the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to *that* shameful thing, *even* altars to burn incense unto Baal.

Was there ever a more pitiable view of degeneracy, than Judah here affords? Was this the great and understanding people, that was once the astonishment and envy of the whole earth? What? had they indeed a dunghill god, for every city? How is the most fine gold become dim?

### **Jeremiah 11:14**

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

We have here a renewed command to restrain prayer. An awful precept, chap. 7:16.

### **Jeremiah 11:15-17**

What hath my beloved to do in mine house, *seeing* she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest. (16) The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, *and* of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken. (17) For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

Amidst all these solemn things, and amidst all the judgments coming upon the people; let not the Reader overlook how the LORD graciously adverts to former times, and still calls his Church *beloved*. I do not presume to determine, what is meant by *the holy flesh*, passing from the people. But I cannot conclude, that it means only the holy flesh of the

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sacrifice. Yet if it did; still that sacrifice was typical of somewhat higher. And who is this but CHRIST? But what is meant then by the holy flesh passing from the Church! I humbly conceive; not that JESUS is passed away from his Church; but his Church hath passed away and lost sight of Him, whom the holy sacrifice typified. Is it not blessed under all to consider, that in it *there was as the teil-tree, and as the oak whose substance is in itself*. The holy seed is the substance. *Destroy it not, a blessing is in it*, Isaiah 6:13. and Isaiah 65:8.

### **Jeremiah 11:18-23**

And the LORD hath given me knowledge *of it*, and I know *it*: then thou shewedst me their doings. (19) But I *was* like a lamb *or* an ox *that* is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, *saying*, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered. (20) But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause. (21) Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand: (22) Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine: (23) And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, *even* the year of their visitation.

Poor Jeremiah's preaching brought upon him constant hatred and persecution. It hath done so to all faithful preachers in all ages of the Church, and ever must, and will. So JESUS taught his disciples to expect, and so they have always found. John 15:18-21. Mark, how the LORD, in the close of the Chapter, sums up the subject, by taking the cause into his own hand.

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Luke 10:1-12. Reader! do not overlook a greater than Jeremiah here. Isaiah 53:7.

## REFLECTIONS

My soul! call out of this Chapter for thy meditation what the *Jerusalem* sinners laid so little at heart; the blessedness of that Covenant, the LORD commanded his servant the Prophet to preach in their streets. What can be more sweet, or gracious, than that which is at the bottom of all mercies, and which JEHOVAH himself makes so: *I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people*. Oh! LORD, amidst all my departures and backslidings to this foundation, and in CHRIST confirmed and made known, may I look and take comfort! My GOD will hear me!

Oh! ye who like the men of Judah, have been setting up the many idols in your heart; here let your views be directed, and seek in the gracious Covenant promises of GOD in CHRIST, deliverance from all your idols. GOD in CHRIST is gracious. He will be very merciful at thy cry in JESUS, and when he heareth he will answer. Oh! for grace to lay hold of the Covenant of redemption in his blood!

## CHAPTER 12

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*This Chapter contains the humble application to the LORD, in beholding the prosperity of the wicked. Towards the close of the Chapter we have some sweet promises of GOD to his people.*

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**Jeremiah 12:1-3**

Righteous *art* thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of *thy* judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? *wherefore* are all they happy that deal very treacherously? (2) Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou *art* near in their mouth, and far from their reins. (3) But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

If the Reader will turn to Psalm 73, and remark the complaints of *Asaph*, on the same subject, he will find the best comment to what *Jeremiah* here speaks of in his experience. He will find also the best remedy to it, and which GOD the HOLY GHOST teacheth, in the close of that Psalm. So much indeed is there said on it, and so truly blessed, and unanswerably conclusive, that nothing more can be required. I only pray the Reader to remark with me, that *Jeremiah* like *Asaph*, begins his observations, with setting it down, as a sure unerring maxim, that however at a loss the people of GOD might be in explaining the ways of GOD in his providences: certain it is, that the LORD is righteous, and cannot do wrong.

**Jeremiah 12:4-6**

How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end. (5) If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and *if* in the land of peace, *wherein* thou trustedst, *they wearied thee*, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? (6) For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

I venture to look far beyond *Jeremiah* and all his personal troubles, in what is here said. Who indeed, but must eye JESUS, in what is here said of his brethren. John 7:3-5. And with respect to JESUS, what were the swellings of Jordan, and the contention of horses, compared to the billows of divine wrath, which overwhelmed his precious soul, when he made his soul an offering for sin. Psalm 42:7. Song Of Solomon 8:7. Psalm 69:1-3, &c.

### **Jeremiah 12:7-13**

I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies. (8) Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it. (9) Mine heritage *is* unto me *as* a speckled bird, the birds round about *are* against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour. (10) Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. (11) They have made it desolate, *and being* desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth *it* to heart. (12) The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the *one* end of the land even to the *other* end of the land: no flesh shall have peace. (13) They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, *but* shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

I hope that I do not use any violence to this passage, neither strain the holy scripture, when I say, that after everything which may be said, in allusion here to Israel, I venture to consider somewhat infinitely higher, and more interesting is intended from it. May we not suppose, that it is the language of GOD the FATHER in respect to his dear SON given up into the hands of wicked men, for the purposes of redemption? At all

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events we know, that the LORD so speaketh, concerning CHRIST. Isaiah 42:1. John 3:16.

### **Jeremiah 12:14-17**

Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. (15) And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. (16) And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people. (17) But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.

I detain not the Reader, with multiplying observations on these verses, the tenor of which is so uniformly discoverable through all the Bible. But I beg of him, to remark with me, how gracious the LORD'S promises of salvation are interspersed, in this, as in all other passages of a like nature. We have a beautiful, and indeed a continued specimen of this from beginning to end, in Leviticus chap. 26, to which I refer.

## REFLECTIONS

READER let us learn from this chapter to form one sure and unerring maxim, concerning the providences of GOD, that however puzzling and unaccountable to us they may appear, the issue of them must invariably be, for the divine glory, and for the welfare of his people. Behold in this point of view, our faith will find frequent cause indeed for exercise; but faith will also find a suited strength to lean upon during the time of exercise. Who should have thought the cruelty of Joseph's

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brethren, would, in the divine direction of it, ultimately be made the means of so much good? Who would have conceived, that the crucifixion of JESUS, was *in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of GOD*? Such events speak, in a loud voice, to suspend our judgment on all the ways and works of GOD: and to wait to hear what the LORD will accomplish by all his providences going on throughout the earth.

Reader let us learn another sweet lesson from the perusal of this Chapter. I mean, that we study more, in silent and humble adoration, the ways and works of the LORD, both in the circumstances of our own lives, and the order of his Church. JESUS hath the government upon his shoulder. He is the King of nations, as well as King of Saints. *His way is in the sea, and his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known*. But the end is sure. Think what wisdom that must be, which comprehends such an infinite variety of men and things, differently and oppositely pursued by them, but ordered by Him, to his glory, and the Church's welfare! Precious LORD JESUS! grant both to Reader and Writer, grace to be always looking up to thee, and seeking thy wisdom to guide; thy power to protect; and thy love to bless, all the events which concern ourselves, and thy people. And while we both take confidence, and holy joy, that if thou art for us, who can be against us, may a sense of thine unerring wisdom, constrain us continually to exclaim, *oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD? How unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out!*

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## CHAPTER 13

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*The Prophet in this Chapter is teaching by signs, as he had before been instructing by plain discourse. Under the similitude of a girdle made rotten, and of bottles perishing with wine; the Prophet showeth the sad Consequences of the children of his people, consuming in their captivity. The Chapter closeth with a gracious call of GOD to his people.*

**Jeremiah 13:1-7**

Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water. (2) So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* on my loins. (3) And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, (4) Take the girdle that thou hast got, which *is* upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. (5) So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me. (6) And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there. (7) Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.

*Jeremiah* spared no pains, and thought nothing of his trouble to follow up the LORD'S commissions. *Euphrates* was no small distance from Jerusalem: but yet we find thither the Prophet went both to carry the girdle thither and to go for it again. Some have thought, however, that this was rather a vision.

**Jeremiah 13:8-11**

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (9) Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. (10) This evil people, which refuse to

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hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing. (11) For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

The signs and types are doubly beautiful, and interesting, which GOD the HOLY GHOST himself explains. And here we have the LORD'S own illustration of it. Our whole nature was marred by sin; and when the LORD gathered from the mass, his people Israel, and chose them for his portion; how did he cause to cleave unto him, both Judah and Israel for a name, and a glory, and a praise,, above all the people of the earth. But when by sin, and transgression they departed from the LORD, like Jeremiah's girdle, thrown by, and marred, nothing but sovereign grace can renew and restore. Oh! blessed JESUS! what eternal praises are due to thee, for the recovery of our fallen nature! All our pride is forever done away, in the recollection, that but for thy gracious interposition we must have been marred forever!

### **Jeremiah 13:12-14**

Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? (13) Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. (14) And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

Here we have another similitude, and it should seem, it was highly suited to the people, to whom the Prophet delivered it. In wine countries, such as Judea, all orders of the people knew the use of it. But alas! they knew also the *abuse* of it. The Prophet therefore, by this figure, seems to have intended, that as they were filled with drunkenness, so should they be filled with sorrow. When the LORD'S judgment overtook them, in the Babylonish captivity, this was the case. Read in confirmation Psalm 137.

### **Jeremiah 13:15-17**

Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken. (16) Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, *and* make *it* gross darkness. (17) But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

Who can read this account of the mournful prophet, but must revere his memory? Oh! how delightful is it to behold a faithful pastor, taking interest in all that concerns his people! But while the memory of Jeremiah on this account is blessed, and that of all faithful ministers in the Church; with what glory doth CHRIST appear in his unequalled affection, whose tears for Jerusalem were so, many, and whose sweat, great drops of blood?

### **Jeremiah 13:18-27**

Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, *even* the crown of your glory. (19) The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open *them*: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive. (20) Lift up your eyes, and behold

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them that come from the north: where *is* the flock *that* was given thee, thy beautiful flock? (21) What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them *to be* captains, *and* as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail? (22) And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, *and* thy heels made bare. (23) Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. (24) Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness. (25) This *is* thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood. (26) Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear. (27) I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, *and* thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when *shall it* once *be*?

I interrupt not the reading of those verses, because they are connected. They contain the solemn expostulation of the LORD, in the view of their sins. They point out also the utter impossibility of the

sinner's recovery by any efforts of his own, under the strong figure of the black hue of the Ethiopian, and of the spots of the leopard. But here again precious JESUS, how unspeakably blessed is it to the soul of thy redeemed, that what *the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; thou through the FATHER'S* sending, hast *in thine own flesh* accomplished; Romans 8:3. And dost thou say to me as to Jerusalem, *wilt thou not be made clean?* Oh!, for grace, to look unto thee, that I may be made whole by thee!

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! while reading the sad history of the Church, in this period of it, and beholding Jerusalem as a marred girdle and a bottle spoiled; oh learn from hence what nature is in itself in all ages; when the preventing and restraining grace of GOD is withheld! How poor, and weak, and blind, and wretched! Oh! thou who alone canst keep from falling; give me LORD I pray thee grace, that darkness come not, and *my feet stumble not upon the dark mountains!*

And shall not my soul take occasion from the review of this solemn Chapter, to look up to JESUS with encreasing earnestness, and beg of him for Zion in the present day? Dost thou say LORD now as thou didst by thy servant the Prophet then; *where is the flock that was given, the beautiful flock?* Behold it LORD, I would say, let thine eye pity and compassionate it. It is indeed scattered in this dark and cloudy day. But wilt thou not gather it, and bring it home, and build it up, and command pastors after thine own heart, to feed it with true understanding and knowledge? Oh! precious LORD JESUS, thou great Shepherd of thy sheep; *be not wrath very sore, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold! see we are all thy people.*

## CHAPTER 14

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*It should seem that the Prophet's preaching, and his types, were followed by a famine. He takes notice of it in this Chapter, and mourns over it. The LORD is not intreated to remove it. Lying prophets deceive the people concerning it.*

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**Jeremiah 14:1-6**

The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth. (2) Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up. (3) And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, *and* found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. (4) Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads. (5) Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook *it*, because there was no grass. (6) And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail, because *there was* no grass.

We have here an account of the famine, which by the parallel history took place in the reign of *Jehoiakim*; probably just before the captivity. *Jeremiah* had mourned for the good king *Josiah*; see 2 Chronicles 35:25. and in the succeeding reign, it is supposed, that this famine followed. The Prophet appears to have lamented it in his Lamentations, chap. 2. The LORD not unfrequently sends after his word, afflictions; that both may under his grace, operate together.

**Jeremiah 14:7-9**

O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou *it* for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee. (8) O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man *that* turneth aside to tarry for a night? (9) Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man *that* cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, *art* in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.

Nothing can be more beautiful and expressive, than this prayer of the Prophet. *First*, he confesses sin: Leviticus 26. *Secondly*, he takes hold of the best and only argument for forgiveness; GOD'S covenant promises in his name; that is, in

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CHRIST. Psalm 106:8. Isaiah 43:25. Thirdly, he pleads the merits of the Saviour. Isaiah 45:21, 22. And *lastly*, he observes the union the LORD had with, and interest in, his people. Joshua, ages before, had pleaded the same, and found success, Joshua 7:8, 9. Reader! do not overlook these pleas, for they are unanswerable; in the hour of distress JEHOVAH's name's sake, is the one glorious cause, of all our rich mercies, in CHRIST; Ezekiel 36:32.

### **Jeremiah 14:10-12**

Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. (11) Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for *their* good. (12) When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

These are solemn scriptures: and awful is it, when the LORD restrains prayer in his people, by withholding the spirit of grace and supplication. But we find in scripture beautiful instances, where the LORD still encourages his people to plead with him; when seemingly he is coming forth as an enemy. Witness Jacob's wrestling with the angel, Genesis 32:24-30. Moses also, still pleads, Exodus 32:10-14. And what a lovely example is that, of the woman of Canaan with our LORD, Matthew 15:22-28.

### **Jeremiah 14:13-22**

Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. (14) Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them:

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they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. (15) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. (16) And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them. (17) Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow. (18) If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine! yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not. (19) Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul lothed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and *there is* no healing for us? we looked for peace, and *there is* no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble! (20) We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, *and* the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee. (21) Do not abhor *us*, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us. (22) Are there *any* among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? *art* not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these *things*.

Faithful ministers cannot but feel grief at the conduct of false teachers, who prophecy smooth things, and prophecy deceit. *Jeremiah* had to encounter with many in his days, of this description and no age of the Church hath ever been free of them. But GOD'S faithfulness is not impeached, nor lessened by the deceitfulness of men. His people are commanded to go to the word, to the law, and to the testimony, for evidences of the truth: Isaiah 8:20. What a gracious prayer the Prophet here offers. Oh! that all ministers would find grace to follow his example. Zion never needed it more than now!

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## REFLECTIONS

READER! we cannot make a better improvement of this precious Chapter, than by following up the example the Prophet hath here left us, both in times of public calamity, and private visitation; in besieging a throne of grace upon the same ground, and pleading for mercy on the same arguments, as the Prophet here useth. Sit down and ponder over the many strong and unanswerable pleas, every poor sinner hath in this one cause of holy confidence, the name of JEHOVAH. The covenant purposes, counsel, will, declaration of JEHOVAH. Moreover, his unchangeable promises, founded in his own free and eternal love. To these add the word, the oath, those immutable things of JEHOVAH, in which it is impossible for GOD to lie. Then open at the same time, the infinite volume of grace, in the Person, work, blood, grace, spirit, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Call in yet further to your aid, the person, offices, and eternal grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And when these grand and glorious truths are fully impressed upon the mind; sit down and devise names if you can find them to misery and sin, in all the various shapes of it: and see if there be not found somewhat in those blessed views of the Almighty covenanters, to answer and satisfy all. Oh! thou *the hope of Israel* I would say, both for myself and Reader: Oh thou art both *the hope and Saviour thereof: why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry but for a night, and takest no interest in the concerns of thy people; Do not abhor us for thy Name's sake: do not disgrace the throne of thy glory?*

CHAPTER 15

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*This is as sorrowful a Chapter as any in the prophecy. Though the last had closed with prayer, yet this begins and ends with judgment.*

**Jeremiah 15:1**

Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, *yet* my mind *could* not *be* toward this people: cast *them* out of my sight, and let them go forth.

Reader! I cannot pass over this verse, without instantly making this observation: Though neither Samuel, nor Moses, can prevail for sinners, yet there is One mightier than both, whom the FATHER heareth always. Oh! how precious is to think, that JESUS cannot fail in his intercession, though all other intercessors fail. His blood is a *speaking* blood. And he ever liveth to appear, and to make intercession in the presence of GOD for us. Hebrews 12:24. Hebrews 7:25.

**Jeremiah 15:2-9**

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as *are* for death, to death; and such as *are* for the sword, to the sword; and such as *are* for the famine, to the famine; and such as *are* for the captivity, to the captivity. (3) And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. (4) And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for *that* which he did in Jerusalem. (5) For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest? (6) Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting. (7) And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave *them* of children, I will

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destroy my people, *since* they return not from their ways. (8) Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused *him* to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city. (9) She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while *it was* yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD.

These judgments had their accomplishment, in the captivity that followed, when the people were carried away to Babylon.

### **Jeremiah 15:10-14**

Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; *yet* every one of them doth curse me. (11) The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee *well* in the time of evil and in the time of affliction. (12) Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel? (13) Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price, and *that* for all thy sins, even in all thy borders. (14) And I will make *thee* to pass with thine enemies into a land *which* thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, *which* shall burn upon you.

We have here the prophet mourning unmanfully. Jeremiah affords an instance, that he, like all others of Adam's race, partook of the common stock of corruption. Alas! how unsuitable and unbecoming is it, in men of grace to complain. Jeremiah thought so in a cooler moment; See his Lamentations, Chap. 3:39. Poor Job before him, had vented his sorrow in a language unbecoming, Job, 3:2-19. And Jeremiah as if pleased with those angry expressions, repeated them with still stronger language, Chap. 20:14-18. Alas! what is man, even the best of men, even a Prophet; consecrated from the womb to be a prophet of the LORD? Chap. 1:5. Oh!

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precious, precious LORD JESUS, to whom shall we look but to thee; whose whole nature was *holy, harmless, undefiled; separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens*, Hebrews 7:26.

### **Jeremiah 15:15-21**

O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. (16) Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. (17) I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation. (18) Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, *which* refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, *and as waters that* fail? (19) Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, *and* thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. (20) And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I *am* with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD. (21) And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

Though the LORD would not listen to the prophet's prayer, to avert the visitation concerning the captivity; yet for Jeremiah's personal safety, the LORD remembered his covenant: see Chap. 1:20. Reader! it is blessed in times of public calamity, to lay hold on the personal promises in CHRIST; and to remember, that the love of JESUS to his Church, however outward things may vary, is the same as JESUS himself, *yesterday, and to day, and for ever*, Hebrews 13:8. Oh! for grace to know this, and live upon an unchangeable GOD in

CHRIST; when all things in us and about us, are changing continually.

## REFLECTIONS

IN reading this Chapter, I find so much of blessedness leading to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that I cannot need more than the first verse opens to me, to feast upon in JESUS forever. What though Samuel and Moses are no intercessors; *though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not;* yet thou blessed JESUS hast stood in the gap, and dost forever stand, *having obtained eternal redemption for us.* Here then, amidst all the calamities of life, whether in private or public, nationally or individually; here would I rest my plea, my only plea, for I need no other. Looking to GOD my Father in CHRIST, I would say, both for myself and the Church of JESUS; *behold O GOD our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed!* And wilt not thou, O LORD JESUS, take up the case and concerns of all thy people? Though our iniquities testify against us, and our sins are aggravated sore; yet LORD, such is the everlasting and eternal efficacy of thy blood and righteousness; such the infinite merit of both; that they plead more for thy people, than all their sins can plead against them. Oh! how would I treasure this word concerning thee; wherein thou hast caused me to hope. I have found them indeed, and have eaten them; and they have been the rejoicing and joy of my heart: yea LORD, I have found thee, the Uncreated Word; and do thou LORD dwell evermore in my heart by faith. LORD do by me, as by thy servant the Prophet; make me as a fenced brazen wall, strong in the grace of faith, that is in CHRIST JESUS. Be thou with me to save me, and to

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deliver me, O LORD; so shall I not be confounded, when times of persecution arise, and the enemy cometh in like a flood; for then will my LORD lift up a standard, even CHRIST JESUS against him.

## CHAPTER 16

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*This is a short, but interesting Chapter; in which, the LORD commands his servant the Prophet, in looking forward to the times of the Captivity, to keep himself unconnected because of his judgments. The LORD pronounceth great evils; but the Chapter closeth in sweet promises, concerning the deliverance of his people; which he promiseth shall be even greater than that from Egypt.*

#### **Jeremiah 16:1-7**

The word of the LORD came also unto me, saying, (2) Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place. (3) For thus saith the LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land; (4) They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; *but* they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcases shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. (5) For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD, *even* lovingkindness and mercies. (6) Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall *men* lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them: (7) Neither shall *men* tear *themselves* for them in mourning, to

comfort them for the dead; neither shall *men* give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.

I venture to read this precept given to Jeremiah concerning marriage while in Babylon, both with a national and spiritual view. No alliances were to be made by the people of GOD, with their idolatrous neighbours. And this, not only to keep them from idolatry; but to preserve the holy seed pure, distinct, and uncorrupt; and specially with an eye to CHRIST. Hence we find the genealogy of CHRIST, is so faithfully recorded by the Evangelists, Matthew 1, and Luke 3:23 to the end. Whether my views in this passage be right or not, still the Reader will not find it unsuitable to the general idea of scripture; for the LORD hath himself dwelt largely upon the subject, in several places. Hosea 2. Isaiah 54:5, 6. Jeremiah 3:14. And I confess, that I am the more inclined to this view of the subject, in a spiritual point, from that solemn expression which is in the midst of it; in which the LORD saith, *I have taken away my peace from this people*: perhaps (for I do not presume to determine) it means, that the LORD hath taken away his people's views of peace in CHRIST, the promised seed, when they found themselves in captivity; and for a while their hopes were cut off. They had lost the faith of that peace, and joy in believing, which their fathers had in seeing, the day of CHRIST afar off. And of course it made their bondage yet more grievous. Hence the Church cried out; *thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity: And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the LORD*, Lamentations 3:17, 18.

### **Jeremiah 16:8-9**

Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink. (9) For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God

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of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

As the LORD prohibited the prophet from mourning in Babylon, so, from feasting; both were alike unsuitable, while the Comforter was far away. I pray the Reader to notice in both views the preciousness of JESUS, the peace and consolation of his people, to sweeten and sanctify all states.

### **Jeremiah 16:10-13**

And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what *is* our iniquity? or what *is* our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God? (11) Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; (12) And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me: (13) Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, *neither* ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour.

There is a wonderful degree of condescension, implied on the part of GOD in what is here said. Where there is an enquiry seriously set up in the soul, concerning the ways and works of GOD, in his visitation; there the LORD will vouchsafe to explain. Reader! let this encourage in all dark seasons, to tell out your sorrows and exercises, and place them down before the throne!

### **Jeremiah 16:14-15**

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of

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Israel out of the land of Egypt; (15) But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

Whether from the divine pleasure, which the LORD took in delivering his people in those instances, which most strongly represented their spiritual deliverance from sin and hell, by the LORD JESUS: or whether in the repeating that deliverance, in the case from Babylon, as the time drew nearer, when the thing represented in type, should be accomplished in reality; or whether from any other cause, which we know not, the LORD thought proper so to do; but the fact is so, that the LORD upon many occasions, speaks of a greater mercy in the Church's emancipation from Babylon than from Egypt. That both were eminently typical, is too plain to be doubted. But it is our duty to accept what the LORD hath said with implicit faith. See Jeremiah 23:7, 8. I cannot doubt, but that the pre-eminency in the case of being delivered from Babylon, arose from the nearness to which that event stood, to the glorious salvation by JESUS, compared to the distant age of Egypt.

### **Jeremiah 16:16-18**

Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. (17) For mine eyes *are* upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes. (18) And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things.

Are not those fishers in allusion to what CHRIST said of his Apostles, Matthew 4:19, 20. And is not the recompense the

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LORD is here said to make to their sin, that wound of the spirit, which the HOLY GHOST when convincing of sin, makes in the heart, in order to lead to JESUS? John 16:8.

### **Jeremiah 16:19-21**

O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and *things* wherein *there is* no profit. (20) Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they *are* no gods? (21) Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name *is* The LORD.

The prayer of the Prophet is a beautiful break in the subject; as if the man of GOD felt his mind instantly led out, so to look up and plead with the LORD, from what had been said. And the burden of his prayer seems to be taking hold of the LORD'S promise, concerning the call of the Gentiles; which the Apostle Paul, in after ages, had it in commission to tell the Church, should provoke the jealousy of Israel. If so, it is a blessed illustration of this passage. Let the Reader consult the scripture, and then compare both Romans 11:11. to the end.

### REFLECTIONS

My soul! gather from the LORD'S precept, to his servant the Prophet; not to marry, nor mingle with the nations of the captivity; how much it concerns thee, to sit aloof, and as much detached as possible, from all persons, and all things, which might have a tendency to draw thine affections from the LORD! Remember, that *thy Maker is thine husband*. And doth he not say to thee, as to the Church of old, *thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot: and*

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*thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.* Precious LORD JESUS! blessed be thou, for thine infinite condescension. Oh! give me grace ever to keep it in view, and to call to mind; wherever I am, or however engaged, amidst the Babylons of this wilderness-state, that my indigence, JESUS neither overlooks, nor despiseth; but will keep me during the captivity, and at length bring me out of more than the Egyptian bondage. Neither in the house of mourning, or of feasting, would I lose sight of my LORD! And oh! grant, that I may constantly have the grace of faith in thee; that the peace in JESUS way be never lost sight of, no not for a moment. But oh! let my constant song in this house of my pilgrimage, be, *the LORD liveth that hath brought the souls of his people, from the north, and from all lands whither they had been driven;* and now brought them into the liberty, wherewith JESUS makes them free. Yea, they shall dwell in their own land, even EMMANUEL'S land, forever. Amen.

## CHAPTER 17

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*Much to the same purport, as the general scope of Jeremiah's preaching, is the subject of this chapter. The folly and sin of carnal confidence; and the blessedness and security of the divine trust, are beautifully set forth. The LORD'S knowledge of the heart is strikingly insisted upon as an evidence of his sovereignty.*

#### **Jeremiah 17:1-2**

The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen of iron, *and* with the point of a diamond: *it is* graven upon the table of their heart, and upon

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the horns of your altars; (2) Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.

What is here said of Judah's sin, may be equally said of all men's sins: they are cut in and formed in the very heart. Nothing short of a new heart, wrought by the LORD himself, can form a change. Ezekiel 36:26.

### **Jeremiah 17:3-4**

O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance *and* all thy treasures to the spoil, *and* thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders. (4) And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, *which* shall burn for ever.

Observe when the LORD threatens punishment, he still speaks of his mountain and his people. Israel and Judah are still the LORD'S, though chastened with the chastisement of a man. Jeremiah 31:20.

### **Jeremiah 17:5-6**

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. (6) For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited.

Reader! as you read these verses do not fail to enquire, in what this sin of trusting in man consisteth: that we may avoid the punishment. May not that man be said to have fallen into it, who placeth the least confidence in his own righteousness, to the slighting the full and complete justifying righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Romans 10:3.

### **Jeremiah 17:7-8**

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Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. (8) For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

What a beautiful contrast do these verses contain, to those which were before; and in what a lovely manner is that well founded trust in the LORD pointed out, under the similitude of a tree planted by the river. Reader! only make reference of what is here said to the Church planted in CHRIST, and by CHRIST, the Tree of life, and what glories pour in upon the soul, from such a view of the doctrine? Revelation 22:2.

### **Jeremiah 17:9-10**

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (10) I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

Had we no other authority than what these verses furnish, here is enough to prove, that after all our knowledge of ourselves, we have not arrived to the perfect apprehension to what a state of sin and self-deception man is reduced by the fall. But however ignorant we are of ourselves to the LORD, the most secret thoughts of our heart are open. What an argument ariseth from hence, to beg the LORD to cleanse us from our secret faults, and to bring us to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. Psalm 19:12. Zechariah 13:1.

### **Jeremiah 17:11**

*As* the partridge sitteth *on eggs*, and hatcheth *them* not; *so* he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

Some naturalists have given this account of the Partridge. And it forms a striking representation of the man of riches brooding over his riches, which after all bring forth nothing but disappointment. See our LORD'S account, Luke 12:16-21.

### **Jeremiah 17:12-18**

A glorious high throne from the beginning *is* the place of our sanctuary. (13) O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, *and* they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. (14) Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou *art* my praise. (15) Behold, they say unto me, Where *is* the word of the LORD? let it come now. (16) As for me, I have not hastened from *being* a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was *right* before thee. (17) Be not a terror unto me: thou *art* my hope in the day of evil. (18) Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

This passage seems to be a break in the midst of the Prophet's sermon, in which he fervently addresseth the LORD in prayer, and a blessed prayer it is. It needs no comment: for it is as plain as it is earnest. These are blessed interruptions to preaching, when the Man of God leaves off for a moment speaking to his people, *from* GOD in order to speak for his people *to* GOD.

### **Jeremiah 17:19-27**

Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; (20) And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: (21) Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to

yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem; (22) Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. (23) But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. (24) And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; (25) Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. (26) And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD. (27) But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

No sooner had the Prophet finished his prayer, than he begins again his Sermon. It is a delightful transition from preaching to prayer, and from prayer to preaching. Both form a part in the minister's commission. We have here GOD'S command blended with his promise, for the sanctification of the sabbath. Oh! who can read it, and the awful judgments connected with the breach of the sabbath, but must tremble for our British Judah and Jerusalem? Oh! for the LORD to pour out of the residue of his HOLY SPIRIT, that we may reverence his sabbaths!

## REFLECTIONS

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WHEN I read of the state of sin on the heart of Judah, as stated in this Chapter: and when I consider, what my own heart saith of the same, and the testimony of GOD concerning the desperately wicked state of every man's heart by nature: my soul feels humbled to the dust, and like the leper we read of, I feel constrained to cry out, unclean, unclean! But oh precious JESUS, thou that art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof, *heal me, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved!*

And my soul, ponder well the striking difference between the confidence founded in the LORD JESUS'S blood and righteousness; and that trust which is in an arm of flesh. Behold the blessedness of the one, and the awful curse on the other. Oh! thou blessed LORD JESUS, be thou to me the unceasing source of life, and health, and strength, and confidence; and let not my soul be as the barren heath, that knoweth not when good cometh, and as the parched places in the wilderness, that is, as a salt land not inhabited.

Blessed, forever blessed be the LORD for the sabbath, that sweet day for men! Oh! for grace to honour it, to reverence it, to love it, and to sanctify and hallow it to the LORD'S glory. Oh thou great LORD of the sabbath, preserve it to our nation, to our people; and be thou the very sabbath of our souls, and our hope of glory forever. Amen.

## CHAPTER 18

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*The Prophet, in this Chapter, is preaching by type and figure. Under the similitude of a Potter, the LORD showeth his sovereignty. The people are offended at the Prophet's preaching. The LORD threatens them with sore judgments.*

**Jeremiah 18:1-2**

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, (2) Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

It is blessed for every child of GOD, and much more for all the Prophets of the LORD, I mean the ministers of the LORD, to sit down in silent waiting at the feet of JESUS to be prepared for his service. That public ministry is likely to be blessed, that is the result of divine direction, in silent and private waiting on the LORD. Isaiah 40:31. and Isaiah 41:1.

**Jeremiah 18:3-6**

Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. (4) And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. (5) Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (6) O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Reader! Was not our nature marred by sin after it came out of the hands of our Almighty Potter? Did the LORD throw it away? No! He new made it in CHRIST JESUS. Oh! what numberless, sweet instructions, arise out of this view of the subject. Blessed JESUS! thou hast not only made thy people new creatures in thee; but by virtue of their union and oneness with thee, they are holier than they were before. And not only so, but from the same source they are now secure,

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and which as it proved, they were not before, from all possibility of any future marring. Sweet thought!

### **Jeremiah 18:7-12**

*At what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy *it*; (8) If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. (9) And *at what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*; (10) If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. (11) Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good. (12) And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.

The LORD himself explains and applies his type of the Potter. And in JESUS how hath the doctrine been fully proved? Surely the LORD can with infinitely more ease create new hearts in his people, and reform both a people and a nation, by the mere sovereignty of his holy word, than the Potter who worketh on vessels of clay, can new make from the broken portions which are marred. But alas! how sin hardens, so as to make the sinner despair, in spite of GOD'S grace, and the declared purposes of GOD'S love, Jeremiah 2:25.

### **Jeremiah 18:13-17**

Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. (14) Will *a man* leave the snow of Lebanon *which cometh* from the rock of the field? *or* shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? (15) Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways *from* the

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ancient paths, to walk in paths, *in* a way not cast up; (16) To make their land desolate, *and* a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head. (17) I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.

What a striking expostulation is in the opening of these verses? The LORD sends his people to ask of the heathen, among whom it was never known, of such apostasy from their dunghill gods, as Israel manifested in backsliding from the true GOD. In hot sultry climates, how grateful is the cold flowing water to the traveller? And was it ever known to be rejected? Whereas Israel revolted continually from the LORD. Reader! let us not confine this subject to Israel of old: but pause and enquire whether the Israel of GOD now, manifest a closer walking with the LORD? Alas! how disposed are we to leave the fountain of living waters, and to be hewing out to ourselves cisterns, *broken cisterns, wherein is no water!* Jeremiah 2:13.

### **Jeremiah 18:18**

Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

Reader! do not hastily pass over this verse. Look through all ages of the Church, and behold the same continually acting over again, towards all the faithful servants of the LORD. One of the surest marks, that that minister is faithful, and his services blessed, who is abused by the ungodly; and both himself and his labours made the drunkard's song. It would be a melancholy prospect in a gospel Church, where the

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accused adversary made no opposition. Matthew 5:11, 12. John 16:32, 33.

### **Jeremiah 18:19-23**

Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me. (20) Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, *and* to turn away thy wrath from them. (21) Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their *blood* by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and *be* widows; and let their men be put to death; *let* their young men *be* slain by the sword in battle. (22) Let a cry be heard from their houses, when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them: for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet. (23) Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay *me*: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal *thus* with them in the time of thine anger.

Prayer is the sure relief of an afflicted mind; and more especially if men persecute, where can we find support but in GOD? The apparent harshness of the Prophet's prayer, ceases to be so, when we consider, for whom those judgments are desired, namely, the sworn foes of GOD and of his CHRIST. Reader! you will always find relief from reading scriptures of this kind spoken by JESUS, or his servants, as referring to the seed of the serpent. The war began between Abel and Cain, and hath continued ever since, and will continue, until time is lost in eternity. And let not the Reader forget, that the happiness of the redeemed in heaven, can only consist in the everlasting and uninterrupted enjoyment of GOD and the LAMB. The day of vengeance, and the year of the Redeemed are connected in one. The everlasting destruction of Satan, and his kingdom, his people, children, and empire, form as

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grand a part in the scheme of CHRIST'S triumphs, as the everlasting happiness of his chosen. Oh! for grace to take part with all that belongs to CHRIST, and to follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth. Isaiah 63:4. Revelation 12:10. Ruth 1:16, 17.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let it be your delight and mine, to go down very frequently to the Potter's house, where the LORD will cause us to hear his word. Surely, we may cry out with the Church of old upon every occasion of life; *but now O LORD! thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thine hands.* And shall the thing formed, say to him that formed him, why hast thou made me thus? And if it be (as that it undoubtedly is) the LORD'S privilege and prerogative, to make vessels of the same clay, to different purposes, and some to honour, and some to dishonour; shall not the LORD *new make* also, as he pleaseth; and not only new make, but *use also*, to the different purposes of his own sacred will and pleasure? LORD! I pray thee, do by me, and appoint me, and use me as it seemeth best to thine unerring counsel, purpose, and will: but oh! new make me in CHRIST JESUS, and make me a vessel to the master's use, to serve him here, and glorify him to all eternity!

LORD! to all the devices of the ungodly, and all the malice of the foe and his agents, against thy faithful ones, like the Prophet; give to thy servants grace, and to their enemies confusion, that in thy strength, all thine exercised family may be strong, and made more than conquerors, through thee, and thy great salvation.

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## CHAPTER 19

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*The Prophet's sermon is here delivered, under the similitude of a Potter's bottle, by way of representing the broken state of the Jews.*

**Jeremiah 19:1-13**

Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and *take* of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; (2) And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, (3) And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. (4) Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; (5) They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake *it*, neither came *it* into my mind: (6) Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter. (7) And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. (8) And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof. (9) And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them. (10) Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, (11) And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and

this city, as *one* breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury *them* in Tophet, till *there be* no place to bury. (12) Thus will I do unto this place, saith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and *even* make this city as Tophet: (13) And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods.

There are several weighty circumstances which strike our mind, on reading this sermon of Jeremiah. Let the Reader observe in the first place, the Persons whom the Prophet was to gather to hear it: *the ancients of the people and of the priests*. Is it not rather strange, that in a time of such general departure from the truth, and from the service of ordinances, that the hearts of those men should be inclined to attend the Prophet's ministry? But no doubt, the thing was of the LORD. Reader! if the LORD would incline men in our day to attend a preached gospel, the same would take place now. But what an awful consideration is it, that the word of truth is so evil spoken of, and so little regarded. We may observe further, that the place of preaching was no less remarkable; not the temple, but the valley of the son of *Hinnom*. So called from Joshua 15:8. See also 2 Kings 23:10. Here, where Israel had provoked the LORD to anger with their idolatries and sacrifices; in the same spot should the Chaldeans put them to shame and destruction by the sword. Never were calamities more striking, nor lamented more bitterly. See Lamentations 4:10. The third observation on this sermon, is the faithfulness of the Preacher. Who can behold Jeremiah thus going on from day to day, undaunted, and without fear, but must admire the firmness of the man, and the glory of the cause in which he

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was engaged. The fourth remark is, the affirmation the Prophet, at the LORD'S command made at the close of his Sermon, in breaking the bottle, to intimate the certainty of it, and as an assurance of what the LORD had said, that as clay in the hand of the Potter: so were the people in the LORD'S hands. Chap. 18:6. And lastly, to add no more: it should be observed, on the Prophet's sermon, that as the LORD had said, so it came to pass. Jeremiah 52:4-11.

### **Jeremiah 19:14-15**

Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD'S house; and said to all the people, (15) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

It should seem, by what is here said, that when the Prophet had finished his Sermon, at *Tophet*;, and had broken the bottle, in confirmation of what he had said before their eyes, that he returned under the influence of the same HOLY SPIRIT, to add an inference in the courts of the temple. It doth not appear, that the LORD commanded him so to do: but the Prophet took it for granted, that it would be right. It is blessed to see men faithful to GOD and to souls. The Apostle commended Timothy to be *in season and out of season*. 2 Timothy 4:2. Jeremiah here set a noble example, that he was delivered from the fear of man. LORD! make all thy servants in the ministry faithful, that whether men will hear, or whether they wilt forbear, that they may be free from the blood of souls. Ezekiel 2:7. Acts 20:25-27.

## REFLECTIONS

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WHAT a most lovely and engaging representation is here made in the character of the Prophet, of a faithful minister. Oh? that it were the LORD'S will, that all who stand to minister in the things of salvation, and stand up between an holy GOD, and unholy sinners had the salvation of souls at heart as Jeremiah had, and felt no less a zeal for the LORD'S honour and glory. How truly ought they to be affected with the awful responsibility of their commission! How unweariedly ought they to labour, night and day in such a service! And in those instances, where, like the Prophet, their labours are despised, and their persons abased, deeply to feel the want of success, and to weep between the porch and the altar, with cries to GOD in prayer!

Precious JESUS! let that compassion of thine, which filled thy tender heart, when weeping over Jerusalem, constrain thee LORD now, in beholding the state of sin, and the impending Tophet of destruction, to send faithful labourers into thy service. Oh! LORD! commission them: ordain them: fill their mouth with arguments, and their hearers hearts with grace, that they may not spend their strength in vain, and their labour for nought. Yea LORD! come thyself in the power of thy blessed SPIRIT, and turn to thyself a people of a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, *to serve him with one consent.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 20

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*We have here an interesting Chapter. The man of GOD is smitten and put into the stocks, for preaching GOD's truth. The governor that commanded this is threatened with judgment for it. The Prophet mourns in the close of the Chapter over his calamities.*

### **Jeremiah 20:1-2**

Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who *was* also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. (2) Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that *were* in the high gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the LORD.

Reader! pause over this account. Recollect how Jeremiah was called to the prophet's office: Chap. 1:5. Recollect the long and painful office he had now exercised, and the universal disregard he found to all his preaching: and then behold how sadly he was requited! When you have duly pondered these things, call to mind that more or less, these are the marks of a faithful minister in GOD'S sanctuary in all ages. Numbers 16:3. Acts 23:1, 2. Nay, look to JESUS under the same, John 18:22, 23.

### **Jeremiah 20:3-6**

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magormissabib. (4) For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold *it* : and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. (5) Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them

to Babylon. (6) And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.

Observe, what holy and becoming boldness in the man of GOD. Observe what an awful judgment *Pashur* is doomed to suffer. *Magor-missabib*, means, being encompassed with fear round about, as a girdle. It is worthy remark, that *Jeremiah* did not prophesy this of *Pashur*, when under the punishment, but after he was delivered from it. Probably, the Prophet did not receive from the LORD until then, authority so to do. It is always blessed to wait the LORD'S time, for executing the LORD'S purposes.

### **Jeremiah 20:7-8**

O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. (8) For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

The Prophet's complaint to the LORD, of being deceived, means being disappointed. Jeremiah concluded, (but too hastily) that the people would regard his preaching, coming from the LORD, and in the LORD'S name, and deliver him from them. Chap. 1:19. He felt what all gracious souls feel, distress at the contempt they put upon GOD'S words. And he felt for himself also. But what were the feelings of the LORD JESUS in his unequalled exercises? Psalm 22 and Psalm 69.

### **Jeremiah 20:9-13**

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not

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*stay*. (10) For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, *say they*, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. (11) But the LORD *is* with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: *their* everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. (12) But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, *and* seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause. (13) Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.

What a blessed testimony, is it to the truth of the holy scriptures, that their effects on the souls of GOD'S people, are in all ages the same. What Jeremiah said, all more or less find, that the word of the LORD is *as a fire and as an hammer*. Reader! can you bear like testimony to its power in *your* heart? Luke 24:32. And what an uniform correspondence is there in all ages of the Church, among the LORD'S people, how the enemy stirreth up the minds of men, to wait for their halting. An infirmity of the LORD'S people, becomes subject of delight to carnal minds. *Aha! Aha! so would we have it*. This is the language of all the haters of CHRIST'S people. Psalm 35:20, 21. The glory given to the LORD, in the close of this paragraph, is beautiful: and no less so the hymn of praise with which it ends.

### **Jeremiah 20:14-18**

Cursed *be* the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. (15) Cursed *be* the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. (16) And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; (17) Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb *to be* always great *with me*. (18)

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Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?

So great a contrast there is between the last verse of the preceding paragraph and the beginning of this, that I cannot but suppose the Prophet is not speaking these things of himself. And I the rather am inclined to suppose this from the great sameness that there is in the words here spoken, to what we meet with in Job's complaint: so as that one might conclude the Prophet quoted them from Job. See Job 3:3, &c. The Reader will remember, that I do not decide upon it, I refer him to the passage. But if the Prophet, like the Patriarch, uttered this vehement lamentation, we only learn from both, what a compound of grace and corruption there is in the best of men as men: It is thou only blessed JESUS, of whom it can be said, there was no *guile found in thy lips*; but as *a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so thou openedst not thy mouth*. 1 Peter 2:22, 23.

## REFLECTIONS

OH! *Pashur!* what a vast difference was there even in the moment of thy seeming triumphs, between the suffering Prophet, and the insulting Governor? And what an everlasting and eternal difference was there when his predictions were fulfilled, and thou wert a terror, a *magor-missabib* to thyself and all around thee! And what is it now? Reader think of that striking passage of the Prophet, and learn from it all that it contains; *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him! Woe unto the wicked it shall be ill with him!*

Precious LORD JESUS! how can I hear or read of the reproaches thrown upon thy faithful servants in every age of thy Church, without having my mind insensibly directed to thee, to behold all the lesser exercises of thy prophets, swallowed up in the floods (as the streams of the earth in the vast ocean) of these unequalled sorrows. *Was ever sorrow like unto thy sorrow, in the day of the LORD'S fierce anger?* Here in thee may my soul always find sweet consolation, and under the taunts and reproaches of the world, recollect, that *if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they those of his household.* Grant LORD! that I may never murmur at any of thy dispensations, nor lament the day of my birth, or wish it to have been covered in darkness: but rather desire to be conformed to thy blessed image in all things, that being made partaker of *the sufferings of CHRIST, I may be also of the glory that shall follow.*

## CHAPTER 21

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*This Chapter refers to a period in the reign of Zedekiah. The King felt alarmed at the prospect of the king of Babylon's army, and sends to enquire of Jeremiah concerning the event. The Prophet sends back a heavy answer of evil tidings.*

#### **Jeremiah 21:1-2**

The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying, (2) Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

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It should seem from the parallel history of Zedekiah, 2 Chronicles 36:11, 12. that there was no sincerity in this enquiry: and what good could therefore be expected from it. Alas! how is it that men draw nigh to GOD with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him?

### **Jeremiah 21:3-7**

Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah: (4) Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and *against* the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city. (5) And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath. (6) And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence. (7) And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

The LORD'S answer by the Prophet is such as one might expect, most alarming and awful! Reader! how blessed is it to know the LORD, in order to a proper confidence in him. Sweet is that promise to this amount, Isaiah 32:1, 2.

### **Jeremiah 21:8-10**

And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. (9) He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. (10) For I have set my face against this city for

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evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

As with the priest, so with the people was the prediction of the prophet; see Isaiah 24:1-3. And what an awful state is that nation in, where corruption is universal?

### **Jeremiah 21:11-14**

And touching the house of the king of Judah, *say*, Hear ye the word of the LORD; (12) O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver *him that is* spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings. (13) Behold, I *am* against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, *and* rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations? (14) But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

It was the glory of Jerusalem, and for which the Prophet boasted, that she should be a quiet habitation, whose tabernacle should not be taken down, nor one of her stakes removed. But this was because her glorious LORD would be unto her a place of broad rivers and streams; so that no enemy could approach while her LORD was in the midst of his Zion for a defense. Isaiah 33:20-22. But if the LORD withdraws: if the LORD give her up, who can protect her! Reader! see to it, that JESUS is your glory, and he will be for a defense. Isaiah 8:12-14.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I learn from the perusal of this Chapter; how needful it must be in times of trouble to have first learnt,

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and to have known the LORD in times of safety. What a sad state was Zedekiah and his army in when the King of Babylon's army made war against them. But what a more awful and tremendous state is that man in, when death draweth near, and the LORD is departed from him! Oh! Reader! think, and let the thought never be parted with, until grace hath followed it up to the means of safety in CHRIST! how truly overwhelmed with sorrow must every man be in by nature, whose conscience then condemns, and there is no whisper of JESUS to speak peace? There is no discharge in that war!

LAMB of GOD! oh by every endearing name let me adjure thee to be thyself the safety to all thy redeemed, in thy blood and righteousness! LORD! when a more formidable foe, than even the *Chaldean* army, comes up upon this people, and there is no way in man to escape; do thou take up our person and our cause, and deliver for thy name's sake, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies! Amen.

## CHAPTER 22

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*In this Chapter the Prophet is calling to repentance. Heavy sentences of judgment are pronounced upon Shallum and Coniah.*

#### **Jeremiah 22:1-5**

Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, (2) And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these

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gates: (3) Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. (4) For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. (5) But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.

In the preceding Chapter messengers from the King, were sent to the Prophet, to know the LORD'S will concerning his people. In this, the prophet is sent with a message to the King, and with promises of a most gracious nature, to assure both him and his people, both of peace and prosperity, if they were found obedient to the LORD. But in point of failure, very heavy denunciations are given: and to confirm them, the LORD swears by himself, since he could swear by no greater, that his purposes shall stand: and desolation should follow. Hebrews 6:13.

### **Jeremiah 22:6-9**

For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou *art* Gilead unto me, *and* the head of Lebanon: *yet* surely I will make thee a wilderness, *and* cities *which* are not inhabited. (7) And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast *them* into the fire. (8) And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city? (9) Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.

Nothing can be more tender and endearing on the part of GOD, to show his reluctancy to punish. Comparing his city, and his people, to *Gilead* and *Lebanon*, are striking expressions. *Gilead* and *Lebanon* were very lovely and

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flourishing: but the most lovely places, if brought under GOD'S displeasure, soon become a wilderness. Reader! think what a *Gilead* and *Lebanon* was our nature before sin marred it. Oh! what a desolation by sin! The world, the LORD saith, shall look with astonishment, on the change wrought on his people and City: *is this Zion whom no man regardeth?* Precious LORD JESUS, what an eternal state of ruin to our nature must have taken place, hadst thou not interposed for our recovery, by the sacrifice of thyself! Reader! who would believe the possibility of Israel changing their glory, had not scripture declared it, and for the love and reverence of JEHOVAH, have given their affection to dunghill idols?

### **Jeremiah 22:10-12**

Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: *but* weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country. (11) For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more: (12) But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

It is probable that this *Shallum* is the same person as is elsewhere in the scripture called *Jehoahaz*: See 2 Kings 23:30. In the 1 Chronicles, Chap. 3:15. we have the name of *Shallum* instead of, *Jehoahaz*: so that it is likely that he was known by both names. The LORD'S command, not to weep for one prince, but sorely for another, forms a different view, in what sense the death of the righteous and of the wicked are considered in the sight of GOD. Revelation 14:13. Psalm 116:15.

### **Jeremiah 22:13-19**

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Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; *that* useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; (14) That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and *it is* cieled with cedar, and painted with vermillion. (15) Shalt thou reign, because thou closest *thyself* in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, *and* then *it was* well with him? (16) He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then *it was* well *with him: was* not this to know me? saith the LORD. (17) But thine eyes and thine heart *are* not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do *it*. (18) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! (19) He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

What a solemn woe, this short but pointed sermon begins with: and what an awful close is made of it, in the application to the king. Is it not astonishing, that any Preacher, and at such a time; should have manifested such faithfulness, as to tell the king, that his burial should be the burial of an Ass? And is it not equally astonishing that the Preacher should have been so suffered? How is it to be explained? Surely by no other but the over-ruling power or GOD. Look back to Jeremiah's ordination and commission, this will explain it, Jeremiah 1:17-19.

### **Jeremiah 22:20-28**

Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed. (21) I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; *but* thou saidst, I will not hear. This *hath been* thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice. (22) The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness. (23) O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt

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thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail! (24) *As I live*, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; (25) And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand *of them* whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. (26) And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. (27) But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. (28) *Is* this man Coniah a despised broken idol? *is he* a vessel wherein *is* no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

We have here a similar prediction against *Coniah*: and a very awful one it is. He is to be made a captive, and to die in a foreign land, even in a land of all others he most dreaded and hated. And what sums up the finishing stroke of his misery. He is to be forsaken of the LORD. Some have thought, that as we do not read of any *Coniah*, among the Kings: but *Jeconiah* the son of *Jehoiakim*; that the alteration of his name was to show the LORD'S displeasure. See 2 Kings 24:8. which in the margin of our old Bibles, makes it *Jeconiah*, see 1 Chronicles 3:16. And the striking off the Jah, they say, was a confirmation of this displeasure; as the addition to Abram's name on the contrary, was intended as a token of divine favor. Genesis 17:5.

### **Jeremiah 22:29-30**

O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. (30) Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

What a solemn and awful cry is this to the earth, and thrice repeated! There seems to be more in it than perhaps we can

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fully explain. Giving a personality to the earth, and the hearing ear, which the nation possessed of GOD'S laws had lost, is indeed a most tremendous judgment, and the most finished proof of our fallen estate. Oh! for the heavens and the earth to hear also that the LORD, hath visited his people, and had mercy on his chosen.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! Who can go through a Chapter of such contents as this unmoved! Who, but for GOD'S authority, in his holy word, confirming the melancholy truth, could have believed, that a nation so highly favoured as Israel, should have sunk so foully. But look we within, and there read the same, sad pages of the human heart. *Are we better than they?* Solemn question of the Apostle. And as sad an answer. *No! in no wise: for he hath concluded all under sin!* Blessed LORD JESUS! was it indeed necessary that thy people should be thus taught in Israel's history, what they also are by nature and by practice? Hath GOD the HOLY GHOST held up in them a faithful mirror, to show what all men are? And must thy people, still look and still learn by way of keeping up remembrance, such once were we: but we are *washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD*. Help LORD then all thy people, to see and know more and more that in themselves they are all as despised idols, as broken vessels, wherein is no water! And if now they are renewed, and made as *Gilead*, and as *Lebanon* to thee: it is thou LORD that art the sole cause of their recovery. Oh! precious JESUS, how increasingly precious art thou to thy people, who see their need of thee more and more, and are

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desirous of living to thee here by faith, that ere long they may live in thee, and by thee, in glory to all eternity. Amen.

## CHAPTER 23

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*We have in this Chapter a blessed and gracious word of comfort succeeding the awful message, in the preceding Chapter. And what tends to make this Chapter most eminently blessed to the Church is, the glorious account given in it under the spirit of prophecy of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

#### **Jeremiah 23:1-4**

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. (2) Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. (3) And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. (4) And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

It is blessed to observe, how from the unworthiness of man the LORD takes occasion to magnify the riches of his grace. Not that our misery is the cause of divine mercy: for his love was long before we had any sense of our need of it, or even our being: but, though the love of JEHOVAH from all eternity was the source and spring of all our blessings; yet even our worthlessness, the LORD takes occasion from, to introduce yet

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more striking marks of his grace and goodness. Thus as in this Chapter, Foolish and destructive pastors make way for the LORD'S faithful One: and because man cannot, the LORD himself will, both gather and feed his sheep from all places, whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day! Ezekiel 34:10-12. Oh! grace divine: mercy unequalled!

### **Jeremiah 23:5-6**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. (6) In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Here are two verses, which contain an epitome of the whole Bible; CHRIST and his offices; CHRIST and his work; CHRIST and his character: all that refers to his glorious Person and finished salvation, is implied in what is here said. The passage opens with a *behold!* regard, take notice, as a thing of immense consequence: and of immense consequence indeed it is. The *day* here spoken of, is as similar to all the other like phrases in the Prophet, the gospel day, the day of salvation. JESUS, under the similitude of a *Branch* is pointed at, and most divinely proclaimed. Several of the Prophets described CHRIST by this same representation. Isaiah 4:2. Zechariah 3:8. and 6:12. And in express allusion to the house of David, from whom CHRIST after the flesh was to arise, the Prophet described him, Isaiah 11:1, 2. How plainly these representations, refer to the LORD JESUS, and in him were completed, and in no other the beloved Apostle shows, Revelation 22:16. His royal office is also strongly spoken of. And how fully is CHRIST shown to be King in Zion, King of

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Nations, King of Saints; the Church's head and husband, the smallest reference to the scriptures will prove. Psalm 2:6. Ephesians 1:20, 21, &c, Revelation 19:16. And what a volume of blessings and mercies are summed up all in one, in that comprehensive account the Prophet gives of the properties of his royal grace and power. Both Israel and Judah, both Jew and Gentile, shall be alike interested in his salvation. His name shall be the full redemption of his people: And this, not only from what he is in himself, and in his own glorious and Almighty character, but, in the relationship in which he hath put himself to his people, and in which by grace they stand in him. JEHOVAH in himself eternal; and JEHOVAH perfect righteousness, and JEHOVAH *our* righteousness. For what he is, he is to them, and for them, and his righteousness, by virtue of this union with him is to all intents and purposes theirs; for he is made of GOD to them all these, *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*; so that they stand in the sight of GOD, one with him, and as a part of himself: And JEHOVAH declares, that this shall not only be the case; but that the people shall know it, and proclaim it, as those who rejoice in it, and take delight: they shall call him so: and live in the enjoyment of it. Was there ever anything more blessed, or ever anything more gracious. Reader! if our hearts take no interest in this most precious scripture, they must be cold indeed!

### **Jeremiah 23:7-8**

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; (8) But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

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In consequence of this great salvation, when the LORD JESUS is come, and hath fully finished it, the former deliverance from Egypt, which was but a type of it, shall then be done away, as the shadow is lost in the substance. Both the deliverance of the Church from Egypt, and the deliverance from Babylon were types of JESUS'S deliverance from worse than Egyptian and Babylonian bondage. They were temporary, but this an eternal freedom. In allusion to this the Church is represented as singing, Revelation 18:2, &c.

### **Jeremiah 23:9-14**

Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness. (10) For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force *is* not right. (11) For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD. (12) Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery *ways* in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, *even* the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. (13) And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err. (14) I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

The Prophet is here representing the horrible state of false prophets, and the awful termination of such conduct. A portion suited not only to the days of Jeremiah but to all ages of the Church. LORD! give grace to all concerned to attend to it.

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**Jeremiah 23:15-40**

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. (16) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, *and* not out of the mouth of the LORD. (17) They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. (18) For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard *it*? (19) Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. (20) The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. (21) I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. (22) But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. (23) *Am* I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? (24) Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. (25) I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. (26) How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart; (27) Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. (28) The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. (29) *Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces? (30) Therefore, behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. (31) Behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. (32) Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and

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cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD. (33) And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What *is* the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD. (34) And *as for* the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house. (35) Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken? (36) And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God. (37) Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken? (38) But since ye say, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD; (39) Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, *and cast you* out of my presence: (40) And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

At the opening of this passage, we have the LORD'S sentence upon them, and an awful one it is. Wormwood and gall are strong figures to set forth the awful bitterness in the close of such a life! Prophets not sent, not commissioned, and who utter lies among GOD'S people; what can be more awful. But the LORD hath marked out a right method of judgment, for such as hear them. As pure wheat is discoverable from chaff; so the pure doctrine of the cross is discoverable from the vain doctrine of the pride of men. The FATHER'S love in redemption, and the SON'S grace in the accomplishment of it, when taught the soul by GOD the HOLY GHOST, will prove, that this word is as fire, and as the hammer, both to break and to inflame, the souls of the hearers, with the truth of salvation. And though

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faithful Preachers, who call upon their people to attend to these things, may be made the jest and the sneer of the Infidel, concerning the burden of the LORD: yet such only mock to their own confusion, and bring upon themselves swift destruction!

## REFLECTIONS

READER! while this Chapter in the awful close of it, holds forth most powerful instructions concerning true and false teachers in the Church of GOD; and which are in themselves enough to call forth the most awakened attention to all that are concerned in the ministry of GOD'S word: let us pray over this part with earnestness, that the LORD may commission what is here said to their solemn conviction. But let you and I dwell with delight on the former part of this most blessed Chapter, in which we find so much said, and so blessedly said, concerning Him, who is the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS. Let us look stedfastly and steadily to him, who comes home thus recommended to us, under this endearing character, and let us not lose sight of Him, until that we have so looked, and so loved, and so believed, unto salvation, as to know, that he is indeed the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Reader! You and I cannot but know, that we both need a righteousness: for *without holiness no man can see the LORD*. And as we have not this holiness in ourselves, it is high time that we should seek it in another. And this righteousness is nowhere to be found but in CHRIST. Now if you and I are taught, savingly taught of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who CHRIST is, and what he hath wrought, that *he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of*

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GOD *in him*; then shall we indeed know Him, and call Him, by this glorious name, the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS. Let us beg of GOD the SPIRIT, to be our teacher, and to bring home CHRIST to our hearts in all his loveliness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. Let us seek with earnestness that unspeakable blessing, to know that He *is made of GOD to us wisdom, and righteousness; sanctification and redemption, that all our glorying may be in the LORD*. Then shall we have that blessed soul experience, which is spoken of by the Prophet, and both our life and conversation will be the same. *Surely shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come; and all that believe in him shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. Amen.*

## CHAPTER 24

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*Under the similitude of good and bad figs, the LORD showeth the state of his faithful people, and the sad end of the ungodly.*

#### **Jeremiah 24:1-3**

The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs *were* set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. (2) One basket *had* very good figs, *even* like the figs *that are* first ripe: and the other basket *had* very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. (3) Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

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The date of this part of Jeremiah's prophecy is given, perhaps with a view, that the reference made in it might be the stronger. Many of the people were at this time in Babylon, carried away in the captivity of *Jeconiah*. And it should seem, that these were among the most zealous and faithful of the people. The Prophets *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* were at this time in *Babylon* with many of the princes. If we consult the first Chapter of *Ezekiel*, verses 2, 3. and the first of *Daniel* verse 6, we shall find it so, as appears by the date mentioned.

### **Jeremiah 24:4-10**

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (5) Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for *their* good. (6) For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull *them* down; and I will plant them, and not pluck *them* up. (7) And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. (8) And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: (9) And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for *their* hurt, *to be* a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. (10) And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

Here the LORD himself becomes the Preacher to the Prophet, and explains. The bad figs, represented Zedekiah and his court, still in the land, but against whom, the LORD would in his own appointed time bring the army from Babylon. And the good figs, referred to the LORD'S faithful ones, now in

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captivity. Reader! it is blessed to mark the final issue of all things. *Tell ye the righteous it shall be well with him. Say ye to the wicked it shall be ill with him.* Isaiah 3:10, 11. But while this is and must be the comfort and consolation of the redeemed; they cannot but feel concern at general calamities, and take part with the sorrows of desolation. That is a sweet promise of the LORD, on this account, Zephaniah 3:18.

## REFLECTIONS

I BEG the Reader to make due reflections on the contents of this short but most interesting Chapter, and he will find cause in making application of what is here said, in reference to the times of the Church then in being, to see how much the people of GOD are concerned at all times to consider the same doctrine. Both upon a civil, and upon a religious account; times of national distress, are times of great concern. If the good figs as well as the bad figs were to be carried away, we learn from it, that in outward things there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked. Like passengers in a vessel, if the ship founders, all on board partake of the same. And though GOD'S people are preserved from eternal shipwreck by grace; yet in temporal concerns, the LORD saith, *I will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.* Reader! let us pray for grace, to take part in all the national afflictions of our land, and to sympathize with all the sorrows of the people. But while we do this, let us look up and bless that gracious GOD, who hath placed our spiritual concerns out of the reach of danger. Precious JESUS, in thy hands, all the concerns of thy people,

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both their persons and their interests are eternally secure. Blessed, forever blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST.

## CHAPTER 25

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*The Prophet is here preaching to the people, and in the usual strain of reproof. But in the midst of threatening he is commissioned to introduce a gracious promise, that the captivity shall not exceed the seventy years before pointed out.*

#### **Jeremiah 25:1-7**

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that *was* the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; (2) The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, (3) From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that *is* the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. (4) And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. (5) They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: (6) And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. (7) Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

Both the time when, and the manner how, and the subject of, the Prophet's sermon are here set down, with the sad event

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of the whole, in that no man regarded. Neither *Jeremiah* nor the Prophets had the least avail in all their preaching. Reader, do not however overlook the plan of their preaching. It was in the morning early, and no doubt in the evening also. But alas! three and twenty years, or three and twenty thousand, had it been possible, until GOD gives the hearing ear, will prove alike unavailing. I cannot close our review of this passage, until that I have first requested the Reader to turn to the gospel, and read our LORD'S parable to the same purport, Luke 13:6-9. Oh! precious JESUS! who shall say to what extent is thy gracious intercession, and how much we owe to it!

### **Jeremiah 25:8-11**

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, (9) Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. (10) Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. (11) And this whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

I pray the Reader to observe, how the King of Babylon is called the LORD'S servant. Yes! for the LORD will serve himself of his enemies, when the purposes of his sacred will, render it necessary. In this sense, the King of Babylon is JEHOVAH'S servant, but, like *Cyrus*, knew not the LORD. See Isaiah 45:4.

### **Jeremiah 25:12-14**

And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the

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LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. (13) And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, *even* all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. (14) For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.

Here is a gracious promise, (and which was most faithfully fulfilled in the season) given with a view to support the minds of the faithful, during their long captivity. I pray the Reader to mark it down, and not overlook it, in order to keep in remembrance the long-suffering of God. And I beg of him also, at the same time to keep, as steadily in remembrance the cause, even GOD'S covenant., See Daniel 9:1, 2. Psalm 89:30-35.

### **Jeremiah 25:15-31**

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. (16) And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. (17) Then took I the cup at the LORD'S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me: (18) *To wit*, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as *it is* this day; (19) Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; (20) And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, (21) Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, (22) And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which *are* beyond the sea, (23) Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all *that are* in the utmost corners, (24) And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert, (25) And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, (26) And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with

another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which *are* upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them. (27) Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you. (28) And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink. (29) For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts. (30) Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread *the grapes*, against all the inhabitants of the earth. (31) A noise shall come *even* to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them *that are* wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.

This scripture can need no other comment, than what is contained in the book of the Revelations, Chap. 14:10. By Jeremiah's taking the cup, and making all these nations drink of it, is meant, making them to hear and know that the wrath of GOD is coming upon them. The LORD had indeed been chastizing his children: but when that was accomplished, the rod should be burnt or destroyed.

### **Jeremiah 25:32-38**

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. (33) And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground. (34) Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves *in the ashes*, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. (35) And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock

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to escape. (36) A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, *shall be heard*: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture. (37) And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the LORD. (38) He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

In these verses is described, the sad consequence of divine judgments. The King of Babylon and his confederates, may seemingly for a time triumph: but their end shall be, like Moab of old, to perish forever. Numbers 24:24. Revelation 18:4-10.

## REFLECTIONS

DEAREST LORD JESUS! who can read the sad requital thy faithful servants met with in all ages of the Church, when rising early and speaking to the people, without calling to mind the awful state of the Jews rejecting thee, the LORD of life and glory, when thou camest to thine own, and thine own received thee not, How did Jerusalem, the holy city, kill thy prophets, and despise thy word, when thou wouldest have gathered her people, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and they would not. And yet, blessed LORD, thy patience was not exhausted, neither thy love given over, for in the moment of thy departure, when giving thy farewell commission to thy disciples, to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature, the charter of grace still ran the same, *beginning at Jerusalem*. Oh! for grace always to keep in remembrance, that love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge.

And LORD, I pray thee, that I may always preserve alive through thine HOLY SPIRIT in me the remembrance of thy grace to thy Church, during the seventy years captivity: and the sure fulfillment of thy Covenant promise, in bringing thy people from it. Even, so LORD now, all thy promises, and all thine engagements are the same, and like the great Author and Finisher of salvation; they remain eternally, and unchangeably the same, yesterday, and to-day; and forever. GOD be blessed and adored in all his faithfulness, and truth, made to a thousand generations: and before ever blessed in all his redeemed, and their enjoyment of them, from henceforth and forever. Amen.

## CHAPTER 26

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*The Prophet Jeremiah continuing still to prophesy, so irritated the carnal Jews, that they arose against him to put him to death; but the LORD delivered him. In this Chapter this history is related.*

#### **Jeremiah 26:1-7**

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: (3) If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings. (4) And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, (5) To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I

sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending *them*, but ye have not hearkened; (6) Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth. (7) So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.

It is impossible to read the continued perseverance of the mournful Prophet, and to hear the sad subject of the peoples neglect of his preaching, but with much exercise and pain of the mind. Reader! is not the same part acted over again, against faithful ministers of the LORD, in the present hour? Are there not thousands who reject the counsel of GOD against their own souls, and both neglect and despise the Preacher, and his word, as much as those of old? What can be an higher proof of the fall of men? What afford a greater testimony of the ascendancy of Satan in the human mind by nature?

### **Jeremiah 26:8-15**

Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. (9) Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD. (10) When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S *house*. (11) Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears. (12) Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. (13) Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the

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evil that he hath pronounced against you. (14) As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. (15) But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

Is there anything new or wonderful in this? What servant, what Prophet, what Apostle, eminent in their LORD'S service, but hath been brought into the same situation. Nay, what was the LORD himself, when witnessing before Pontius Pilate a good confession, but the same. Oh! how blessed to be a witness for the testimony of JESUS!

### **Jeremiah 26:16-24**

Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man *is* not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God. (17) Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, (18) Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed *like* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. (19) Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls. (20) And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah: (21) And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt; (22) And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, *namely*, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *certain* men with him into Egypt. (23) And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people. (24)

Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

I pray the Reader to observe with me, who were the enemies of faithful *Jeremiah*: namely, the unfaithful priests. Oh! what a reproach is it to any age, and to every age of the Church, that the Redeemer should be wounded in the house of his friends, and that those, who profess his name, should be the first to persecute his people. Reader! do not overlook, that *Jeremiah* was not singular in his services. *Micah* in his days, and *Urijah* in his, were both brought into danger, for being found faithful. That must be a most accommodating, time-serving, and worldly spirit, which chimes in with the wishes of the people, in speaking smooth things and prophesying deceits. The resolution of Paul will bring upon every preacher his odium. To preach CHRIST crucified and CHRIST glorified, is to provoke hell. The offence of the Cross hath never ceased, and never will. Oh! for faithful ministers, to do as *Jeremiah* did, and leave the event with the LORD. 1 Corinthians 2:2.

## REFLECTIONS

YE ministers of the LORD JESUS! here learn from *Jeremiah* the blessedness of being found faithful. Solemnly enlisted under the banner of CHRIST, plead his cause, and fight his battle, with an ungodly world, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. And as the LORD hath said, *fear ye not the reproaches of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but your LORD'S righteousness shall be for ever, and his salvation from generation to generation.*

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And oh! thou Almighty LORD of thy servants! do thou stand by them, and help them; give them to see and know, that it is thy cause they plead, and that thou art engaged for their defense. Make them a sweet savour of thyself unto GOD and the FATHER; and though a gazing stock, and a proverb of derision to the world, do thou own and bless their labours to the conversion of sinners, and the comforting of saints; that when thou, the Great Shepherd of thy fold shall appear, they may rejoice before thee at thy coming, and receive a *crown of glory, that fadeth not away.*

## CHAPTER 27

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*Jeremiah in this Chapter is addressing the other nations around, at the command of GOD, to tell them of their shortly being subject to the King of Babylon. Towards the close of the Chapter, the Prophet admonisheth the King of Judah to the same.*

#### **Jeremiah 27:1-8**

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck, (3) And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah; (4) And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; (5) I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet

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unto me. (6) And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. (7) And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. (8) And it shall come to pass, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

The time of this prophecy is noted, but it should seem, that though the word of the LORD came to *Jeremiah* then, he did not deliver it till a considerable space after, *for Jekoiakim's* reign at the beginning, was many years before *Zedekiah*. But the doctrine is the same. Let the Reader observe from what is here said, how the LORD governeth all nations: and that it is *by him Kings reign; and princes decree justice*. Sweet and consolatory thought to the believer in JESUS! Proverbs 8:15.

### **Jeremiah 27:9-11**

Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: (10) For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish. (11) But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.

I only detain the Reader on these verses to remark, how in all ages, the Church of GOD hath been infested by false prophets. With what caution ought men to hear!

### **Jeremiah 27:12-15**

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I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. (13) Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? (14) Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you. (15) For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

This must have been a painful service to Jeremiah, to go from one to another, and with messages of evil. All GOD'S servants have done the same. Ezekiel 2:3, 6.

### **Jeremiah 27:16-22**

Also I spake to the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the LORD'S house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you. (17) Hearken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste? (18) But if they *be* prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and *in* the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon. (19) For thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city, (20) Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem; (21) Yea, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain *in* the house of the LORD, and *in* the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem; (22) They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the LORD; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.

Both Prophets and Priests are deceived, and the LORD seems to have made his servant *Jeremiah* a wonder of truth in the midst of falsehood. Is it not so very often now? Are there not always those who speak smooth things, who prophecy deceits? Oh! for the LORD GOD of the Prophets to be the teacher of his people.

## REFLECTIONS

PAUSE Reader! and behold the wretched state of false prophets! for the wretched hire of this world's favor, and to please men, what will they not do. Though the LORD sent his faithful servant Jeremiah, both to the nations around and to Judah, with assurance that the King of Babylon should come, and take them away into captivity; yet allured by those false prophesiers of deceit, they were lulled to their ruin, and put off all consideration of the evil day, until the tremendous event came upon them. Pause Reader! and then ask, is it not too often the case now? Doth not the gospel of salvation uniformly denounce evil upon all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men! Are not we assured again and again, that *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in GOD's sight*: and that nothing but *the blood of CHRIST can cleanse from all sin*? How are these truths received by the great mass of men? Are they not considered by them as idle tales, and believed not? Oh! for grace, and the teachings of the HOLY SPIRIT, to bring them home to the heart, and to rivet them on the mind. Blessed JESUS! take thy cause into thine own Almighty hand. Bring down every rebellious, every self-aspiring thought; and cause every knee to bow to thee, and to the sovereignty of thy power, until thou hast subdued the

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nations to the sceptre of thy grace, and made all confess, that JESUS CHRIST *is* LORD *to the glory of* GOD the FATHER. Amen.

## CHAPTER 28

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*In the preceding Chapter the false prophets were generally spoken of, in their making the people to trust in lies. In this we have an example of one more impudent and bold than his fellows. The awful termination of his career is here recorded.*

#### **Jeremiah 28:1-4**

And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, *and* in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which *was* of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, (2) Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. (3) Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD'S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: (4) And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.

I hardly know anything in scripture more striking, and what tends to interest the feelings of the Reader more sensibly, than this short but affecting Chapter. The Prophet Jeremiah knew himself to have been called to the Prophetic office from the womb. (See Chapter 1.) But he had to contend with all the malice and contradiction of the world, as well as the powers of darkness all the way. We have here one of the sons

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of the Prophets publicly standing up to oppose and confront him. And that, not in a private insinuating manner: but in an open, bold, and avowed contradiction of all that Jeremiah had said. Let the Reader figure to himself the congregation of the people all assembled in the house of the LORD: and then behold the son of the Prophet Hananiah, standing up to disprove the whole of Jeremiah's preaching; and delivering the whole of what he professed to prophesy, in the name, and by the authority of the LORD. This will give him a lively idea of the subject of this Chapter.

### **Jeremiah 28:5-9**

Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the LORD, (6) Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD'S house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place. (7) Nevertheless hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people; (8) The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. (9) The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, *then* shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him.

It is hardly possible to conceive, what were the feelings of Jeremiah upon this occasion. He could not indeed, but know in himself, that what Hananiah had said, must be false; but yet from the natural unbelief that is by nature in every man's heart, he might for the moment, be tempted to doubt, whether the LORD had not indeed sent Hananiah. Besides the heart of Jeremiah as well as the hearts of all the people, naturally leaned to a wish, that what Hananiah had prophesied might prove true. So that under these

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circumstances, Jeremiah no doubt felt himself most dreadfully exercised. And as the false prophet Hananiah had very artfully referred the decision of his prophecy to two full years; of consequence, if the matter rested upon the event, before it could be determined, the minds of the people would not be enabled to discover, on which side the truth was, until the period had fully run out. Ministers of JESUS in the present hour, as well as the faithful Prophets of old, know what it is to be so exercised.

### **Jeremiah 28:10-11**

Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it. (11) And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

What impudence do men proceed to, when hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Jeremiah had constantly worn a wooden yoke around his neck, as he walked up and down among the people, both to enforce the truths he preached, by type as well as by word. And Hananiah it is plain, considered the Prophet's yoke in this point of view. By breaking it therefore, and taking it from Jeremiah, he showed the bitterness of his heart, against the poor despised, and mournful prophet, and vented all that he dared to do, to testify his contempt of his person and preaching. Reader! it is blessed in the present hour, that GOD'S faithful servants have the protection of the law: for otherwise, the malice of hell would break out in open acts of violence, against the LORD'S servants. As they did by Stephen, so would carnal men in all ages do to all, and gnash upon them with their teeth. Acts

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7:54. I beg the Reader, not to overlook the peaceable and meek temper of Jeremiah upon this occasion, in going his way. And while the Reader remarks the conduct of the servant, I hope he will not need to be reminded of the unequalled patience of the Master, who *when he was reviled, reviled not again*. Oh! precious, precious LORD JESUS! in all things thou must have the preeminence. 1 Peter 2:23.

### **Jeremiah 28:12-14**

Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah *the prophet*, after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, (13) Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. (14) For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

With what blessedness doth the LORD make known to his servants in their retirements, the sacred purposes of his will. No doubt though it be not related in this place, the Prophet Jeremiah when he left Hananiah, and went his way, went to spread the whole matter; like another Hezekiah, before the LORD, Isaiah 37:14. Where shall a poor exercised soul go, but to a throne of grace? Where shall a servant opposed in his message relate the reception he hath met with, but to his Master? Oh! it is most blessed in all things; *by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving to make our requests known unto God*. And the promise is absolute and encouraging. See Proverbs 3:6. Psalm 25:14.

### **Jeremiah 28:15-16**

Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest

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this people to trust in a lie. (16) Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD.

Behold Reader! what holy boldness the LORD imparts to his faithful servants. It doth not appear by what was said in the former verses, when the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, that it was revealed to him of Hananiah's death. And yet observe, Jeremiah not only pronounced his death, but limited the time. He had said, that within *two* years, the people should be delivered from the fear of the King of Babylon. Now Jeremiah limits Hananiah's death to *one*. I beg the Reader to remark this, and to turn to other passages in the word of GOD, to observe how the LORD doth at times, thus give sanction to the message of his faithful servants. See Numbers 6:28-33. Acts 13:8-11.

### **Jeremiah 28:17**

So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.

This is but a short verse, but it is a most awful one. The HOLY GHOST hath made a great emphasis of it. So Hananiah the prophet died. And not only the same year, but within two months from the time, that he taught rebellion against the LORD. *Two years* he had limited to the fulfillment of his lies. And *two months* only the LORD limited to the fulfillment of his iniquity. Reader! pause and ponder well the awfulness of such a character! See another such a death. Luke 16:22, 23.

## REFLECTIONS

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READER! Can any portion of GOD'S holy word speak more decidedly or more awfully, in determining between true and false Prophets and Teachers, than what is said in this Chapter.

Who that had been present at *Hananiah's* message, as he solemnly prefaced, what he had to say in the name of the LORD, but would have taken part with him, leaning so much as it did to the side of mercy? And who but would have looked at *Jeremiah* with displeasure, as one that had been making the people sorrowful, with unnecessary alarms? But what an awful reverse of circumstances soon took place, to determine their true character. And are there not *Hananiah's* in the present hour? Do not many come forth in the LORD'S name, whom the LORD never sent? And do not they cause men to trust in lies, saying, *peace, peace, when there is no peace*. Robbing the Redeemer of his glory, and precious souls of their true happiness: in bolstering sinners up in the false confidence of their own righteousness, instead of preaching CHRIST to the people?

LORD! do thou countenance all thy faithful *Jeremiah's* of gospel times, and stop the mouths of them that run unsent, who speak smooth things, and prophecy deceits. Manifest the truth of thine own cause, and let not thy people be brought under their delusions: but give to all thy redeemed, Pastors after thine own heart, that may instruct and feed thy people with true understanding and knowledge.

## CHAPTER 29

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*We have in this Chapter an account of the Prophet Jeremiah's letter, which he sent to the captives in Babylon. Here is also the fearful doom pronounced by the LORD, upon two lying prophets.*

**Jeremiah 29:1-3**

Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon; (2) (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;) (3) By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,

The Reader will recollect, that at this time many of the people were already gone into captivity, and the false prophets, and time-serving persons of the party, were budding up the hopes of the people, as Hananiah had done at home, with assurances of their speedy return to their own land. Jeremiah being better taught of the LORD, here sets himself to correct their mistaken notions on this point, and, therefore sends a letter to them on the subject.

**Jeremiah 29:4-7**

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; (5) Build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; (6) Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. (7) And seek the peace of the city whither I have

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caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

He first endeavours to reconcile their minds to the LORD'S determination. Seventy years were appointed for their captivity: and therefore, he recommends the people to live and act as persons who were not travellers, that turned in to tarry for a night. The LORD'S will must be accomplished. Here is a gracious lesson to the people of GOD, to be gathered from hence in all ages. In a nation's peace, the Church of GOD shall have peace. See that ye pray for it therefore, and promote it by all the lawful means in your power. 1 Timothy 2:1, 2.

### **Jeremiah 29:8-9**

For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that *be* in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. (9) For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

There have been, and there always will be, as long as the Church continues militant upon earth, persons to prophecy smooth things, to prophecy deceits, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace. It began with the first lie of hell, in the garden of Eden. Genesis 3:3, 4.

### **Jeremiah 29:10-14**

For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. (11) For 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. (12) Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. (13) And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (14) And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your

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captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

I pray the Reader to pause over these gracious expressions of the LORD. They are suited to the LORD'S exercised family, in all ages, at all times, and under all the sorrows of their estate. Mark how many the promises are, and let them be to you for a token of GOD'S faithfulness.

### **Jeremiah 29:15-19**

Because ye have said, The LORD hath raised us up prophets in Babylon; (16) *Know* that thus saith the LORD of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, *and* of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity; (17) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. (18) And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: (19) Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them*; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.

That the Church might perfectly consider and understand the cause of this Captivity: and that in general sins there should be general calamities, the LORD declares the same or similar evils, for those not gone into captivity, as for those that were. *All have sinned, and come short of GOD'S glory. No flesh can glory in his presence.* Romans 3:10-23.

### **Jeremiah 29:20-23**

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Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon: (21) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes; (22) And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which *are* in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire; (23) Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and *am* a witness, saith the LORD.

What an awful judgment is here denounced upon false prophets! All rebellious children shall be punished; but they who both rebel themselves, and teach others to rebel, shall have a tenfold judgment, even to become a proverb of reproach. Oh! what a lesson is here, within a short compass, to false teachers and ministers in the house of the LORD!

### **Jeremiah 29:24-32**

*Thus* shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying, (25) Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that *are* at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, (26) The LORD hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the LORD, for every man *that is* mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldst put him in prison, and in the stocks. (27) Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you? (28) For therefore he sent unto us *in* Babylon, saying, This *captivity is* long: build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. (29) And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet. (30) Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, (31) Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning

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Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie: (32) Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.

I cannot help admiring the gracious providence of GOD over the Church, in that the events which took place in one age, so exactly corresponds to what takes place in another: as if to prove to GOD'S faithful ones, that in all ages they must and shall suffer persecution. Reader! do not fail to remark, how the faithful writings of Jeremiah is opposed by the lying writings of Shemaiah and his fellows. And doth not every generation bring forth the same? But oh! behold how the LORD himself interposeth! And thus depend upon it, in all ages the LORD is still looking on and will uphold his servants, and silence all their opposers. Oh! it is blessed to be on the LORD'S side, and to be found in his truth.

### *REFLECTIONS*

READER! after that you have made, under divine teaching, your most serious contemplations on the different subjects proposed, from true and false prophets brought before you in this Chapter; there is a train of thoughts opened to your view, in a portion of the contents of it, to which I would beg to direct more immediately, both your meditation and my own. I mean, in that unequalled grace and goodness manifested by the LORD, in the midst of all his people's rebellion and sin, as set forth in this Chapter. After seventy years, saith the LORD, be accomplished, I will visit you, and perform my good word

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towards you. Reader! is not this the constant tenor and precious words of the whole charter of grace? What is GOD'S good word towards his people, but the word of GOD in CHRIST JESUS? What is the performance of JEHOVAH'S promise, but the promise of redemption in CHRIST, which he purposed in himself before the world began? And what is the whole coming of JESUS, to deliver from worse than Babylonish captivity, even from sin, death and hell; but to perform *the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy Covenant?* Oh! what a thought is it, amidst all my rebellious ways, and after all my unworthy views of divine goodness, that *his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways.* JESUS saith, and GOD the FATHER saith, and let me never forget the gracious declarations: *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD: thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end!* Do LORD! I would say, as thou hast said. Help my soul to pray to thee, and to seek for thee, as for hidden treasure, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul. And do thou LORD, gather thy Church, thy redeemed, thy people, from all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day; yea LORD, bring them all home to thy flock, and manifest that thou art their GOD, and that they are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture. Amen.

## CHAPTER 30

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*We have in this Chapter and the following, the Prophet comforting his people with comfortable words indeed. Both*

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*the Chapters are full of gospel, and of gospel promises, from beginning to end.*

### **Jeremiah 30:1-3**

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, (2) Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. (3) For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

Reader! it is your mercy and mine, as well as the Church at large, that the LORD commanded his servant, not simply to *preach* these glorious things here delivered, but to commit them to *writing*. And every word is indeed most precious. And do not fail to observe, how the LORD speaks of them: *my people Israel and Judah*, saith the LORD. Oh! precious JESUS! what a sweet thought is it, that thy people in thee are indeed a people, the LORD hath chosen for himself, and who shall show forth his praise, Isaiah 63:21.

### **Jeremiah 30:4-9**

And these *are* the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. (5) For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. (6) Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? (7) Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. (8) For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: (9) But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

I do not presume to decide, but I would humbly propose a subject of enquiry, and in answer to this question, whether a man doth travail with child, I would say, is not the miraculous conception and incarnation of the LORD JESUS referred to? None but JESUS travailed in birth for souls: and his sold agonies were great indeed. To none but Him, could that promise refer, Isaiah 53:11. And that CHRIST the Messiah, for the David here mentioned is spoken of, is abundantly evident, for David king of Israel had been long gathered to his fathers, and had seen corruption, when the Prophet Jeremiah exercised his ministry in the Church.

### **Jeremiah 30:10-11**

Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid. (11) For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

The Reader will not fail to remark, without being reminded of it, (for the language of this sweet passage will of itself suggest the thought) what a striking similarity there is in what is here said, to what the Prophet Isaiah delivered before on the same blessed subject, Isaiah 43:1, &c.

### **Jeremiah 30:12-20**

For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise *is* incurable, *and* thy wound *is* grievous. (13) *There is* none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. (14) All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; *because* thy sins were increased. (15) Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow *is*

incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: *because* thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. (16) Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. (17) For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, *saying*, This *is* Zion, whom no man seeketh after. (18) Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. (19) And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. (20) Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.

I stay not to detain the Reader with any observations upon this blessed passage, though in itself it would invite some of the most delightful. But the gracious things here spoken of, both in a way of judgment and mercy, are so plain and so very obvious that they can need no comment. The LORD points out the awful state of his people by the fall, and their total inability to any recovery in themselves: and thus, from impressing on their minds their undeservings, he heightens the riches of his grace in their redemption!

### **Jeremiah 30:21-22**

And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who *is* this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD. (22) And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

I cannot forbear desiring the Reader to pause over this short, but most comprehensive passage, so full as it is of CHRIST,

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and pointing to him as it doth with a direction so truly blessed. GOD finds all that is said here in Covenant love, and traces all the blessings bestowed upon his people up to this one source: *ye shall be my people, and I will be your GOD!* And, considered in this point, how truly blessed is it to behold JESUS as our governor, in our midst, arising out of his own people, concerning whom he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Him, the LORD GOD our FATHER, will cause to draw near to himself. But who but JESUS could engage his heart to this service? Reader: can your mind imagine anything more blessed, than thus to behold CHRIST, so plainly foretold, as engaging his heart to approach GOD for his people, as their Surety and Mediator; and JEHOVAH putting his blessed hand to the work, in causing him to draw near? Oh! precious, precious truth, of a thrice and tenfold precious GOD in CHRIST, *reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.*

### **Jeremiah 30:23-24**

Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. (24) The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done *it*, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

Here is an awful close to the Chapter after such unspeakable mercies as were just before delivered. But then let it be remembered, it is awful only to the enemies of our GOD and of his CHRIST. The terrors threatened are said to fall upon the head of the wicked.

## REFLECTIONS

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READER! amidst very many beauties in this Chapter, let you and I fix our meditation, and pray that GOD the HOLY GHOST will make it profitable to us both, in beholding Him, concerning whom GOD the FATHER here speaks of being the Governor from among his people. And while we regard the gracious promise, and behold the LORD JESUS at the call of his FATHER, coming forth as the Great Head and Surety of his people; let us behold him in every possible point of view, and see how suited he is in that high character, and how suited to us for all the purposes of salvation.

Doth our GOD and FATHER demand who this is that engaged his heart to approach unto the LORD for his people? And may we not humbly, yet joyfully answer, it is the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS. One, and the only one, able to make up the dreadful breach which sin had made, between GOD and us, and restore perfect order among all the works of GOD. One who is, and was, and ever will be, mighty to save: *one with the FATHER, over all GOD blessed for ever: and one with us bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.* One who is called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty GOD, the everlasting FATHER, the Prince of peace!*

Oh precious LORD JESUS! help us to be engaged to thee, as thou hast engaged thyself to GOD and thy FATHER for us! Say dearest LORD! how should any of Adam's fallen, ruined, helpless race have ever stood before GOD, hadst not thou stood up at the call of GOD for us, and answered in our law room and place, both by doing and by dying. Oh! for grace from henceforth to give up all engagements, to sacrifice all human covenants, all hopes of creature strength, and creature attainments, to be found wholly engaged to CHRIST,

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and to follow him in the regeneration. Do thou LORD, who hast undertaken and accomplished salvation *for* us, accomplish salvation *in* us, and be *in* us *the hope of glory*. Let every faculty, every wish, every thought; be brought into subjection unto thee; that henceforth, we may no longer live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again. Make us thine, and be thou ours, that *being bought with a price, we may glorify thee, both in our bodies and in our spirit, which are thine for ever*. Amen.

## CHAPTER 31

### CONTENTS

*This seems to be but a continuation of the former Chapter; and a most blessed continuation it is! We have here, the LORD speaking most graciously to his people; and giving them exceeding great and precious promises in CHRIST, confirmed with all the sanction and authority of JEHOVAH.*

#### **Jeremiah 31:1**

At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

The first observation, that I desire to offer on this most glorious chapter is, to mark to the Reader, the repeated confirmation we meet with of its blessed contents, in a *thus*, and a *thus saith the LORD*. No less than *one and twenty times*, within the space of forty verses, doth JEHOVAH graciously condescend to set his seal of authority to the merciful promises delivered, by the mention of his own great and incommunicable name. Reader! I beseech you never to

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overlook this, in whatever part of the Sacred Word it occurs. It is the testimony of JEHOVAH, which becomes the ground and warrant of our faith. *The testimony of the LORD is sure; yea, the Psalmist saith, that the LORD'S testimonies are very sure, holiness becometh his house for ever, Psalm 93:5. and Psalm 19:7.* And it is the FATHER'S testimony, and approbation of his dear SON, as our glorious Head and Surety, which must give assurance to our faith. Every poor unbelieving sinner, who fears the salvation of his soul is too great to be believed, could never desire stronger assurances for his faith to rest on, than the Word of GOD. If the LORD would but say it, I should believe. Here then comes in the blessedness of this short, but comprehensive expression. *Thus saith the LORD.* But what *time* is this to which the LORD refers, in which he will be the GOD of all the families of Israel, and they shall be his people? I apprehend, not simply the time of restoring them from Babylon, but looking forward unto Gospel times, when both Jew and Gentile shall be brought into the fold of CHRIST. In confirmation of this, see Isaiah 49:6. Galatians 3:29.

### **Jeremiah 31:2**

Thus saith the LORD, The people *which were* left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; *even* Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

The sword probably hath an allusion to the sorrows of Egypt, from whence the LORD brought the people out, into the wilderness, and then brought them to rest in Canaan.

### **Jeremiah 31:3**

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying,* Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

I do not presume to determine, but I venture to observe, that I conceive the former part of this verse is the language of the Church; and the latter the words of JEHOVAH. The Church having heard the LORD say in the foregoing verse, how gracious the LORD was, in bringing his people out of Egypt, takes up the subject in the opening of this verse, and is about to speak of some of the ancient proofs of GOD'S love, when JEHOVAH himself interrupts her by speaking. Yea, saith the LORD, wouldst thou speak, of ancient love, how ancient wouldst thou make it? It began not in Egypt; not with the Patriarchs; not with the creation of the world; but from everlasting. And the one sole cause for which I have drawn thee is, because, from everlasting I have loved thee. Precious consideration to the believer. In JESUS the Church hath been beheld, and loved, from all eternity. John 17:23.

### **Jeremiah 31:4-7**

Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. (5) Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat *them* as common things. (6) For there shall be a day, *that* the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. (7) For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

All these blessings arise out of what went before. The Church was now partly in bondage, and the residue of the people were shortly to be sent thither. But the LORD looks beyond times of bondage, and comforts the people with these assurances. There shall be a day in CHRIST, when all these sweet effects shall follow. And whereas the Church is now

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without ordinances and means of grace, there shall in gospel times be great plenty, and men shall invite one another to attend them. Songs of praise shall be sung in the same to the LORD.

### **Jeremiah 31:8-9**

Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, *and* with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. (9) They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim *is* my firstborn.

I do not doubt, but that these verses had respect to the bringing back the people from Babylon. But, I still think, the HOLY GHOST had yet a much greater object in view, in bringing back the LORD'S heritage from worse than any earthly captivity, even from the captivity of sin and Satan. For what blindness is equal to the blindness of the soul; or what captivity like the bondage of hell? If we read the passage in this spiritual point of view, we shall find it precious indeed. The LORD puts a *behold!* before the words, that the Church may take notice. And surely most worthy of notice it is: for both the north country, and all the coasts of the east shall give up GOD'S children, when the LORD demands his own. He saith to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back. Isaiah 43:6. But who are they that shall come? Both the blind and the lame. JESUS will be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. No impediments shall obstruct, for even a woman in travail shall not plead excuses, but joyfully follow the LORD'S royal camp. And observe, Reader! the LORD saith, it shall not be a few, but a great company. John when in vision he saw

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heaven opened, tells the Church, that in his day it formed a multitude that no man could number. And what an host of redeemed souls since born, and who have joined the society of the spirits of just men made perfect, who shall calculate? Revelation 7:9. And I beg the Reader yet further to remark on this beautiful passage, how the redeemed are said to come. They are to come both with weeping and supplication. Tears of holy joy, under a conscious sense of undeservings but, as holy mourners in the view of divine mercy. The same Prophet hath elsewhere more particularly described this sweet frame of soul. Chap. 50:4, 5. And what sums up the whole beauty of this lovely passage, is in the close of it, wherein the LORD assigns the reason of this mercy; that it is not in human merit, but divine favor; and GOD'S relationship to his people in CHRIST. As the LORD said to Pharaoh in Egypt, so now he saith to all: Israel is my son, my first born. Oh! precious cause of all our mercy in CHRIST! Exodus 4:22.

### **Jeremiah 31:10-14**

Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare *it* in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd *doth* his flock. (11) For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of *him that was* stronger than he. (12) Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. (13) Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. (14) And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

I do not detain the Reader with any comment here: for the words are too plain to need any, and too sweet to admit of any without injury. Let the Reader read the passage again and again, and then mark the gracious tendencies of the LORD to his people.

### **Jeremiah 31:15-17**

Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, *and* bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they *were* not. (16) Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. (17) And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

The Evangelist hath made application of what is here said to the murder of the young children by Herod: and thereby hath very clearly shown, that the whole of this blessed chapter is of gospel signification. *Rahel*, or *Rachel*, is, probably, put for the whole of the afflicted Parents; meaning that all felt in the general calamity. The grave of Rachel was near Bethlehem: and therefore formed a suitable image of grief. Genesis 35:19. Matthew 2:18. Pious parents, in the loss of their little ones, may find some rich, consoling thoughts from these scriptures, in the consideration of covenant mercies!

### **Jeremiah 31:18-20**

I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself *thus*; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed *to the yoke*: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou *art* the LORD my God. (19) Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon *my* thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. (20) *Is* Ephraim my dear son? *is he* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still:

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therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

Perhaps there is not a more beautiful and interesting representation in the whole compass of the Old Testament scripture, than what is here drawn, of the melting heart of a sinner by grace; and of the LORD'S bowels of mercies, yearning over a returning sinner on the occasion. Here is Ephraim falling down at the footstool of the mercy-seat: and the LORD stooping down, as it were, to raise him up. I am a worthless sinner, cries Ephraim; like a beast, stubborn and restive I have been. Thou art a dear child, saith the LORD. My soul is troubled, saith Ephraim, in the recollection of what I have done: my bowels are troubled for thee, saith the LORD. Oh! what a representation is here! It can only be equaled by that divine drawing which the LORD JESUS hath given in his parable, Luke 15:17-24. I hope the Reader cannot want a single observation, to take the whole blessedness of the instruction home to his own heart. It speaks of GOD'S grace, mercy, and love in CHRIST equal to a volume; and it holds forth the most unequalled persuasion to poor sinners, in prompting them to return. Isaiah 55:7-9.

### **Jeremiah 31:21-25**

Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, *even* the way *which* thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. (22) How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man. (23) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, *and* mountain of holiness. (24) And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they *that* go forth with

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flocks. (25) For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

I do not presume to decide upon this passage, but I venture to propose my views of it to the Reader. I do not object to the comment of those who suppose the return of the people from Babylon might be implied in it. But I cannot but think an infinitely higher object was intended from what is here said. *A woman compassing a man*, cannot have the smallest connection with the mere event of the people's returning from Babylon. Surely an eye to the incarnation of JESUS, is here plainly set forth. Isaiah's prophesy compared with it, and explained together, make the matter pretty clear. And if so, what a blessed prophesy is here? Isaiah 9:6. Isaiah 7:14. And yet further, GOD'S creating a new thing in the earth, is eminently so, in respect to the incarnation of CHRIST. For, if CHRIST'S human nature had been made out of man, as *Eve* was, this would not have been a new thing. Neither, had his human nature been made out of nothing, as Adam was, would this have been new. But to make CHRIST'S human nature of a woman, yea, of the seed of the woman, and that without an human father; this was a thing new indeed. Isaiah 43:19.

### **Jeremiah 31:26**

Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.

I put this verse by itself from the singularity of its contents. And while I propose my views of it, I pray the Reader to look up to the LORD as his teacher, to lead him, and to guide him into all truth. Is not this verse (for I ask the question) a new subject, a new paragraph, and a different speaker from the

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former? Who was it that is said here to have awaked? If we suppose it to be the blessed JESUS, may we not without violence to the expression conceive, that it refers to that period, when after the third day from our LORD'S death, he arose from the dead! And when he arose, might he not be supposed to say, that the short sleep of that temporary death was sweet to him, because by it he destroyed the everlasting sleep of eternal death to all his people? *By death he destroyed him that had the power of death:* and now, as the glorious Head of his body, the Church, he felt a blessedness and a sweetness in it, because in his triumphs all his people were concerned. I leave the Reader to his own thoughts on the subject. May a gracious and infallible Teacher instruct both Writer and Reader on the point, to the glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST, Hebrews 2:14, 15. 1 Corinthians 15:20.

### **Jeremiah 31:27-30**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. (28) And it shall come to pass, *that* like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD. (29) In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. (30) But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

Perhaps, in allusion to the flourishing state of CHRIST'S church, under the latter day dispensation, this prophesy had respect. But what I particularly desire the Reader to remark with me is, the different features which are here drawn between the Old Testament Church and the New, on this subject. The covenant under the law entailed all the effects of the

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breaches of it upon the children. But in CHRIST JESUS, the new nature from him and in him, as the covenant himself, entails all his blessings on all his seed. Compare Exodus 20:5, with Isaiah 59:31.

### **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (33) But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The HOLY GHOST hath himself given the comment of this passage, in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, Chap. 8 which supersedes all that might be offered. I only beg to remind the Reader, while comparing both scriptures, and pondering well the subject, that he looks out for the fulfillment of it in himself in the evidences of divine teaching. If that promise be in your own instance completed: and as a child of GOD you are taught of GOD, then must the LORD have given you a new heart, and proved himself as your covenant GOD in CHRIST, and in you, as belonging to his people. Isaiah 54:13. John 6:45.

### **Jeremiah 31:35-37**

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of

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hosts *is* his name: (36) If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. (37) Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

I pray the Reader not to overlook the abundant grace of GOD, in thus appealing to his covenant concerning his providences, made after the flood, and the confirmation of it in Jeremiah's days, as a token and pledge of his covenant concerning grace. And I pray the Reader not to forget the further confirmation of it, from Jeremiah's days to the present. See Genesis 8:21, 22. See it again Jeremiah 33:20, 21, 25.

### **Jeremiah 31:38-40**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. (39) And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. (40) And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, *shall be* holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

If we accept this promise as in the smallest degree referring to the building of the second temple and the city, after the people's return from Babylon, we must still look further to gospel days, to observe the full accomplishment of it: for there we find holiness indeed unto the LORD, in JESUS the glorious Head of his church, so as the church must be preserved in him forever.

## REFLECTIONS

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PONDER well my soul, from the perusal of this most blessed Chapter that sacred source of all thy happiness, the everlasting love of GOD. See to it, that from thence it is, that JESUS Mediator with all his fulness comes, and GOD thy FATHER, becomes the GOD of all the families of Israel. And do not fail to connect with this soul-transporting view, that if thou art CHRIST'S, then art thou interested in this family, being *Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

And oh! most gracious LORD! do as thou hast said; bring LORD, thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth: bring them both from the north and south; let the blind eyes be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Nothing shall be impediments in the way of salvation, when JESUS gives but the power; even the women with child shall come, and her that travaileth with child together. And, as true penitents and holy mourners, shall all thy dispersed come, for thou wilt lead them as thou hast said: and their way in JESUS shall be a strait way, wherein they shall not stumble. No lamentation in Ramah; no sorrow for children in the church of JESUS shall be heard, for the child in CHRIST shall die an hundred years old; while the sinner, who is an hundred years old, out of CHRIST, shall be accursed. Precious LORD! all thy ransomed ones, when instructed and brought back, shall come like Ephraim; and our covenant GOD will be full of bowels of compassion to his poor long lost wanderers. In the incarnation and ministry of JESUS will be all joy; and as JESUS himself was in the morning of his resurrection, as one refreshed with sleep, so shall the triumph of his people be in him!

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Will the LORD then bring on to every child of his the sure and certain promise, and now in the last days, fulfil that gracious word, in *putting his law in our minds, and writing it in our hearts*; in being *our* GOD, and making us *his people*: that henceforth we may no longer ask around, or say to others, *Know the LORD*; for *all shall know thee from the least to the greatest*? We look up to thee O LORD for this unspeakable gift of the latter day glory! We wait for the sure accomplishment of it! For as sure as the ordinances of day and night are in the LORD'S own appointment; so equally sure are the children of CHRIST heirs of the promise. Blessed GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS; so let all thy promises be yea and amen in him. Amen.

## CHAPTER 32

### CONTENTS

*We have in this Chapter the imprisonment of Jeremiah for his faithfulness. The Prophet complains to GOD. The LORD confirms the word of his servant. The Chapter closeth with GOD'S gracious promises of a return to the people.*

#### **Jeremiah 32:1-5**

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which *was* the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. (2) For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which *was* in the king of Judah's house. (3) For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; (4) And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth,

and his eyes shall behold his eyes; (5) And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.

There was some considerable space, it should seem between the close of the former Chapter and this, for, according to the date of the eighteenth year of *Nebuchadrezzar*, it could not be very far from the time of the total overthrow of the kingdom. Let the Reader not overlook the faithfulness of GOD'S servant upon this occasion. Where is the servant, where is the minister of GOD in the present hour to be found for such integrity?

### **Jeremiah 32:6-15**

And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (7) Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that *is* in Anathoth: for the right of redemption *is* thine to buy *it*. (8) So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance *is* thine, and the redemption *is* thine; buy *it* for thyself. Then I knew that this *was* the word of the LORD. (9) And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, *even* seventeen shekels of silver. (10) And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed *it*, and took witnesses, and weighed *him* the money in the balances. (11) So I took the evidence of the purchase, *both* that which was sealed *according* to the law and custom, and that which was open: (12) And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's *son*, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison. (13) And I charged Baruch before them, saying, (14) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. (15) For thus saith the

LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

The LORD was pleased by this token, of causing Jeremiah to buy a portion of land, in the prospect of the loss of all the land, to testify, that his word should stand: and though for a time he gave his people up, he would not cast them finally away. I pray the Reader not to overlook the LORD JESUS in this. He was and is our Kinsman Redeemer, to whom the right of our lost and long forfeited possessions belonged, of redemption, Ruth 4:7-11.

### **Jeremiah 32:16-25**

Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD, saying, (17) Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee: (18) Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, *is* his name, (19) Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes *are* open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: (20) Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, and in Israel, and among *other* men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day; (21) And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror; (22) And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; (23) And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them: (24) Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and,

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behold, thou seest *it*. (25) And thou hast said unto me, O Lord GOD, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

What a beautiful view is here given of the piety and faith of the Prophet! With what zeal and earnestness doth he set his heart to seek the LORD. Though all his remonstrances and entreaties had failed, in seeking to persuade men; yet who can say, the Prophet thought with himself, what prayer shall do with GOD. Reader! let such views lead the heart to JESUS? Think of him and his all-prevailing intercession in all seasons of distress!

### **Jeremiah 32:26-35**

Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, (27) Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me? (28) Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it: (29) And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger. (30) For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD. (31) For this city hath been to me *as* a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face, (32) Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (33) And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching *them*, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction. (34) But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. (35) And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their

sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

We have here the LORD'S gracious answer to the Prophet's prayer, Isaiah 65:24. I think it not altogether improbable, but, as the LORD had directed Jeremiah to buy the field in *Anathoth*, even in the prospect of the ruin of the whole nation; that Jeremiah had some hopes that the LORD would still spare the people from captivity. The LORD'S answer throws down all those hopes. The sentence is gone forth, and the LORD will not reverse it. Oh! what a lesson in all ages of the Church, *to seek the LORD while he may be found, and not to put off from day to day.*

### **Jeremiah 32:36-44**

And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; (37) Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: (38) And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: (39) And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. (41) Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. (42) For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. (43) And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, *It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.* (44) Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal *them*, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of

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Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD.

Reader! I beseech you to ponder well the precious things which are contained in the bosom of this scripture; and read them over again and again. Were there ever promises more gracious, even in the midst of the most flagrant impiety? Can there be any form of words equal in point of tenderness, to show the LORD'S love to his people? He makes use of human affections, and expresseth himself by human feelings, in saying, that he will do what he will do, in love and mercy, *with his whole heart, and with his whole soul*. And who but JESUS is this? Are not these words peculiarly his? Oh! dearest LORD, what affection must there have been in thy heart toward thy people, who thus so many years before thou didst openly tabernacle in substance of our flesh, even then to condescend to speak to thy redeemed under the expression of human passions.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! behold in the example of Zedekiah King of Judah, how sin hardens. Though every tittle Jeremiah had foretold during the many years of his preaching, had come to pass, and not one thing had failed: though the false prophet Hananiah, that prophesied smooth things, and had promised peace, had suddenly died for his daring impiety; yet no one effect had either wrought upon the mind of Zedekiah, or his princes, or the people. Oh! what an awful state to be given up to a judicial blindness, and to the obduracy of a hardened and impenitent heart!

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Behold the faithfulness of Jeremiah in the times of such impending danger. What a blessed state is that, which grace alone can induce, when neither the frowns nor smiles of men bring a snare!

But chiefly from this Chapter, may the reflections both of him that writes, and him that reads be directed, to behold JESUS in his unceasing tenderness and compassion over his people. Can the imagination form a representation of anything so lovely, as what is here said, of GOD'S gathering his dispersed, and bringing home his captives, notwithstanding all their obstinacy and rebellion against him? Precious LORD! let every one of thine say, be it unto us according to thy word. If thou LORD wilt undertake both for thyself and people in this everlasting covenant, then most assuredly all those blessings must come to pass, and in the gift of one heart and one way, to fear thee and love thee forever; neither the father nor the children shall depart from thee! Oh! the sweetness and blessedness of that promise, in which thou hast said: I *will* not; and they *shall* not; I will not turn from them, and they shall not depart from me. Oh! for grace to live in the constant belief of this most blessed truth, by which all thy redeemed are safe, and shall not be cast down nor destroyed forever. Amen.

## CHAPTER 33

### CONTENTS

*The Prophet prophesied in the prison. The LORD confirms the word of Jeremiah. Many gracious promises are mingled with GOD'S determined judgments in this Chapter.*

### **Jeremiah 33:1-9**

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to establish it; the LORD *is* his name; (3) Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. (4) For thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword; (5) They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *it is* to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city. (6) Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. (7) And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. (8) And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. (9) And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

Some of Paul the Apostle's sweetest Epistles and preaching was when he was shut up in prison: witness to the Church of the Philippians, and his preaching to the jailor, Acts 16. And certainly Jeremiah in this and the former Chapter, hath given a most eminently sweet savour of the unction of his ministry.

### **Jeremiah 33:10-13**

Thus saith the LORD; Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say *shall be* desolate without man and without beast, *even* in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that

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are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, (11) The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD *is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: *and* of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD. (12) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down. (13) In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth *them*, saith the LORD.

I pass over many beauties in those verses, which would furnish out much room for the most delightful meditation, in order to beg the Reader's attention to that most interesting part, which so plainly and so fully points to the LORD JESUS. Of whom can the Prophet be supposed to speak concerning him that telleth the flocks, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Was it not He that took down their names in the everlasting covenant, when he bargained for their redemption, and when he received them from the FATHER? Did he not say, in the days of his flesh, that *all the FATHER had given him should come to him*? And indeed, was he not engaged to give *eternal life to as many as the FATHER had given him*? Surely the words can be interpreted in no other sense. And I pray the Reader, as a further confirmation to remark, that the flocks are here said to pass again, under the hands of him that telleth them, which is without doubt, a positive proof, that they had passed before. So much to the purpose is this one glorious scripture; and so blessed in the confirmation of the rich mercy of GOD in JESUS CHRIST!

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**Jeremiah 33:14-16**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. (15) In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. (16) In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

I pray the Reader to compare this scripture with what was said to the same purport in Chapter 23:6. and let the Reader pause over the blessedness of both, and remark from both, how much these grand things lay upon the heart of JEHOVAH. And I beseech the Reader not to overlook the varied expression in this passage, from that which was before. Here it is, *She* that is said to be called the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS. And there it was *He*, who was to be known by that name. And wherefore is it so altered, but to show and prove also, that as the LORD JESUS, as the Husband and Head of his Church and people, becomes the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS! so the Church as wife, interested and bearing part in all that belongs to him, takes his name also. Reader! the truth of this is undeniable, and the preciousness and blessedness is beyond all calculation. See these scriptures in confirmation: Isaiah 49:3. where CHRIST takes the Church's name. And 1 Corinthians 12:12. and Jeremiah 23:16. as well as here the Church is called by the LORD'S name. And from such a communication of names and interest, a oneness and union becomes undeniable.

**Jeremiah 33:17-18**

For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; (18) Neither shall the priests the

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Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

I do not presume to decide, but I would venture to enquire, is not the LORD JESUS, both in his royal and in his priestly offices, pointed out here?

### **Jeremiah 33:19-26**

And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying, (20) Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; (21) *Then* may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. (22) As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. (23) Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, (24) Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. (25) Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant *be* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; (26) Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, *so* that I will not take *any* of his seed *to be* rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

We have here two short, but sweet Sermons of the Prophet, and both to the same amount, by way of confirming the word. The LORD appeals to his original Covenant made after the flood, by way of assuring the Church of his mercy. If the Covenant of day and night cease, then, and not before, may the seed of our spiritual David tremble for their captivity. Genesis 8:21, 22.

## REFLECTIONS

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SWEET and blessed are the great truths of a Covenant GOD in CHRIST, which are contained in this Chapter! May the soul both of the Writer and Reader, through grace, enter into the full enjoyment of them. And as it was here with the Church in her deep affliction, so is it in all ages with the Church under her exercises; the salvation by her LORD remains, while her transgressions testify against her. The LORD will cleanse his people from their iniquity, and will turn back their captivity, and will pardon all their sins for his own great name's sake.

My soul! do thou be sure take part in these sweet promises, from the sure interest thou hast in JESUS. It is for his sake, and for his sake alone these mercies are secure. And be thou looking forward, with an holy joy, founded in the confidence of his righteousness, that JESUS will come to call all his redeemed to him, for all and every one, one by one, must pass again under his hand that telleth them. He hath once received them from his FATHER, and they are the purchase of his blood, and the conquest of his SPIRIT; and therefore, he will take effectual care that not one of them shall be found wanting, when he maketh up his jewels. Hail then, thou blessed dearest JESUS! This is the name whereby thy Church, from being one with thee, shall be called, *the* LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS! GOD will confirm his Covenant, and perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which he hath sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old.

## CHAPTER 34

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*The Prophet is again commissioned with heavy tidings to Zedekiah and to the people. As the time of the captivity drew near, the alarm became greater.*

### **Jeremiah 34:1-3**

The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire: (3) And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.

We cannot sufficiently admire the faithfulness of the Prophet, in following up the will of the LORD. Times were dangerous, but Jeremiah considered, that there was but the more reason to be conscientious. Though a prison was before him, and into it he knew he should be sent, yet whether men would hear, or whether they would forbear, he dared be honest. Ezekiel 2:5, 6.

### **Jeremiah 34:4-7**

Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword: (5) *But* thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn *odours* for thee; and they will lament thee, *saying*, Ah lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD. (6) Then Jeremiah the prophet spake all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, (7) When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.

While the Prophet used faithfulness, he forgot not exhortation. It is the duty of ministers to admonish as well as reprove. And never surely was there a servant of the LORD more tender, in his persuasions to the King and people, than Jeremiah. So are commanded all JESUS'S ministers to be. 2 Timothy 4:1, 2.

### **Jeremiah 34:8-22**

*This is* the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which *were* at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; (9) That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, *being* an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, *to wit*, of a Jew his brother. (10) Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let *them* go. (11) But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids. (12) Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, (13) Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, (14) At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. (15) And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: (16) But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. (17) Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a

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liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. (18) And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof, (19) The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; (20) I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. (21) And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you. (22) Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.

Concerning the law for the release of servants, we have it at large, Exodus 21:16. And as this was a beautiful type of the LORD JESUS, in becoming JEHOVAH's servant for his Church and people; it was most strictly to be observed; and it should seem that it was very religiously followed, when at anytime trouble was upon Israel: but when the trouble was over, the great ones oppressed their brethren as before. So was it at this time. So was it in the after age of Nehemiah. See Nehemiah 5:1-13. Oh! what poor wretched unfeeling creatures sin hath made us! without natural affection, sin is among the most awful judgments of the fall. Romans 1:31.

## REFLECTIONS

WE cannot close this Chapter without first stopping to admire GOD's patience and man's unworthiness. Though judgment

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was at the door, and everyone seemed to be tremblingly alive at what would follow, yet sin is not lessened. Gracious GOD! what but sovereign grace can soften the human heart!

Precious LORD JESUS! thou wert indeed the servant, who would not go out free. For the love that thou didst bear thy FATHER, and the love thou didst bear thy wife the Church, and the children which the FATHER had given thee; thy ear was indeed bored, and thou didst *give thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. Thou didst not hide thy face from shame and spitting.* Oh! for grace to imitate thy blessed example, and in all the circumstances of life, *to show mercy in having obtained mercy.*

## CHAPTER 35

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*We have here a subject introduced in the midst of Israel's history, of the history of a family obedient to their father. The Prophet makes a suitable improvement from it, to set forth the shamefulfulness of the disobedience of the family of Israel towards GOD their Father.*

#### **Jeremiah 35:1-2**

The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, (2) Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.

This family of the Rechabites was an ancient family, for we find the founder of it in the days of Jesse, 2 Kings 10:15, 16.

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But some have supposed that it began much earlier, even tracing it to Hobab, Moses's father-in-law. I refer the Reader, if he be desirous to examine this point for himself, to Numbers 10:29, 30. Judges 1:16. The prohibition of wine should seem to imply, that the original founder was of the order of the Nazarites. But whether so or not, the house of the Rechabites became a living reproach to all the drunkards of Ephraim. Oh! for more of the house of the Rechabites in this our day!

### **Jeremiah 35:3-11**

Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; (4) And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of the princes, which *was* above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door: (5) And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. (6) But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, *neither ye*, nor your sons for ever: (7) Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have *any*: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye *be* strangers. (8) Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; (9) Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: (10) But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. (11) But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.

Reader! after paying due attention to the filial reverence and charity of this house of the Rechabites, pause over the history, to gather another profitable instruction from it of a spiritual nature; and consider the blessedness of minds, like the Rechabites, who live detached and unconnected, and have only moveable tents to dwell in here below. The sorrows and exercises of the world are made tenfold grievous, from the large circle in which they take in those, who are ingulphed in the world and encumbered with many cares. If we are weaned from the earth, and the things of the earth, when called upon to depart from it, we shall be soon ready, for there are then few cords to tie the soul down. The believer may say with Jonadab's posterity, let me go up to the Jerusalem which is above, where JESUS is, the *Chaldeans* and the *Syrians* are nothing to me. Oh! the blessedness of such a frame!

### **Jeremiah 35:12-19**

Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, (13) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD. (14) The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. (15) I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them*, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. (16) Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: (17) Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will

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bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered. (18) And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: (19) Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

Here we have the application of the history, as the LORD intended it, to Judah and Jerusalem: and a close heart-felt application it is. Reader! do not fail to observe the graciousness of the LORD to his people under all their unworthiness. Was there ever a nation or people so blessed! Was there ever a nation or people so rebellious! How the Chapter closeth, and what blessings to faithfulness are read to us in it! The LORD make it profitable. For if the LORD was well pleased with affection and obedience to one another among men, what blessedness must there be in our faithfulness unto GOD.

## REFLECTIONS

LET us not dismiss this Chapter without taking with it the instructions the HOLY GHOST seems to have intended the Church to gather from it; for they are very many, and very interesting also. Surely the LORD hath not handed down to us this famous history of a single family, but with an express design that it might be profitable withal. There seems to be all along intended from it, a great heightening of men's folly in respect to their inattention to divine things, when in mere human things so much respect was shown. The father of the

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house of the *Rechabites*, had for many ages and generations this veneration manifested towards him, when he himself was mouldered to dust, and his ashes mingled with his original earth. But the inattention GOD'S people manifested to the LORD, was to One who inhabiteth eternity: and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! The house of the Rechabites knew Jonadab only by name: but the LORD of hosts was known to his people by power and mighty acts, in grace, mercy, and continual favor. The authority of Jonadab certainly ceased with his life. But Israel's GOD was their GOD forever and ever. And had the house of the Rechabites disobeyed Jonadab their father, the offence would have been against a man like themselves: but in Israel's disobedience, their rebellion was against the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for this was his name forever, and this was his memorial to all generations. Pause, Reader! and in the view, think of the forbearance, and long-suffering, and goodness of the LORD: that notwithstanding Israel's perpetual and unceasing rebellion, the LORD still cast not away his people whom he foreknew. Still the LORD carried them on, and still he loved them; until at length JESUS came *to bless them, in turning away every one of them from their iniquities!* Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

## CHAPTER 36

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*The Church is here taught by writing, as the Prophet had before been commissioned by preaching, the same solemn truths. The effect of inattention is here set forth as the same.*

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**Jeremiah 36:1-3**

And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, (2) Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. (3) It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

I pray the Reader to take particular notice of what the LORD saith by his servant the Prophet, in this last verse, of the *may be* that they would attend. As faith cometh by hearing, this seems to be the great inlet to the mind. And although the word is heard to little purpose until the LORD gives the word; yet we find many blessed instances, where the LORD hath blessed an attendance on the means of grace. It *may be* our mercy to be found waiting at the gates of wisdom. It *will be* our condemnation if we be found not.

**Jeremiah 36:4-7**

Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. (5) And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I *am* shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD: (6) Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD'S house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. (7) It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.

As *Jeremiah* from long preaching was become unpleasant to those refractory spirits, *Baruch* appeared to be more likely to

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conciliate. The word was the same by both, and could not be altered, in accommodation to the false taste of any man; but if offences be removed by poison, let this among every other expedient be tried. Oh LORD! what possible excuses will the unreclaimed and graceless bring at the last day, before whom the holy word hath been brought, and proved ineffectual, from the voice of the Charmer, *charm he never so wisely*.

### **Jeremiah 36:8-26**

And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD'S house. (9) And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem. (10) Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house, in the ears of all the people. (11) When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD, (12) Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, *even* Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. (13) Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. (14) Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cush, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them. (15) And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read *it* in their ears. (16) Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words. (17) And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? (18) Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth,

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and I wrote *them* with ink in the book. (19) Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be. (20) And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king. (21) So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. (22) Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him. (23) And it came to pass, *that* when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth. (24) Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, *neither* the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. (25) Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them. (26) But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them.

It should seem,, that Baruch made great use of this roll, and read in it to the people continually! For it was in the *fourth* year of *Jehoiakim* that he wrote it, and began to read it; and here we find him on the fast day in the *fifth* year still reading in it. And we have a very circumstantial account of the proceedings at this fast. I think, the fear and the terror of their looks are striking proofs of the alarm generally felt in their consciences. The hiding also both of *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* for the apprehension of the King's wrath, is another testimony of it. But let the Reader observe also, that there is not a word said of their heart turning to the LORD. Alas! until the LORD turns the heart not a single affection of the heart will turn towards him. And let the Reader observe yet further, that though their consciences were thus alarmed, yet when the

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daring impiety of the King was carried to such an height, as to cut the roll and cast it into the fire, not a soul rent his garment, or took shame and confusion of face. See how the LORD sheltered his faithful servants. Here also the hand of the LORD was manifested. When the LORD hid them, he thereby showed himself!

### **Jeremiah 36:27-32**

Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, (28) Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. (29) And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? (30) Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. (31) And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not. (32) Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.

Nothing can be more gracious on the part of GOD, than what is here said of the writing of another roll; and even adding to it more of his calls and alarms to the sinner. And nothing can be more solemn, to show the hardness of men, as testified in the case of the obdurate King. Oh! what an awful termination to an awfully rebellious life! Reader! behold, to what a state man is reduced by the fall, when natural blindness is followed

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by a judicial. *Let Ephraim alone, he is joined to his idols.*  
Hosea 4:17.

## REFLECTIONS

How can we better improve the perusal of this Chapter, than in considering our privileges, to whom not only a roll of a book of GOD'S gracious dealings with his people is given, but the glorious gospel of the ever blessed GOD is come; and with a fulness of light, and life, and salvation, that all that are in darkness, and the shadow of death, may hear, and know the joyful sound, and be brought to walk in the light of GOD'S countenance. Blessed LORD JESUS! what shall we render to thee for thy merciful grace towards us! Thou hast not only sent thy *Jeremiahs* and thy *Baruchs* to write off to thy people the blessed words that came from thy mouth; but thou hast come thyself, out of the bosom of the FATHER, full of grace and truth, *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel!*

Oh LORD! add a blessing to thy mission, and sanctify thy word, to the great purpose of salvation. LORD, let it not only be unto thy people, a *may be*, that they may hear and obey thy word; but make it a *shall be*, that they may be *willing in the day of thy power!* LORD, give to them the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, and the receiving and believing heart. Oh! that thy word may at all times come with power to thy redeemed, that it may be the savor of life unto life; and eminently show itself to be, *the engrafted word which is able to save the soul.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 37

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*The history of the siege by the Chaldeans, is related in part in this Chapter. At the report of Pharaoh's army, the siege is raised. Jeremiah going to the land of Benjamin, is smitten and cast into prison, but after many days is taken out. He still prophesieth evil to the land.*

**Jeremiah 37:1-2**

And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. (2) But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah.

What an awful thing it is, when children tread in the steps of their ungodly fathers, and the rising generation seem but to exceed the former in impiety.

**Jeremiah 37:3**

And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us.

Reader! is it not strange, that the ungodly should willfully persist in their transgressions, and yet seek an interest in the prayers of the faithful. Is not this a testimony to GOD'S truth. Precious JESUS! how blessed is it, that the unworthiness of the redeemed, do not put a stop to thine unceasing intercession!

**Jeremiah 37:4**

Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people: for they had not put him into prison.

There is somewhat very singular in this relation of Jeremiah's freedom. Surely the boldness, and faithfulness of the Prophet, must have been very galling to the king and his people. But GOD's fear was upon them. *Do my Prophets no harm!* Psalm 105:15.

### **Jeremiah 37:5-10**

Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem. (6) Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying, (7) Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. (8) And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire. (9) Thus saith the LORD; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart. (10) For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained *but* wounded men among them, *yet* should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.

Who but must admire the Prophet upon this occasion. Oh! for a portion of the same Almighty SPIRIT, to be imparted to all that minister in holy things, and especially in a time of prevailing corruption. Reader! observe the temporary relief, the LORD in mercy gave, by the removal of the Chaldean army at the approach of the Egyptians. But, as the Prophet declared, and the history afterwards proved, it was but temporary. So is it with the forbearance of GOD to sinners, who harden themselves therefrom, in their wickedness. Observe what the Prophet saith, even wounded men shall be enough to destroy, when the LORD commissions them.

### **Jeremiah 37:11-12**

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And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, (12) Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people.

Probably the poor despised Prophet, grieving to see that all his labours for his people were so completely useless, intended to retire to *Anathoth*, there to mourn in secret over the impending desolations. Alas! what can be more painful to a faithful servant of the LORD, than to discover all his preaching useless!

### **Jeremiah 37:13-15**

And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward *was* there, whose name *was* Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans. (14) Then said Jeremiah, *It is* false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes. (15) Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison.

Falling off to the Chaldeans, had such a thought been entertained, should have been while they were besieging Jerusalem. The thing spoke for itself, that it was both false and absurd. But, Reader! is it not the same in all ages? It is faithful ministers that incur the reproach of the ungodly; and disaffection to the earthly, power, and zeal to the divine glory, are with some, one and the same. Is it not probable, that this spawn of *Hananiah*, (partaking as he did of the same malevolence,) sprung from the very false prophet of that name, who had lately died for speaking lies in the name of the LORD. See Chapter 28.

**Jeremiah 37:16-21**

When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days; (17) Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there *any* word from the LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. (18) Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? (19) Where *are* now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land? (20) Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. (21) Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

We have here a most interesting relation, in which Jeremiah appears most delightful indeed. Neither stripes, nor prisons, can make the faithful servants of the LORD less faithful: yea the exercises of a prison are always found to give a greater dignity and strength to their preaching. Witness the Apostles Paul and Silas, Acts 16. And what a rich savour do those Psalms of David afford, which were composed in the wilderness; and Paul's Epistles from prison? Psalm 63 Epistle Philippians throughout.

**REFLECTIONS**

READER! I pass by several other weighty things, which might be proposed, from the view of the events recorded in this Chapter, to call your attention, while I wish to exercise my own, on the situation of the poor, despised, and mournful

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Prophet, Jeremiah. Behold his faithfulness in the midst of danger; no change in his preaching could be wrought by all their threats, or his sufferings; whether cast into prison, or whether brought forth for death. It should seem, that for many days, he lay in the dungeon unregarded and unpitied, and without food. But yet, when brought from it to deliver the word of the LORD, he had no soothing message for the king. Reader! it is the happiness of GOD'S people, in the present hour, that they are not called forth to such trying times and exercises: nevertheless, faithfulness in every age, though not exposing to bodily punishment, must and will expose to painful reproaches from the ungodly. It is very blessed to eye JESUS upon all these occasions; and to rest in the assurance that JESUS eyes his servants. Jeremiah was in the prison: John the beloved Apostle at Patmos, and Paul and Silas in the stocks: but JESUS was there also. Men may persecute, when he permits, as *Shimei* did *David*; but the day of retribution will come. And oh! what a tremendous day to those that offend one of CHRIST'S little ones! Precious LORD! let thy grace support all thy people, during the dark and trying hour, until the bright and glorious morning come, when those their enemies, that now seem to triumph, they shall see their faces no more forever.

## CHAPTER 38

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*From bad to worse, the history is prosecuted concerning the conduct of the people, Jeremiah continues preaching until their passions are excited, and he is cast into the dungeon. The LORD stirreth up a stranger to intercede for*

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*his life with the king. He is taken from the pit; but still preacheth of ruin.*

### **Jeremiah 38:1-3**

Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. (3) Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

I again and again detain the Reader to remark the faithfulness of Jeremiah. Never surely was there a more conscientious preacher. Let the Reader connect this view of Jeremiah with his ordination, and then look up and bless God for making him faithful. Jeremiah 1 throughout.

### **Jeremiah 38:4-6**

Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. (5) Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he *is* in your hand: for the king *is* not *he that* can do *any* thing against you. (6) Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that *was* in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

What an awful character was Zedekiah! Surely he had strong convictions of the truth, but like another Felix, though he trembled under the word, yet he consents to execute the preacher. Acts 24:25.

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**Jeremiah 38:7-13**

Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; (8) Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, (9) My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for *there is* no more bread in the city. (10) Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. (11) So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. (12) And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now *these* old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. (13) So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

See how the LORD raiseth instruments, from the most unexpected quarters, for the deliverance of his people. Here was a stranger, and a Gentile, prompted to fly to the rescue of one of the LORD'S prophets, when all the people of the land were consenting to his death. Precious LORD JESUS! how can I read this without having my mind led instantly to thee, who coming to our whole nature, as the divine Samaritan, delivered us from thieves, when neither Priest nor Levite would look upon us with mercy.

**Jeremiah 38:14-26**

Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that *is* in the house of the LORD: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me. (15) Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare *it* unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me? (16) So Zedekiah the

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king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life. (17) Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: (18) But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. (19) And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. (20) But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver *thee*. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. (21) But if thou refuse to go forth, this *is* the word that the LORD hath shewed me: (22) And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house *shall be* brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those *women* shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, *and* they are turned away back. (23) So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire. (24) Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die. (25) But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee: (26) Then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there.

This must have been a very interesting interview between the king and the Prophet; and it is impossible but to take concern in it, and to wish that Zedekiah had listened to the Prophet's advice. And as it seems nothing could have been more improbable than that success should have followed the

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measure, had the king adopted it. But the thing was of the LORD. Reader! do not fail to remark from it, how truly awful it must be, to be given up to a deluded mind.

### **Jeremiah 38:27-28**

Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived. (28) So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was *there* when Jerusalem was taken.

The poor Prophet is hunted like the partridge upon the mountains. But though in the midst of foes, yet in no real danger. As he was before the siege, so through the whole of it; and so in the end. So the LORD had promised: and so he found. Jeremiah 1:18, 19.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! we peruse this portion of GOD'S holy word to little purpose, if so be that we do not, under his divine teaching, gather from it the blessed instructions it holds forth. For what is it that we behold in the different characters then, but the same as we behold in the different characters now; that the LORD'S children are conformed to his lovely image; and the children of the evil one to Satan their master. Their malice is against CHRIST and therefore it is manifested to his people. As then saith an Apostle, speaking of the days of old, *he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now*. And so it will go on, until time shall be no more. And then the LORD will come, and take out of his kingdom all things that offend. Blessed LORD JESUS! I would say both for myself and Reader; give us to know, and

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see clearly, the marks of our adoption character. Let our souls discover, that our spots are the spots of GOD's children. And then, like Paul, like Jeremiah, like all the faithful gone before, we shall be enabled to say, *though bonds and imprisonment await us, yet none of these things will move us; neither shall we count our life dear to ourselves so that we finish our course with joy, and the calling we have received of the LORD JESUS to testify the gospel of the grace of GOD.*

## CHAPTER 39

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*We are now arrived at the long predicted event, the taking of the city. Zedekiah hath his eyes put out; and all the people are made prisoners.*

#### **Jeremiah 39:1-3**

In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. (2) *And* in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up. (3) And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, *even* Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.

See here the confirmation of GOD'S word; and the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy: and behold in it also, a full refutation of the false and lying prophets. And thus, Reader, depend upon it, will be the final accomplishment of all GOD'S promises of salvation to the people of GOD, and everlasting destruction to all his enemies.

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**Jeremiah 39:4-9**

And it came to pass, *that* when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain. (5) But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. (6) Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. (7) Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon. (8) And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem. (9) Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.

What a sad business Zedekiah had made of it; and what a grievous calamity followed! Zedekiah was but in the prime of life when these things took place. And here he felt the awful consequence of rejecting the counsel of God against his own soul His eyes allowed him to behold his little ones, and nobles, all slain; and then darkness as to this world, closed in upon him forever. Reader! pause and contemplate the still greater calamity of the hardened sinner, when all earthly comforts are departing from him; and the everlasting darkness of death and eternal misery, are sealing up his soul at the last day!

**Jeremiah 39:10**

But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

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I read this verse by itself, to remark distinguishing mercies. The poor also in a spiritual sense, who have nothing, find all things in JESUS!

### **Jeremiah 39:11-14**

Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, (12) Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee. (13) So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rabsaris, and Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's princes; (14) Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

Behold the care the LORD takes of his people, agreeably to his promise, chap. 15:11. And is it not so in all ages? Oh! Reader, never lose sight of the blessed doctrine that ariseth out of this scripture. *The LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly.* 2 Peter 2:9. Psalm 105:14, 15.

### **Jeremiah 39:15-18**

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, (16) Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be *accomplished* in that day before thee. (17) But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou *art* afraid. (18) For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD.

It should seem that *Ebed-melech*, notwithstanding his boldness in Jeremiah's cause, (see Chap. 38:7-13.) was timid concerning the threatened judgments of GOD upon Jerusalem.

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The LORD hath special respect to the fearful minds of his little ones. His grace shall be sufficient for them; and his strength shall be according to their weakness. It is blessed to know this; and doubly blessed to rely upon it in CHRIST.

## REFLECTIONS

WHO would have believed (saith the Prophet) among the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem! But the cause is immediately given. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, it is that which hath shed the blood of the just in the midst of her. But Reader! behold not only in this history, but in the history of all the earth, what sin hath wrought. It was sin that caused the destruction of the old world by a flood! It was sin that gave rise to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire. And it as sin, by which death hath entered into the circumstances of all mankind, and destroys all, because all have sinned. And would you see a yet more tremendous display of the effects of sin, than the everlasting destruction of rebellious men and angels, put all together; behold it in the death of CHRIST; when he *who knows no sin became sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Yea, Reader, in the SON of GOD taking upon him our nature, and dying, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD, there is a greater manifestation of the awful nature of sin, than the overthrow and annihilation of all the creation of God would have been in proof!

Pause then, my soul, over these solemn considerations! Behold the judgments against sin, going on throughout the

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earth! Look at the effects of sin, in the sorrows, and wars, and carnage, and miseries, both in private life and public bodies. And when the full influence of these solemn things are suitably felt in thine own apprehension, look unto JESUS, the only refuge and consolation under all. Oh! for grace to know him, who *by death hath destroyed him that had the power of death; and delivered them who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage.*

## CHAPTER 40

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*We have here some of the events which took place at Jerusalem, immediately after the city was taken, the history is carried on.*

#### **Jeremiah 40:1-6**

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon. (2) And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. (3) Now the LORD hath brought *it*, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you. (4) And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which *were* upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee: but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land *is* before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go. (5) Now while he was not yet gone back, *he said*, Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell

with him among the people: or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go. (6) Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.

It is blessed to trace the LORD'S providences over the LORD'S people. Here was Jeremiah enjoying more freedom and happiness from the appointment of enemies, than he had from professed friends. I pray the Reader, however, not to overlook the cause, in the LORD'S appointment. How fully was that scripture proved: Proverbs 16:7.

### **Jeremiah 40:7-12**

Now when all the captains of the forces which *were* in the fields, *even* they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon; (8) Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. (9) And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan sware unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. (10) As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put *them* in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken. (11) Likewise when all the Jews that *were* in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan; (12) Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much.

It appears by the appointment of one of their own people among the Jews to be Governor, that the King of Babylon meant kindness to the lower orders of the people, though he had slain their king and nobles. And the gathering of the summer fruits for themselves seems to have been a confirmation of it.

### **Jeremiah 40:13-16**

Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, (14) And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not. (15) Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know *it*: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish? (16) But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.

We have here the information of a conspiracy: but the accomplishment is not related in this Chapter. In the succeeding one it is. Alas! neither mercies nor judgments; the fear of death nor of hell, find their influence on some men's minds. Oh! what a wretched, fallen, depraved state, hath our nature sunk into by sin!

## REFLECTIONS

I BEG the Reader to make a solemn pause over this Chapter, and to remark, how soon a sense of divine judgments lose their effect, except divine grace keep the remembrance of them, with all their blessed consequences, alive in our hearts. Who should have conceived that after so alarming a visitation,

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in the putting out the eyes of the king, and carrying him and his nobles away into captivity, with all the residue of the people excepting the poor, that rebellion and disaffection should have sprung up among them. But so it is. There can be no change but what grace makes. And much it is to be feared, that if the miserable in everlasting chains, under darkness to the judgment of the great day, were once again to be permitted to come on earth, their minds would be the same, and the sin and malignity of their nature remain unchanged. LORD JESUS! give to thy people that *new heart*, and that *new mind*, in which the new birth consists: that by regeneration they may be prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of thee in glory; since thou thyself hast said, without it, we *cannot see the kingdom of GOD!*

## CHAPTER 41

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*The treachery spoken of in the preceding chapter, is said in this to have been accomplished. Gedaliah the new governor is slain; and much confusion followeth.*

#### **Jeremiah 41:1-3**

Now it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah. (2) Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. (3) Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, *even* with

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Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, *and* the men of war.

I know not, Reader, what reflections the LORD awakens in your mind while prosecuting this sad history. But will not such a view of the horrible cruelty of the human mind, make a man blush to belong to it? Can it be the same nature, equally disposed to the same crimes, unrestrained by grace, in all the fallen race of Adam? Oh! how precious, when under this conviction, is the consideration of our interest in, and relationship to, the second Adam, the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

### **Jeremiah 41:4-9**

And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew *it*, (5) That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, *even* fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD. (6) And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. (7) And it was *so*, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, *and cast them* into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that *were* with him. (8) But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren. (9) Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, *was* it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: *and* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *them that were* slain.

Was there ever a monster of iniquity further gone in the lust of human blood, than this *Ishmael*? The Prophet doth not fail to tell us that he was of the seed royal! Oh! how disgraceful, had he been of the offspring of the dung-hill. But, Reader! do

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not overlook the common stock of sin, by whatever temporary distinctions they are known. Here there is one common level; and it is grace alone that makes a difference.

### **Jeremiah 41:10-18**

Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that *were* in Mizpah, *even* the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites. (11) But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, (12) Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that *are* in Gibeon. (13) Now it came to pass, *that* when all the people which *were* with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, then they were glad. (14) So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah. (15) But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites. (16) Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after *that* he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, *even* mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon: (17) And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt, (18) Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

It is hardly possible, but to take part with satisfaction on the success of *Johanan*, in the recovery of the Captives. Nevertheless, what is the sum and substance of the history, but *potsherds striving with potsherds*; and the LORD'S cause,

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and the LORD'S glory, becoming the object of neither. Behold, Reader! as we prosecute the history, we only read more and more of man's ruin and apostacy from GOD. Well might the Prophet Jeremiah be called the mournful Prophet, for every one that reads the history of his day, and feels concerned for the LORD'S glory, must find cause to mourn also. Lamentations 1:20.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! the great relief to a Child of GOD, when turning over continued pages in the word of GOD in relating man's depravity, is the view of JESUS, who was manifested, as an apostle saith, *to take away our sin, and in him is no sin*. Precious LORD JESUS! I would ask, both for myself and Reader! what could support the soul, under the consciousness of one common nature of evil, but the consciousness also, that thy people have one common nature of righteousness in thee? *As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many were made righteous*. Every way, and by every view, to which the mind directs her attention, in *Zedekiah, Ishmael*, and all the residue of the people, we see nothing but evil; and in ourselves feel the breaking out of the same. But in thee, blessed JESUS, we behold a fulness of grace and truth; and those graces abounding for thy people. Oh! LORD! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, if it be thy blessed will, the needed grace, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST; that of thy fulness we may all receive and grace for grace. Amen!

## CHAPTER 42

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*We have in this Chapter, a renewed instance of the incorrigible hardness of the human heart, void of divine grace. Johanan pretendeth to seek after GOD, and enquireth of the Prophet. Jeremiah kindly tells the people, but in vain.*

**Jeremiah 42:1-3**

Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near, (2) And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, *even* for all this remnant; (for we are left *but* a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:) (3) That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

Hitherto the character of Johanan seems to have been fair. The zeal he manifested against Ishmael, and the recovery of the captives, is well succeeded by this enquiry. But alas! what sincerity is there in man? The LORD hath given a representation of all such characters, by his servant the Prophet. Ezekiel 33:30-32.

**Jeremiah 42:4-6**

Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard *you*; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, *that* whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare *it* unto you; I will keep nothing back from you. (5) Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us. (6) Whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

Nothing can be more promising than this engagement on both sides. We shall see how the matter ends.

### **Jeremiah 42:7-18**

And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah. (8) Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which *were* with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, (9) And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him; (10) If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you, and not pluck *you* up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. (11) Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I *am* with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. (12) And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land. (13) But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, (14) Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: (15) And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; (16) Then it shall come to pass, *that* the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. (17) So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them. (18) For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.

Reader! do remark the graciousness of GOD. And recollect, that from the first threatenings, such was the uniform

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language the LORD used. And had Zedekiah listened to it, what calamities would have been spared. But, Reader, do not overlook also the personal interest that we have, in the present hour, to the same truths. If sinners look stedfastly to JESUS, and trust to his righteousness, and stay themselves upon it, without an eye to the righteousness of the creature, their salvation would be also near. But if we make the reeds of Egypt our confidence, instead of the Rock of Ages, what is this but the same conduct as Johanan, and the people with him.

### **Jeremiah 42:19-22**

The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day. (20) For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do *it*. (21) And *now* I have this day declared *it* to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any *thing* for the which he hath sent me unto you. (22) Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go *and* to sojourn.

I cannot sufficiently admire the faithfulness of the Prophet, in times of such general danger. What an uniformity Jeremiah manifested, in his office of speaking the truths of GOD. Oh! for the LORD to give his Church, in all ages, faithful ministers like him, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear!

### REFLECTIONS

READER! you and I shall lose all the beauties of these scriptures, if from the representation here made of the Church, in the days of Jeremiah we do not gather instruction,

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to suit the Church in our's. Depend upon it in all ages, more or less, it is the same. Oh! how doth Zion languish! How are the glorious distinguishing truths of our holy faith kept back, or believed only in part! And as these pillars, and ground of the truth, are but coolly received; ,so in proportion, like Johanan and his party, we are looking more to an arm of flesh for our confidence, than to the living GOD. Thus turning from one creature to another, we seek salvation from any, and from every resource, rather than the one great and finished redemption of JESUS! Oh that the LORD would give his people grace, that in the present hour the advice of Jeremiah might be followed; that we may abide in CHRIST, that the LORD might build us up, and plant us in the glorious salvation by JESUS! For then when the LORD comes to bless his land and people, he will bring with him grace to pardon, grace to renew, grace to sanctify, grace to save, and an abundance of grace, to enable us to triumph; over all our enemies. Precious LORD! fulfil all thy merciful dispensations towards us, and return to thy people, as thou hast said, a pure language, that *they may call upon the name of the LORD with one consent.*

## CHAPTER 43

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*The awful rejection of the Prophet's advice, by Johanan and his party, is related in this Chapter: and with daring impiety he and his followers carry Jeremiah, and the remnant of the people by force into Egypt.*

#### **Jeremiah 43:1-3**

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And it came to pass, *that* when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, *even* all these words, (2) Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there: (3) But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.

Reader! mark in the progress of the history, the truth of that scripture; as *Jannes* and *Jambres* withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, 2 Timothy 3:8. How awful the state of judicial blindness!

#### **Jeremiah 43:4-7**

So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah. (5) But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah; (6) *Even* men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah. (7) So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they *even* to Tahpanhes.

To what a desperate degree of boldness in sin, doth sin harden! It is somewhat extraordinary however, under all, that the life of the Prophet is so sacred. The reason is assigned us: Jeremiah 1:19.

#### **Jeremiah 43:8-13**

Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, (9) Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the

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clay in the brickkiln, which *is* at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; (10) And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. (11) And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, *and deliver such as are* for death to death; and such *as are* for captivity to captivity; and such *as are* for the sword to the sword. (12) And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace. (13) He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that *is* in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.

Reader! look at God's people in their vassalage: part of them in Babylon, and part in Egypt! Is this the LORD'S heritage? Well might the Prophet use his lamentations in the way he hath, and pour out his soul in prayer, see Lamentations 5 throughout. But, Reader! in the midst of judgments do not overlook how the LORD'S grace follows the people. Jeremiah is still to preach, and still to prophesy. And although evil must come, yet goodness shall follow. Pray read Jeremiah 32:37 to the end.

## REFLECTIONS

MY soul! do not close this book of GOD, neither pass away from this Chapter, without first dropping in prayer before the mercy seat, for the continual leadings, and preventing, and restraining influences of the HOLY SPIRIT. Who can read the astonishing hardness of the human heart, as set forth in the relation of *Johanan* and his followers, without trembling? Who would have supposed it possible, that when a nation for its

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impiety had been given up by the LORD to the sword, the remnant should have set forth yet more outrages and marks of rebellion against GOD! But, alas! what is man, in his highest attainments, if for a moment left of GOD! The best of men are but men, and are equally capable of falling: for corruption is the same in all men, by nature. And, my soul, never for a moment lose sight of that most certain and unquestionable truth, that they that are kept, *are kept by the power of GOD, through faith unto salvation.* And that thou art not like Johanan and his party, is not owing to thee; or to thy prudence, but wholly to the merciful grace of the LORD. Oh! for grace to seek grace; and to be on the lookout for the sweet visits of him and his love, who alone keepeth from falling, and will present his people before his throne faultless, with exceeding great joy. Precious JESUS! Do thou keep me, and I shall be kept. And grant LORD, that I may never *grieve the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD; whereby thy people are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

## CHAPTER 44

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The Prophet is here preaching, though in Egypt, in the same strain of reproof as before. And the LORD foretells by him the destruction of that kingdom.

#### **Jeremiah 44:1-14**

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the

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cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they *are* a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein, (3) Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, *and* to serve other gods, whom they knew not, *neither* they, ye, nor your fathers. (4) Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. (5) But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods. (6) Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted *and* desolate, as at this day. (7) Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye *this* great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; (8) In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? (9) Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? (10) They are not humbled *even* unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers. (11) Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah. (12) And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, *and* fall in the land of Egypt; they shall *even* be consumed by the sword *and* by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, *and* an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach. (13) For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: (14) So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape.

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Never surely could anything be more gracious than the LORD'S repeated expostulations with the people. The LORD follows them into Egypt, whither they had fled in direct defiance of GOD'S word; and yet even here, the same patience and long suffering is set forth. Reader! do not overlook, in Israel's history, our own. Every part and portion of GOD'S word, and every providence, preacheth now as much as then, to the same amount; *I am GOD, and not man, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.* Malachi 3:9.

### **Jeremiah 44:15-19**

Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, (16) *As for* the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. (17) But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for *then* had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. (18) But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all *things*, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. (19) And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?

While we remark the patience and long suffering of the LORD; are we not compelled no less to remark, and be astonished at the impudence, and incorrigible hardness of the human heart? Was there ever an example of more daring impiety, than what is here represented? Alas! how sin hardens. Well may every poor sinner, who reads it, exclaim in the language of that prayer, *from pride and hardness of heart, and contempt of*

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*thy word; good LORD, deliver us!* The idol here spoken of, the queen of heaven, to whom the wives of the people paid homage, very probably, was the Moon. Under the influence of this planet, they conceived, that they had favourable seasons. And it is likely, that in conjunction with the Moon, they worshipped also the other heavenly bodies—Alas! how fallen! Acts 7:42-44.

### **Jeremiah 44:20-23**

Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him *that* answer, saying, (21) The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it *not* into his mind? (22) So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, *and* because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. (23) Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.

Here the LORD compels them to look back, and trace the causes or all their past calamity. The idolatry of themselves, and their fathers, had already brought upon them, and their land, the awful judgments which had prompted them to flee into Egypt.

### **Jeremiah 44:24-30**

Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt: (25) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of

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heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows. (26) Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth. (27) Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them. (28) Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs. (29) And this *shall be* a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil: (30) Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life.

Here the LORD calls upon them to be prepared for the destruction of Egypt. No place, no kingdom shall give shelter to those whom GOD will punish. In their own land, or in the land of strangers, the LORD will find them out, and will punish them. *There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.* Job. 34:22.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! we are engaged, in the perusal of this Chapter, in a most solemn and awful history. Israel, given up to idolatry, and their neck hardened against all the calls of the LORD's long suffering and patience. Let us pause over it, and remark the tremendous and fearful condition of such a state. There is, indeed, in every man, by nature, a blindness, an ignorance, and even an enmity, against God. Our wills, our

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inclinations, our faculties, are all on the side of rebellion; and until an act of grace is wrought upon the heart, there is none that will seek after GOD. But, when added to this, a *judicial* blindness follows, this is most alarming indeed! Thus the LORD by his servant proclaims, *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.* Intimating the natural hardness and impenitency of the heart, shut up in unbelief. *So I gave them up unto their own heart's lusts; and they walked in their own counsels.* As if the LORD had said, *Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone!* Oh! precious, precious LORD JESUS! thou that art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof! blessed forever be thy gracious interposition, in coming to take away sin by the sacrifice of thyself! LORD! open our hearts, and keep them open by thy grace, that they may never more be shut against thee!

## CHAPTER 45

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*We have here a short, but precious Chapter, in which Baruch, being dismayed at his situation in Egypt, is comforted by the Prophet.*

#### **Jeremiah 45:1-3**

The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch; (3) Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.

We had an account of this *Baruch* in the thirty sixth Chapter of this same prophecy; and here, in a short, but instructive manner, his history is again brought forward. It appears, that though a follower of the LORD GOD of Israel, he had but weak faith. He lived in continual apprehension of danger, and from the surrounding calamities was full of fear, that evil would befall him. Reader! it is astonishing how much even good men suffer from imaginary fears; and what troubles the faithful bring upon themselves from not always living above these fears, by living upon faith in CHRIST. That is a sweet promise, which ought to be worn in the bosom of a child of GOD, for every occasion: Isaiah 26:3. And it was an old saying of the primitive Christians, "he that lives by faith, will never die by fear."

#### **Jeremiah 45:4-5**

Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, *that* which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. (5) And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

I have often found this gracious answer of the LORD, by his servant Baruch, very profitable. Shall the children of GOD, while going home to their Father's house, and conscious that they are passing through a wilderness, expect velvet paths, and the easiest accommodation, by the way? Reader! in a world like this, where desolations are all around, let us bless GOD if we escape the storm. Amidst general shipwreck, let us consider our lot peculiarly favoured that we are not stranded, or overwhelmed with the waves.

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## REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! it is enough that thou art my portion; Oh! let me seek no great things beside. To have my spiritual life secured, mid my natural life given me for a prey, in such a world as this, where the arrows of death are flying around in every direction; LORD, help me to consider these as distinguishing mercies; and by faith to live on thee now, and ere long to enjoy the full fruition of thee in glory; oh! what marked and distinguishing grace is mine. And now, LORD! I pray thee, let *Baruch's* history continually furnish out subject of instruction; for in having thee, O LORD, I really and truly possess all things.

## CHAPTER 46

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*Egypt is here threatened, and Babylon is pointed to as her conqueror. In the close of the Chapter the LORD comforts his people.*

**Jeremiah 46:1-12**

The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; (2) Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah. (3) Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle. (4) Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with *your* helmets; furbish the spears, *and* put on the brigandines. (5) Wherefore have I seen them dismayed *and* turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: *for* fear *was* round about, saith the LORD. (6) Let

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not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates. (7) Who *is* this *that* cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? (8) Egypt riseth up like a flood, and *his* waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, *and* will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof. (9) Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle *and* bend the bow. (10) For this *is* the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates. (11) Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; *for* thou shalt not be cured. (12) The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, *and* they are fallen both together.

At this Chapter begins the judgments of GOD against the enemies of Israel. The LORD hath had a long controversy with his people; but now in the midst of it, he will reckon with their foes. And first for Egypt. This kingdom must come down, and the LORD will accomplish it by the king of Babylon: thus making one enemy of Israel to ruin another. Reader! mark some of the same things in the present hour. The LORD never wants a scourge to correct when his wisdom sees it fit.

### **Jeremiah 46:13-26**

The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come *and* smite the land of Egypt. (14) Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee. (15) Why are thy valiant *men* swept away? they stood not, because the LORD did drive them. (16) He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword.

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(17) They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt *is but* a noise; he hath passed the time appointed. (18) *As* I live, saith the King, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, *so* shall he come. (19) O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into captivity: for Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant. (20) Egypt *is like* a very fair heifer, *but* destruction cometh; it cometh out of the north. (21) Also her hired men *are* in the midst of her like fatted bullocks; for they also are turned back, *and* are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, *and* the time of their visitation. (22) The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood. (23) They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and *are* innumerable. (24) The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north. (25) The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and *all* them that trust in him: (26) And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD.

If the Reader will compare scripture with scripture, which is always the most profitable way of reading the word of God; he will find, that what Jeremiah is here engaged in, Isaiah had been before him, and Ezekiel had no less the same commission. Isaiah 66:14. Ezekiel 30 and 39.

### **Jeremiah 46:27-28**

But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make *him* afraid. (28) Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I *am* with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee:

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but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure;  
yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

I pray the Reader to pause over these sweet verses, and read them again and again: it is impossible to read them too often. The LORD had once before given the same blessed promises to his afflicted ones, Chap. 30:10, 11: but such is his grace, and the exceeding riches of his grace, that he will repeat the gracious assurances. And Reader! I pray you, as you read these verses, recollect, that they belong to the Israel of GOD, in all ages, even JESUS'S Church forever. Amidst all our unworthiness and rebellions, as in the Church's history, so in the Church's history through all ages, the LORD hath respect to his own glorious name, and to his Covenant promise in CHRIST. See the precious scriptures, Ezekiel 20 and Romans 11.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass by a thousand beauties, as they arise before us in this precious scripture, in GOD'S destruction of all the enemies of his Church and people, to dwell upon that most blessed and gracious portion of it, in his tender mercies over his redeemed. Every part of the holy word tends to confirm what this most merciful passage so faithfully proclaims, that GOD'S Jacob shall not finally be lost, nor his Israel forsaken. *Cast down* his children may be, when their sins and rebellions render chastisements necessary: but *cast off* they never can be; for how unworthy soever in themselves, they are beheld precious in JESUS. Oh! thou sin-bearing LAMB of GOD! what everlasting love and praises will the ages of eternity bring in to thee, in an endless revenue of

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glory, when thou shalt have finally brought them all home, and forever secured them beyond all future possibility of danger, in thine own eternal righteousness in thy kingdom!

## CHAPTER 47

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*We have the same subject prosecuted through this chapter as in the former. The LORD is about to punish Israel's enemies, and having begun with the Egyptians, he here declares the destruction of the Philistines.*

#### **Jeremiah 47:1-4**

The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza. (2) Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl. (3) At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong *horses*, at the rushing of his chariots, *and at* the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to *their* children for feebleness of hands; (4) Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, *and* to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.

We shall find this Chapter, as well as the several around it, truly profitable, if we spiritualize it. The *Egyptians* and *Philistines*, *Moab* and *Ammon*, were all sworn foes to the people of GOD from the beginning, and so their spawn continues through all ages. But, though the LORD causeth them to act as rods to correct his children with; yet, when he hath finished the correction, he will throw, (as parents do that

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punish their little ones,) the rod away. Here the LORD calls the Philistines to account, and gives some most awful threatenings concerning them. And thus the LORD hath said, he will deal with all the foes of his people, and finally bring them under their feet. Romans 16:20. Isaiah 49:24-26.

### **Jeremiah 47:5-7**

Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off *with* the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself? (6) O thou sword of the LORD, how long *will it be* ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still. (7) How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it.

I beg the Reader to remark with me, the beauty, as well as the power of this scripture. Calling to the sword to be quiet, is a fine image, to express the feelings of the Prophet, in the view of slaughter, even though of our enemies. Gracious feelings do not destroy natural ones, though they refine them. As men in one common nature, we tremble at the destruction of men; but as the followers of the LORD, CHRIST'S enemies are our enemies, and there can be nothing neutral in this war. *He that is not for me is against me.* These things will all be explained at last. But in the mean time, our duty is, to refer all to his unsearchable wisdom. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth, do right?*

## REFLECTIONS

METHINKS the LORD, the HOLY GHOST, hath opened to the believer's view sweet instructions in this Chapter. Here we learn, that however long and oppressive the Philistines, in all ages and generations, may bear hatred, and show forth their malice against the LORD'S heritage, yet a day of reckoning is

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sure, and a time of recompense must come. The LORD may, and the LORD will correct his children when they offend, and with the rod of men, for so the Covenant of grace declares; but all this shall be but in measure, while in the end their enemies will finally perish, and that forever.

And is it not a gracious, part also in GOD, to teach his people these precious truths, and to help them by such promises, even during their exercises, to live by faith in the expectation what the end shall be? Oh! for grace to watch and mark the unceasing tendencies of divine love in all his appointments. Surely the LORD doth *stay his rough wind, in the day of the east wind. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away sin.*

## CHAPTER 48

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*In this Chapter Moab is called to account, and a long and trying account it is. The last verse, however, (and probably in allusion to the Gentiles given to CHRIST in Moab,) closes with a gracious promise.*

#### **Jeremiah 48:1-11**

Against Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded *and* taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed. (2) *There shall be* no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come, and let us cut it off from *being* a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; the sword shall pursue thee. (3) A voice of crying *shall be* from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction. (4) Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard. (5) For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up;

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for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction. (6) Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness. (7) For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity *with* his priests and his princes together. (8) And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the LORD hath spoken. (9) Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein. (10) Cursed *be* he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed *be* he that keepeth back his sword from blood. (11) Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

The Prophet Jeremiah, whom the LORD when giving him his commission, had set over the nations and over the kingdoms, (see Chap. 1:10.) is here arraigning, trying, and condemning Moab; and an awful condemnation it is. But what I particularly beg to notice in this account is, the cause assigned in this last verse. *Moab hath been at ease from his youth*. Reader! mark, I beseech you, what the LORD saith. And this is the one fatal cause, both of the destruction of kingdoms and individuals, an unawakened, unregenerated state. Sinners continue sinners. They are at ease in Zion. *They have no changes*, saith the Psalmist, *therefore they fear not* GOD. Psalm 55:19. As they were born so they continue. Thus they live, and thus they die. Hence the old scent of the old nature remains! An awful state, and according to our LORD'S account, impossible ever to *enter the kingdom of heaven*, John 3:5.

### **Jeremiah 48:12-46**

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall

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empty his vessels, and break their bottles. (13) And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence. (14) How say ye, We *are* mighty and strong men for the war? (15) Moab is spoiled, and gone up *out of* her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts. (16) The calamity of Moab *is* near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. (17) All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, *and* the beautiful rod! (18) Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from *thy* glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, *and* he shall destroy thy strong holds. (19) O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, *and* say, What is done? (20) Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled, (21) And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, (22) And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Bethdiblathaim, (23) And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Bethgamul, and upon Bethmeon, (24) And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near. (25) The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith the LORD. (26) Make ye him drunken: for he magnified *himself* against the LORD: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision. (27) For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy. (28) O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove *that* maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth. (29) We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart. (30) I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but *it shall* not *be* so; his lies shall not so effect *it*. (31) Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; *mine heart* shall mourn for the men of Kirheres. (32) O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach *even* to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. (33) And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; *their* shouting *shall be* no shouting. (34) From the cry of Heshbon *even* unto Elealeh,

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*and even* unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar *even* unto Horonaim, *as* an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate. (35) Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods. (36) Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres: because the riches *that* he hath gotten are perished. (37) For every head *shall be* bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands *shall be* cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth. (38) *There shall be* lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein *is* no pleasure, saith the LORD. (39) They shall howl, *saying*, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him. (40) For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab. (41) Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. (42) And Moab shall be destroyed from *being* a people, because he hath magnified *himself* against the LORD. (43) Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *shall be* upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD. (44) He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, *even* upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. (45) They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones. (46) Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives.

It would swell our Commentary to a length indeed, to enter minutely into the several branches of the visitations here set forth. Indeed it would only when done, tend to confirm what hardly needs further confirmation. GOD'S foes must be accounted with, and destruction must overtake all the workers of iniquity. *Moab* as well as the *Philistines*, and all that oppose

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GOD in his purposes, will finally perish. That one blessed declaration sums up and answers all: *my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*, Isaiah 46:10. Precious consideration to all the people of GOD!

**Jeremiah 48:47**

Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far *is* the judgment of Moab.

I have reserved this sweet verse to be read by itself, as containing much mercy in the midst of judgment. Those who read it in reference only to temporal blessings, must own that GOD is gracious. And those who read it through the medium of spiritual blessings in CHRIST, may and will discover wonderful events, which may be supposed to be folded up in it, in relation to the Gentile Church. Isaiah 49:6.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! who, but must be struck with holy awe and reverence, that contemplates the LORD'S judgments in the earth! And though from a conscious sense of being made a partaker of grace, cannot but find cause to be humbled, under a sense of sin and undeservings, and *to rejoice with trembling*.

It would be a blessed and sanctified use of all afflictions, judgments, and visitations, that we behold, or hear of, among nations, or families, or individuals: if, while we view the sorrows of others, we duly considered our deserts also. The LORD hath caused it, to be recorded, for the solemn admonition of his Church and people, that a *fruitful land is turned into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell*

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*therein.* And when we see, as that we do now see, nations, like Moab, convulsed and shaken to their very centre, for the wickedness and impiety of the people; surely our British Israel hath reason to humble herself before GOD, lest she should see also an enemy in her habitation. It will be blessed to him that writes and to him that reads, if Moab's sorrows here threatened, lead the hearts of both in prayer to GOD in CHRIST, that our minds may be always deeply affected with the sense, of national sins, and the just apprehension of national judgments. *Oh LORD!* I would say with the Prophet, *spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thy heritage to reproach!* Oh! grant that this our British Zion may never see the Golden Candlestick of the Gospel removed out of its place: neither the going down of the sun among our Prophets: but, oh! that the LORD, with whom alone is the residue of the SPIRIT, would *turn to the people a pure language, that they might all call upon the name of the LORD to serve him with one consent.* Amen.

## CHAPTER 49

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*The judgments of the Ammonites takes up the former part of this Chapter. In it we have also the condemnation of Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam.*

#### **Jeremiah 49:1-6**

Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why *then* doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities? (2) Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites; and it shall be a desolate

heap, and her daughters shall be burned with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, saith the LORD. (3) Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled: cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth; lament, and run to and fro by the hedges; for their king shall go into captivity, *and* his priests and his princes together. (4) Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, *saying*, Who shall come unto me? (5) Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts, from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandereth. (6) And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD.

The Chapter opens in a beautiful and striking manner, for the LORD himself, Israel's lawful Sovereign, demands, as in a court of justice, how, or wherefore it is, that the land he gave, (and as LORD and proprietor of the whole earth he had a right to give,) to Israel, is now possessed by the children of Ammon? What! saith the LORD, is it so, that Israel is childless, whose posterity GOD promised should be as the sand of the sea for multitude? That is impossible. And will any nation then dare to possess Israel's birth-right? If the Reader will compare this passage with other scriptures, he will see the ground upon which JEHOVAH brings this charge. Amos 1:13-15. Zephaniah 2:8-11. Reader! spiritualize the passage, and it will be yet more blessed. How shall the seed of CHRIST be ever dispossessed of their inheritance, when they are heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST? Romans 8:16, 17. I beg the Reader not to overlook the mercy promised to Ammon in the last verse of this passage, in the after-day dispensation. Surely we do not strain the scripture, when we refer it to the call of the Gentiles under CHRIST. Isaiah 49:6. Acts 11:1-18.

### **Jeremiah 49:7-23**

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Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; *Is* wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished? (8) Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time *that* I will visit him. (9) If grapegatherers come to thee, would they not leave *some* gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough. (10) But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he *is* not. (11) Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve *them* alive; and let thy widows trust in me. (12) For thus saith the LORD; Behold, they whose judgment *was* not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and *art* thou he *that* shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink *of it*. (13) For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. (14) I have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, *saying*, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle. (15) For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, *and* despised among men. (16) Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, *and* the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD. (17) Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. (18) As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it. (19) Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who *is* a chosen *man*, *that* I may appoint over her? for who *is* like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who *is* that shepherd that will stand before me? (20) Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them. (21) The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea. (22) Behold, he shall

come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. (23) Concerning Damascus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; *there is* sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet.

The *Edomites*, the descendants of *Esau*, are here brought to account. Long grudge, and an old hatred to Jacob and his seed, marked this race: and to this hour the enmity hath not ceased. Galatians 4:29. I cannot add to the beauty of this passage; neither is it possible to illustrate and explain it, equal to what is already done by scripture: See Obadiah's prophecy. But, I beg the Reader to notice that verse in it, the 11<sup>th</sup>, which the Chaldee scripture seems to make a promise of God to Israel, in the midst of this judgment on Esau. I do not say it is so, I only mention it. And it should seem to be very probable: for it is a blessed promise, and hath been found blessed to God's people in all ages.

### **Jeremiah 49:24-27**

Damascus is waxed feeble, *and* turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on *her*: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail. (25) How is the city of praise not left, the city of my joy! (26) Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD of hosts. (27) And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad.

In the prophecies of Zechariah we have a similar threatening against *Damascus*. Zechariah 9:1-8. The LORD is visiting his enemies, and the enemies of his Church, and therefore the day is awful.

### **Jeremiah 49:28-29**

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Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith the LORD; Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the east. (29) Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto them, Fear *is* on every side.

*Kedar* was the son of *Ishmael*, and as the son of the bond-woman mocked, so his posterity. All must be accounted for therefore in the day of judgment.

### **Jeremiah 49:30-33**

Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the LORD; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you. (31) Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, *which* dwell alone. (32) And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them *that are* in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the LORD. (33) And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, *and* a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor *any* son of man dwell in it.

We have here the continuation of the same or similar judgments: and all by one and the same Destroyer. It is not to be wondered at that Babylon should be so lifted up with pride, when the LORD had made Babylon the scourge of all nations!

### **Jeremiah 49:34-39**

The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, (35) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might. (36) And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. (37) For I will cause

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Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, *even* my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them: (38) And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD. (39) But it shall come to pass in the latter days, *that* I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.

I beg the Reader, as he closeth this account, to mark the sweet promise of grace to *Elam*, in the latter days. And when he hath done it, let him consult the Prophet Joel for the meaning of the phrase *latter days*; and the Acts of the Apostles, for the fulfillment of the promise, when the HOLY GHOST was poured out on the *Elamites*, and both will serve to throw a light upon similar promises of grace, in this Chapter. Joel 2:28, &c. Acts 2:1-9. and then to 21.

## REFLECTIONS

IN reading this Chapter, and beholding the gracious Covenant promises of GOD in CHRIST, thus held forth to the full assurance of faith for the final destruction of all the Church's adversaries every child of GOD by promise, as *Isaac* was, may well join that hymn of old, and say; *so let all thine enemies perish, O LORD, but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!* It is blessed, it is precious to see, that the issue of the holy war is not doubtful. JESUS hath conquered in our name and nature; and He will subdue *for us and in us*, all that oppose.

Reader! we find cause however, in the midst of triumph to be humbled, in the recollection, how often through sin and unbelief, those *Ammonites* and *Edomites* vex our souls with their wiles: and act as scourges to chasten the LORD'S people,

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when by sin we transgress. When we provoke the LORD to jealousy with our rebellion, and cause him to hide his face from us, then those enemies gain their advantage over us. But oh! how blessed still to recollect, that He that is for us is more than all that is against us; and he will, as in this Chapter is promised, account with, and rebuke all nations for his people's sake. He will subdue the enemy, and bring all their power low, for his own righteousness' sake, and for his Covenant promise in CHRIST JESUS!

## CHAPTER 50

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*Here Babylon, who had been the scourge of so many nations, now comes to be reckoned with herself. Her judgments are described. There are many sweet promises interspersed in this Chapter to Israel.*

#### **Jeremiah 50:1-3**

The word that the LORD spake against Babylon *and* against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. (2) Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, *and* conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. (3) For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.

The Chapter opens with GOD'S denunciation against Babylon: Israel at this time was in captivity in Babylon. But the hour is now hastening when Babylon is to be destroyed, and Israel

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delivered. *Bel* and *Merodach*, their two great idols, shall be destroyed.

### **Jeremiah 50:4-8**

In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. (5) They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, *saying*, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant *that* shall not be forgotten. (6) My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away *on* the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. (7) All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers. (8) Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.

What a beautiful description is here given of the people's return to their beloved home! Reader! there is such a thing as tears of joy, as well as tears of sorrow. Holy mourners in CHRIST, come with in the blessing, Matthew 5:4. And observe the beautiful order in the people's return. They are said first to seek the LORD their GOD; GOD in covenant. This is the first work of grace. And the second is like to it; they shall ask the way to GOD'S Church, to Zion. And what is the object of both, but that the Covenant may never more be broken on their part, for the LORD hath never broken it on his. Reader! was there ever a more lovely representation than this? And how exactly it describes your heart, my heart, yea every heart, of a poor returning Prodigal, who by sin hath ran away from GOD, and is brought back by sovereign grace, to seek the LORD'S face sorrowing. And oh! what grace in GOD to dispose the heart to all this, without which no heart would ever be

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disposed! What grace to receive the poor returning Prodigal when he hath nothing to bring, and nothing to offer; and when every enemy concluded that they sinned not in wounding them, because they had sinned against the LORD. Luke 15:17-24.

### **Jeremiah 50:9-16**

For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows *shall be* as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. (10) And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD. (11) Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls; (12) Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations *shall be* a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. (13) Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. (14) Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD. (15) Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it *is* the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her. (16) Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.

Let not the Reader overlook still further testimonies of divine favor to his poor outcasts, in that the LORD sends enemies to destroy Babylon, because Babylon had wasted his people. *Ye rejoiced, said the LORD, and were glad, ye destroyers of mine heritage!* Oh! how full of grace this is! And do observe, Reader, moreover, that in the worst of times, Israel was still

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the LORD'S heritage, and the LORD delights to own Israel. Oh! the blessedness of such unspeakable mercy! Deuteronomy 33:29. And observe once more, the LORD in this passage calls Babylon's oppression of his people *sinning against him*: agreeably to that sweet expression, *whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*. Zechariah 2:8.

### **Jeremiah 50:17-20**

Israel *is* a scattered sheep; the lions have driven *him* away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. (18) Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. (19) And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. (20) In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall be* none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Every verse in this passage is peculiarly striking and gracious. Observe how the LORD speaks tenderly in behalf of his people, and contemptuously of their enemies. A scattered sheep fallen into the jaws of lions. *This king* of Babylon, as if to point to his impotence. And do not overlook, or forget, from this representation, how plain it is, that the LORD is everlastingly watching over his people, and takes particular notice of every one that hurts them. Oh! that every child of GOD would keep this in remembrance. And, Reader, do not forget to mark down also in the tablet of thine heart; yea, beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to write it there for thee, that such is the perpetual, unceasing, and soul cleansing efficacy of CHRIST'S blood, that when the iniquity of Israel, and sin of Judah, are sought for, they shall not be found. The Church of JESUS, in

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the eye of GOD the FATHER, by virtue of her union, and oneness with him, is altogether beautiful and lovely. *He beholds no iniquity in Jacob, neither perverseness in Israel.* JESUS declares himself of his spouse, that *she is all fair, and that there is no spot in her.* And he will present her to himself *a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,* but that she may be for ever unblameable and irreproveable in his sight. Numbers 23:21. Song Of Solomon 4:7. Ephesians 5:27.

### **Jeremiah 50:21-32**

Go up against the land of Merathaim, *even* against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee. (22) A sound of battle *is* in the land, and of great destruction. (23) How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! (24) I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD. (25) The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this *is* the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. (26) Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left. (27) Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation. (28) The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple. (29) Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel. (30) Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD. (31) Behold, I *am* against thee, *O thou* most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time *that* I will visit thee. (32) And the most proud shall

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stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.

I only detain the Reader, to make one remark on this passage, though it furnisheth out many; and the one I beg the Reader particularly to observe is, in my view, a most important one; namely, that Babylon's sin, in the cruelty manifested to Israel, was directed against the LORD. *She hath been proud against the LORD.* Yes! The hatred manifested against the LORD'S people, is on the LORD'S account. So saith JESUS, and blessed be his dear name, that it is so. Turn to that scripture, and you will find it. John 15:18, 19. I know not what the Reader's feelings are at this discovery; but in mine it forms a sweet and precious consideration. I find a holy boldness sometimes to faith, in telling my LORD, that since he hath called me by his grace, and the enemy hates me but the more on his account, surely my LORD will feel constrained to keep me the nearer to himself for this reason, that the foe may not triumph.

### **Jeremiah 50:33-34**

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah *were* oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. (34) Their Redeemer *is* strong; the LORD of hosts *is* his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

And doth not those sweet consolations belong to GOD'S people at all times, and under all exercises. GOD'S Israel, and Judah, are oppressed together. Every hand is against the household of faith. Men may detain them for a while; but they are GOD'S property, and therefore GOD'S care. Their *Goe!* kinsmen owns them, and will plead their cause. And when he ariseth, woe to

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the enemies of his people. He will give rest to his people, and their land shall be in quiet. Isaiah 65:19-25.

### **Jeremiah 50:35-46**

A sword *is* upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise *men*. (36) A sword *is* upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword *is* upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed. (37) A sword *is* upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that *are* in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword *is* upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed. (38) A drought *is* upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it *is* the land of graven images, and they are mad upon *their* idols. (39) Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell *there*, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. (40) As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD; *so* shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein. (41) Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. (42) They shall hold the bow and the lance: they *are* cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, *every one* put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon. (43) The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, *and* pangs as of a woman in travail. (44) Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who *is* a chosen *man*, *that* I may appoint over her? for who *is* like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who *is* that shepherd that will stand before me? (45) Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make *their* habitation desolate with them. (46) At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

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I must not detain the Reader, by entering upon the many interesting particulars here enumerated of GOD'S judgments upon Babylon. I only briefly observe, that the history of that kingdom hath fully shown the truth of the divine predictions. For where is that once great city, whose magnificence and glory was so highly spoken of? It is, as the LORD said it should be, now a desert for beasts and the reptiles of the earth. Thus Isaiah prophesied of it, and so it came to pass, and is fulfilled even to this day. Isaiah 13:19-22. *Cyrus the Persian*, in concert with *Darius the Mede*, as had been predicted of him, opened a passage through the great river *Euphrates*, and entered Babylon by night, while the king and his nobles were reveling in their security. See Isaiah 45:1-4. and Daniel 5:30. But though I must not detain the Reader any longer with the mere history of the event, I should lose the chief object of this commentary, did I not humbly follow the steps of the Prophet, explained by the Evangelist, and call the Reader to the *spiritual* illustration of the history of Babylon. All oppressors of GOD'S people act as instruments for the promotion of GOD'S glory. And the final destruction of them is therefore set forth in the scriptures, as the one great design of God. Hence in the book of the Revelations, the Apostle John had it in commission to tell the Church, that this was the spiritual object all along intended. GOD'S love and attention to his Church in CHRIST, was thus all along shadowed out in all the sacred scriptures; so that as this Chapter concludes the whole history confirms, *at the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.* Revelation 18 throughout.

### REFLECTIONS

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READER! contemplate in this Chapter, what all Scripture proclaims, and all experience in the history of men and things confirm; GOD'S people must ultimately triumph, and all the enemies of GOD, and of his CHRIST, must be destroyed. How little did proud Babylon calculate the dreadful purchase they made when leading Israel into captivity! How little did Egypt suppose, for the deliverance of their poor brick making slaves, Egypt should be destroyed! And how little now, in the present hour, doth mystic Babylon frame an idea, that in one day her ruin will be accomplished. Oh! that the people of GOD, when racking under chastisement and oppression, would *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it:* and in their transgressions and unbelief, trace the source of the LORD'S displeasure. But let them not forget, amidst all, that though like lost sheep, as this scripture beautifully describes them, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, yet they are still the sheep of CHRIST. And in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and both in Jerusalem and Judah, *the flocks must pass again under the hands of him that telleth them.* Oh! the blessedness, when grace inclines the heart, of doing as the poor Captives from Babylon are described, going and weeping, they shall seek the LORD, and shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, to join themselves to the LORD, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be broken. And as in grace, so in glory, what blessedness will break in upon the soul of all the LORD'S outcasts, which here dwell with *Moab*, and are constrained to have their habitation in the *Babylon* of the world, when finally and fully they shall return, and come to the Zion which is above, *with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads, when they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

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## CHAPTER 51

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*The same subject is prosecuted in this Chapter. The utter destruction of Babylon is declared, and the LORD'S judgments upon her determined.*

**Jeremiah 51:1-5**

Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind; (2) And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about. (3) Against *him that* bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against *him that* lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host. (4) Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and *they that are* thrust through in her streets. (5) For Israel *hath* not *been* forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.

I beg the Reader particularly to take notice of this last verse. Amidst all the chastisements of the LORD, and the permission given to the enemies of the Church to oppose her, the LORD'S own testimony is here given, that neither Israel nor Judah had been forsaken of the LORD of hosts, though their land had been filled with sin. Oh what a word of comfort is here to all precious souls, under the various exercises of their pilgrim state!

**Jeremiah 51:6-19**

Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this *is* the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. (7) Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the

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earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. (8) Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. (9) We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up *even* to the skies. (10) The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. (11) Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device *is* against Babylon, to destroy it; because it *is* the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. (12) Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. (13) O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, *and* the measure of thy covetousness. (14) The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, *saying*, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they shall lift up a shout against thee. (15) He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. (16) When he uttereth *his* voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. (17) Every man is brutish by *his* knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image *is* falsehood, and *there is* no breath in them. (18) They *are* vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. (19) The portion of Jacob *is* not like them; for he *is* the former of all things: and *Israel is* the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts *is* his name.

Again I beg the Reader to remark, how the LORD points to his discriminating grace. The portion of Jacob is not like others. *This people, saith JEHOVAH, I have formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise, Isaiah 43:21.*

### **Jeremiah 51:20-45**

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Thou *art* my battle axe *and* weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; (21) And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider; (22) With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; (23) I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers. (24) And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. (25) Behold, I *am* against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. (26) And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD. (27) Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers. (28) Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. (29) And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. (30) The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in *their* holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwellingplaces; her bars are broken. (31) One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at *one* end, (32) And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. (33) For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon *is* like a threshingfloor, *it is* time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come. (34) Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. (35) The violence done to me and

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to my flesh *be* upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say. (36) Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry. (37) And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. (38) They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lions' whelps. (39) In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD. (40) I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats. (41) How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! (42) The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. (43) Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth *any* son of man pass thereby. (44) And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall. (45) My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

Is not this command to the people of God, to go out of Babylon, the same as gospel precepts, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18, Revelation 18:4.

### **Jeremiah 51:46-58**

And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a rumour shall both come *one* year, and after that in *another* year *shall come* a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler. (47) Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. (48) Then the heaven and the earth, and all that *is* therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD. (49) As Babylon *hath caused* the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth. (50) Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into

your mind. (51) We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD'S house. (52) Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan. (53) Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, *yet* from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD. (54) A sound of a cry *cometh* from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: (55) Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: (56) Because the spoiler is come upon her, *even* upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite. (57) And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise *men*, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts. (58) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

If the Reader will compare what is here said, with what is said of mystic Babylon in the New Testament, he will soon perceive what a striking resemblance there is between things temporal and spiritual. Revelation 17 and 18.

### **Jeremiah 51:59-64**

The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And *this* Seraiah *was* a quiet prince. (60) So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, *even* all these words that are written against Babylon. (61) And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words; (62) Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever. (63) And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book,

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*that* thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: (64) And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

Here the subject closeth, both to Jeremiah's prophecy, and the predictions against Babylon; and a solemn close it is. The best and truest explanation we find to the whole is in the Book of Revelation; to which I refer. Revelation 18:20, 21. What follows, in the following Chapter, is purely the history of the event, so that as this scripture saith, Thus far and no farther respecting prophecy, are the words of Jeremiah. The LORD GOD of the Prophet be adored for what he gave this faithful servant of his to record!

## REFLECTIONS

HERE Reader! we arrive to the termination of Jeremiah's prophecy, and have seen how sure the word of the LORD is, in destruction to his enemies, and in grace and faithfulness to his people. And we who have lived to see, not only the whole accomplishment of the things predicted, but the introduction of that blessed era of his gospel, in whose kingdom all the great events of salvation to GOD'S people are founded, and by whom all nations of the earth are blessed, may well bow down, with thanksgiving and praise, for this precious portion of the word of his grace. Blessed be the LORD for his servant's ministry! And blessed be the LORD for having such precious scriptures handed down to us, for our instruction! And blessed be the LORD, who teacheth us to profit by the ministry of his servants!

Farewell *Jeremiah!* thou faithful servant of the most High GOD! painful indeed were thine exercises, to have thy ministry so despised and scorned; and thy person treated with such indignity and suffering. But sure was thy reward: and JESUS, in whose name thou didst minister, did not leave thee without witness in the most perilous times. Oh! that the LORD JESUS, in all ages of his Church, would grant tokens to his faithful ones, as to Jeremiah, when opposed by false prophets: and to the *Hananiahs* and *Pashurs* of the present day, speak in his decision, that they may be *Magor-missibibs* in terror all around. LORD take thine own blessed cause, unto thine own Almighty arm; and in the ordination of thy ministers, as in the case of Jeremiah, make them as a defenced city, an iron pillar and brazen walls, that they may be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Yea, make them what thou wouldest have them to be, and make them more than conquerors, through thy grace helping them, that JESUS may be glorified in their instrumentality, and the souls of thy people made joyful through them, in the LORD our GOD.

## CHAPTER 52

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*This Chapter contains the historical relation of the siege of Jerusalem; the capture of the city and people, and the deplorable treatment of Zedekiah and his Sons, and nobles.*

#### **Jeremiah 52:1-34**

Zedekiah *was* one and twenty 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. (2) And he did

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*that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. (3) For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. (4) And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. (5) So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. (6) And in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. (7) Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which *was* by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans *were* by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain. (8) But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. (9) Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him. (10) And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah. (11) Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death. (12) Now in the fifth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, which *was* the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, *which* served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, (13) And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great *men*, burned he with fire: (14) And all the army of the Chaldeans, that *were* with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about. (15) Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive *certain* of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude. (16) But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left *certain* of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen. (17) Also 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, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass

of them to Babylon. (18) The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. (19) And the basons, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; *that* which *was* of gold *in* gold, and *that* which *was* of silver *in* silver, took the captain of the guard away. (20) The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that *were* under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. (21) And *concerning* the pillars, the height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof *was* four fingers: *it was* hollow. (22) And a chapter of brass *was* upon it; and the height of one chapter *was* five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapters round about, all *of* brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates *were* like unto these. (23) And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; *and* all the pomegranates upon the network *were* an hundred round about. (24) And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: (25) He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city. (26) So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. (27) And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land. (28) This *is* the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty: (29) In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons: (30) In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons *were* four thousand and six hundred. (31) And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the *first* year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of

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Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, (32) And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon, (33) And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. (34) And *for* his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

The relation of this history hath been already gone through, almost word by word, in the book of the Kings: so that it would be to swell unnecessarily the relation on any commentary here. If the Reader will compare this Chapter with the account of the siege, and destruction of Jerusalem, as it is rehearsed at large in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Book of Kings from the 18<sup>th</sup> verse of the 24<sup>th</sup> Chapter, through the whole of the 25<sup>th</sup> Chapter that follows, (including only a parenthesis, as a portion before related in the 40<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> verses) he will find the agreement in all the particulars. I only add therefore, that we ought to pay the greater attention to those portions of the word of God, which the divine wisdom hath been pleased to have twice recorded, as demanding this respect from us. And when we consider the awful subject of which they both treat; and that, notwithstanding the LORD'S love to his Church, he will not leave that Church without his severe chastisement; we have abundant reason to observe what the Apostle hath said on these solemn judgments in general, lest for our transgression; the LORD visit us also. *Be not high minded but fear: for if GOD spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee?* Precious JESUS! how blessed is it to see to whom our safety is alone owing; and in whom all our security stands. LORD! hasten thy kingdom, and bring home thine heritage. And let thy redeemed behold the New

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Testament Babylon destroyed forever, and all the enemies of our salvation; that that blessed time may soon arrive, when *the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our GOD and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever.* Amen.

### REFLECTIONS

READER! what vast subjects open to our most devout meditation, while going over in the perusal those prophetic writings of the mournful Prophet Jeremiah. How gracious to his Church and people, the LORD is here manifested! How patient, and long suffering! And, finally, what an issue to his mercy! How tried, afflicted; distressed, and exercised, his faithful servant the Prophet! And what a series of the most aggravated provocations, rebellions, and sins, did the people of Israel and Judah set up against the LORD; and against Jeremiah!

Reader! solemnly ponder well the whole subject. Then call to mind the Covenant faithfulness of JEHOVAH, as the one only cause of Israel's salvation. Oh! the blessedness of that rich mercy and grace given the Church in CHRIST JESUS, before the world began. Here Reader! centre all your views. Here trace all mercies to their source. In JESUS behold the whole purpose of redemption: and *from* JESUS see that you draw all your consolation. GOD in CHRIST *reconciling the world to himself*, explains the whole mystery of redemption, and places the whole on a firm foundation, not to be shaken. May a gracious GOD, give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, more and more to rest on this Rock of Ages, and to be

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looking forward with holy faith to that hour when the LORD will bring again, Zion, and overthrow all the enemies of the Church, as Babylon, with an everlasting destruction! Amen.

# LAMENTATIONS

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE title of this book is rather gathered from the general contents of it, than from any other reason; for there is in fact no title given to it by the Author. The Old Church was accustomed to call it *The Book of Lamentations*: and under the New Dispensation we have adopted the same. There can be no question, but that the Prophet *Jeremiah* was the penman; and on which account indeed, it invariably follows in the order of the books of scripture, his prophecies. And the occasion upon which the Prophet gave vent to the sorrows of his heart, in the desolations of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, is but too palpable an evidence upon what account they were written.

The Lamentations are for the most part written in the style of the Hebrew poetry, and agreeable to that style of writing, are alphabetically arranged; that is, each verse beginning with the letter as standing in the order of the alphabet. They are very beautiful in point of poetry, but much more so in respect to piety; and no doubt have in many parts strong allusions to Christ; as the Reader, taught by the Holy Ghost, will soon discover. With respect to their date, it must be left to conjecture to determine. It is more than probable that they were written at different periods, as the calamities of the nation gave scope to the sorrowful exercises of the Prophet. I only detain the Reader, to add a prayer to the Holy Ghost, that his grace may accompany our perusal of them, and make them profitable in a gracious manner, to lead unto Christ: that

in tracing the lamentations of God's people, we may always keep in remembrance, that *in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

## CHAPTER 1

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*In twenty-two verses, corresponding to the number of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, the Prophet mourns the desolations of his people, and his beloved city Jerusalem. He confesseth sin, and acknowledgeth the justice of the divine judgments.*

#### **LAMENTATIONS 1:1-7**

How doth the city sit solitary, *that was* full of people! *how* is she become as a widow! she *that was* great among the nations, *and* princess among the provinces, *how* is she become tributary! (2) She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears *are* on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort *her*: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. (3) Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. (4) The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she *is* in bitterness. (5) Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy. (6) And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts *that* find no pasture, and they are gone without strength before the pursuer. (7) Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and

none did help her: the adversaries saw her, *and* did mock at her sabbaths.

I pause after reading this last verse, just to remark what a devout vein of real sorrow for sin, as well as a sincere affliction for the miseries which arise out of sin run through this whole scripture. The Holy Ghost hath caused to be recorded several instances of sacred poetry, of the mournful kind, 2 Samuel 1:19; Ezekiel 2:10 but here is blended with sorrow a sense of sin and unworthiness. I do not presume decidedly to speak upon the subject, but I confess I rather think, that the whole is not only historical, but typical of the Church, in her real captive state under sin and Satan, and the Holy ghost's preparing the soul by his gracious corrections of sin for the cordial reception of Jesus. John 16:8-12.

### LAMENTATIONS 1:8-12

Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honored her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward. (9) Her filthiness *is* in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter. O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified *himself*. (10) The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things: for she hath seen *that* the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command *that* they should not enter into thy congregation. (11) All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O LORD, and consider; for I am become vile. (12) *Is it* nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me* in the day of his fierce anger.

I again make a pause at the close of this memorable verse, and beg the Reader to judge for himself, whether without violence to the verse, and indeed to the general scope of the whole book of Lamentations, which this verse seems to become a clue to, in explaining, we may. but behold a greater

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than the mournful Prophet Jeremiah here. When we consider that Christ and his Church are one, and that from everlasting; and that in all the Church's affliction he was afflicted; surely we may look beyond the Prophet Jeremiah's days, and contemplate Christ as thus speaking, when he stood forth the Church's representative and surety in the days of his flesh. See in testimony to this opinion, Isaiah 53:1-12 throughout, and the Evangelists on the crucifixion.

### LAMENTATIONS 1:13-22

From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate *and* faint all the day. (14) The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, *and* come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into *their* hands, *from whom* I am not able to rise up. (15) The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty *men* in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, *as* in a winepress. (16) For these *things* I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed. (17) Zion spreadeth forth her hands, *and there is* none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, *that* his adversaries *should be* round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them. (18) The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. (19) I called for my lovers, *but* they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls. (20) Behold, O LORD; for I *am* in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home *there is* as death. (21) They have heard that I sigh: *there is* none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad that thou hast done *it*: thou wilt bring the day *that* thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me. (22) Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as

thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs *are* many, and my heart *is* faint.

I forbear to enlarge by way of commentary; the Chapter is too plain too need any, and too sublime to receive benefit from any. I only pray the Reader to look over the several passages, and examine, under the Spirit's teaching, whether in a general sense, as referring to the Church at large, or in a more confined point of view, as directed to individuals, as forming part of the whole, the subject may riot he supposed to have an eye to the state of the gospel dispensation. And if so, I venture to observe, that without any special or particular application of the several parts of it, the Prophet may be supposed to he treating of the sad cause, and effects of sin, and from thence was thus teaching, and preparing the Church for the after corning of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this sense, if the whole be read, and with an eye to Jesus, it will be most blessed indeed.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! Who can contemplate the dreadful state of the Church at that season, when the Prophet thus mourned, without feeling the most sensible and sorrowful impression? Who that loves Zion, can thus behold Zion, and not take part? And yet, if in the days of Jeremiah there was sad cause for taking up lamentation, surely now there is still greater reason for mourning. It is true indeed, Zion is not gone into national captivity: but what of that, spiritual captivity is an infinitely greater evil. So few are there now seeking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, that the language of the Prophet will hold good; *there is none to guide her, among all the sons whom she hath brought forth: neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.* And in a day of such degeneracy in Zion, may we not well suppose that Jesus is looking on, and feels sensibly for the defections

of his people! Lord raise up thy power and come among us. Take to thyself thy great name, and go forth conquering and to conquer, until that thou hast converted the nations to the sceptre of thy grace, and called home thy banished ones to thy glory. Thou wilt arise to have mercy upon Zion, to comfort all that mourn, and to take to thyself a pure people, with one consent to call upon the Lord. Amen.

## CHAPTER 2

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*We have here a continuation of the same subject as the former. The Prophet mourns over the desolated circumstances of Jerusalem, and complains of those afflictions to God.*

#### **LAMENTATIONS 2:1-12**

How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, *and* cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger! (2) The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought *them* down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof. (3) He hath cut off in *his* fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, *which* devoureth round about. (4) He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all *that were* pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire. (5) The Lord was as an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strongholds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. (6) And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as *if it were* of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath

despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest. (7) The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast. (8) The LORD hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: he hath stretched out a line, he hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying: therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament; they languished together. (9) Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes *are* among the Gentiles: the law *is* no *more*; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD. (10) The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, *and* keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground. (11) Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. (12) They say to their mothers, Where *is* corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom. (13) What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach *is* great like the sea: who can heal thee? (14) Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment. (15) All that pass by clap *their* hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, *saying, Is* this the city that *men* call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth? (16) All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed *her* up: certainly this *is* the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen *it*. (17) The LORD hath done *that* which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused *thine* enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries. (18) Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye

cease. (19) Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street. (20) Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, *and* children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? (21) The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain *them* in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed, *and* not pitied. (22) Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD's anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.

We shall not fully enter into the spirit of this solemn scripture nor discover the chief bent of the man of God's lamentations, unless we take with us, all along what it was that so deeply afflicted his mind, and gave the finishing stroke to his sorrow, namely, that it was the Lord's doing. Painful as it was in itself to be brought under the humblings of a proud foe; yet, the aggravated circum-stances in it were, that the Lord's hand directed the whole. And when the Lord smites, and for sin also, doubly and tenfold distressing is that misery. Reader! make application of this to the sorrows of Jesus, when receiving at the Lord's hand double for the sins of his beloved Jerusalem, for whom he became surety. The sword of justice that awoke and smote *the man that was God's fellow*, awoke and smote him at Jehovah's command: *yea, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief.* Zechariah 13:7; Isaiah 53:4-6.

### **LAMENTATIONS 2:13-22**

What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee? (14) Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen

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for thee false burdens and causes of banishment. (15) All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth? (16) All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it. (17) The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries. (18) Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease. (19) Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street. (20) Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? (21) The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed, and not pitied. (22) Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD'S anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.

There is somewhat very blessed in this address of the Prophet to the Lord, in the close of the Chapter. Pouring out the heart before the Lord, and spreading all our sorrows at the mercy-seat; these are among the sure tokens of grace. It is a certain sign that our afflictions are sanctified, when these effects follow. When our exercises lead our hearts to God, and not lead them *from* God. When Jesus is still loved as Jesus, and his grace and righteousness still sought after, and still above all things valued. Neither doth the soul's humble submission to the Lord's will under sorrowful exercises, become unsuitable or unbecoming, to be accompanied with

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earnest prayers to be delivered from them. Jesus himself is here our great example: who, when he came purposely to do away sin by suffering, yet in His agonies desired *the cup might pass from him*, Matthew 26:39. But while by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we make our requests known unto God; the work of grace will always induce not only a composed resignation, but more than this, even a perfect approbation, that all is right, though the cup of sorrow be not taken away. *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?*

## REFLECTIONS

READER! it will be our wisdom from the perusal of the lamentations of the mournful Prophet, to gather consolation to our exercises, and. the exercises of Zion in all ages: and study to learn those sweet and gracious lessons the Holy Ghost intended, from such a record in his sacred scripture.

We see then in this part of the history of the Church, to what a state of sorrow God's people may be brought, when their sins and backslidings testify against them. And will not God in every age, chasten the same in his people? Will he overlook sin in them, more than in the world? Nay, will He not chastise them much more, in proportion as sin in them is more offensive in the divine eye, than in others? Sin indeed, as sin, is the same thing in all. But, nevertheless, it is worse in God's children than in the ungodly; just as a weed in a garden, though the same as in the hedge or field, is yet more offensive, and more proper to be rooted out. Let us learn therefore from hence, how sure sin, in all its various forms, must induce the divine displeasure, and bring on the chastisement of God.

In the next place, let us under all our exercises of affliction trace our sorrows to the source, and when we find the Achan in the camp, bring all with deep contrition before the Lord: and

say in the Lord's own words, *take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips!*

And above all, Reader! see to it, that in all our sorrow for sin, and desires after pardon from the guilt of it, the whole is done with an eye to Christ. It is He which hath borne our sins and carried our sorrows; and it is wholly in respect to him and his finished salvation, that God pardons the sin and accepts the sinner. Even the corrections of the Lord are not for the satisfaction of God's justice, for that justice hath been fully satisfied by the blood of the cross; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, by whose stripes we are healed. But all corrections for sin become the testimony of God's holiness; and are in the charter of grace so set forth, and not by way of expiation. Therefore with an eye to Jesus, and the everlasting efficacy of his sin-cleansing blood, let our sorrow for sin, and repentance towards God be always accompanied: And oh! how sweet and precious the thought, that the same merit is in the blood of the Lamb as ever, though new contracted defilement be in his people, from day to day. Precious Jesus! thou hast made my peace by the blood of thy cross.

## CHAPTER 3

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*The same subject of lamentation runs through the whole of this Chapter.*

#### **LAMENTATIONS 3:1-17**

I *am* the man *that* hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. (2) He hath led me, and brought *me into* darkness, but not *into* light. (3) Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand *against me* all the day. (4) My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. (5) He hath built against me, and compassed *me* with gall and travail. (6) He hath set me in dark

places, as *they that be* dead of old. (7) He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy. (8) Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. (9) He hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked. (10) He *was* unto me *as* a bear lying in wait, *and as* a lion in secret places. (11) He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate. (12) He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. (13) He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins. (14) I was a derision to all my people; *and* their song all the day. (15) He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood. (16) He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes. (17) And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity.

If we do by this scripture as the Apostle enjoined upon another occasion, *compare spiritual things with spiritual*, we may discern some striking features of One greater than the Prophet thus expressing himself. 1 Corinthians 2:13. I am free to allow, that the mournful Prophet might truly say; in reference to his own personal calamities, that he was a *man of affliction*; but still I think the personal afflictions of Jeremiah would not have been considered sufficiently remarkable, to have demanded a book of elegies in the volume of scripture. And when I behold expressions in this sacred book of God, similar to what is found elsewhere in the Bible, and directly spoken of Christ; and in a spirit of prophecy by Christ; I must at least be obliged to connect so much together of both, as to have my mind led out in contemplation upon the person of my Lord. Let the Reader meditate upon many things said in these verses, and then recollect what is said elsewhere of Christ, and by Christ; and I venture to think, that the application will be striking. Jeremiah was a mournful Prophet indeed: but Jesus, as the Head and Representative of his people, was the only One that could in a way of personal and peculiar appropriation say, *I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath*. See Psalm 22:1-31; Hebrews 5:7, Psalm 69 &c. Some have thought, that it is the Church which is here

venting her sorrows by the pen of the Prophet. And if it be so, is not Jesus the Head of his Church, eminently the first mourner: and the Church in all her members beheld in him? Reader! remember, I do nothing more than merely propose the humble question. I assert nothing. But I conceive, that it will always be found profitable, in all the parts of lamentation and suffering, to eye Him *who was made perfect through suffering*; and I humbly believe, that we shall not lose an atom of profitableness, if then our views of the Church or of individual believers be beheld as in Him.

### LAMENTATIONS 3:18-23

And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD: (19) Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. (20) My soul hath *them* still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. (21) This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. (22) *It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* (23) *They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

I make an interruption to the reading of the Chapter here, only to remark the beauty and gracefulness of the Prophet's observation: that though in the midst of suffering, there is no injustice. It is *of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed*. It is blessed when God condemns us, that we still can and do approve of Him. *The just Lord can do no iniquity*. Zephaniah 3:5, Ezra, Nehemiah, Job; all the faithful have acknowledged this. Ezra 9:13; Nehemiah 9:33; Job 9:12-21.

### LAMENTATIONS 3:24-66

The LORD *is* my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (25) The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him. (26) *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.* (27) *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.* (28) He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne *it* upon him. (29) He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. (30) He giveth *his* cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full

with reproach. (31) For the Lord will not cast off forever: (32) But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. (33) For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. (34) To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, (35) To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, (36) To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not. (37) Who *is* he *that* saith, and it cometh to pass, *when* the Lord commandeth *it* not? (38) Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? (39) Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? (40) Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD. (41) Let us lift up our heart with *our* hands unto God in the heavens. (42) We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned. (43) Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. (44) Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that *our* prayer should not pass through. (45) Thou hast made us *as* the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people. (46) All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. (47) Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction. (48) Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people. (49) Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission, (50) Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven. (51) Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city. (52) Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause. (53) They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me. (54) Waters flowed over mine head; *then* I said, I am cut off. (55) I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon. (56) Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. (57) Thou drewest near in the day *that* I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not. (58) O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life. (59) O LORD, thou hast seen my wrong: judge thou my cause. (60) Thou hast seen all their vengeance *and* all their imaginations against me. (61) Thou hast heard their reproach, O LORD, *and* all their imaginations against me; (62) The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day. (63) Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I *am* their music. (64) Render unto them a recompense, O LORD, according to the work of their hands. (65)

Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. (66) Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD.

Very beautiful and highly instructive is the whole of this passage, and every verse more or less is a sermon; but it would swell the commentary to a length indeed, to notice the several beauties of it. I rather offer a prayer upon it, that God the Holy Ghost will bless this whole Chapter, and the whole Book of the Lamentations to the Reader's mind, in his solemn and devout perusal. And blessed will indeed be that study, if Christ be discovered as the sum and substance of the whole Bible, to *whom all the Prophets give witness, and that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Acts 10:43.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! In your afflictions and mine, like the Prophet's, or the Church, can only find motives to assuage and soften them in the contemplation of the unequalled sorrows of Jesus. While we have our eyes stedfastly directed unto Him, we shall find our sorrows lightened, and our faces will not be ashamed. For while we eye Him, we hear a voice speaking to our hearts in a way of the most gracious accommodation; *behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?*

Reader! let me only detain you with a short observation, just to remark, how blessed the after fruits of exercises are, where our sorrows are sanctified with grace, and Jesus mingles our tears with the spiced wine of his pomegranate. And if afflictions lead to Him, prompt the soul to lean upon Him: determine the heart to abide by Him, and like an ancient sufferer, compel the soul to say, *though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;* depend upon it, these afflictions which are thus sanctified, be they what they may, are among the all things

which work together for good, and will be found in the end to be *the light afflictions of the moment, which work out of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

## CHAPTER 4

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*The fallen and sorrowful state of Zion is made the subject of lamentation through the greater part of this Chapter. Towards the close the punishment of Edom is threatened.*

#### **LAMENTATIONS 4:1-10**

How is the gold become dim! *how* is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. (2) The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! (3) Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people *is become* cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness. (4) The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, *and* no man breaketh *it* unto them. (5) They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills. (6) For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her. (7) Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing *was* of sapphire: (8) Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick. (9) *They that be* slain with the sword are better than *they that be* slain with hunger: for these pine away, stricken through for *want of* the fruits of the field. (10) The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Never was the desolation of a kingdom mourned over with more awakened and heart-felt sorrow, than what is here done of Zion. The Prophet seems to have his whole soul going out in the most dejected state of lamentation. He takes notice of all the objects of distress, which might be supposed to call up mourning. He contrasts her former state of joy with the present dejection; and then, having raised up all the finer feelings in the view, describes the deplorable situation of misery in all its aggravated circumstances. The images are very strong. They that were fed delicately were desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet, embraced dunghills. Yea, even the tender mother was found to have sodden her own children to abate the cravings of hunger! But amidst these strong descriptions of misery, I beg the Reader to take yet more especial notice of one, in the case of the *Nazarites*, which, from the connection with Him who was the One great *Nazarite*, and to whom the whole order acted but as types, demands our attention, the more. Every thing that is said here of the purity of the *Nazarite*, could only be said so in relation to Jesus. He, and He only, was pure, and holy, and harmless, and undefiled. The Church bare testimony to this, when she said, *my beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand*, Song of Solomon 5:10. Hence Matthew was commissioned to tell the Church, that the great reason intended from Christ's dwelling in Nazareth was, that he might be called a *Nazarene*, that is, the great *Nazarite*. Matthew 2:23. Thus the passage read with an eye to Christ, will be, her *Nazarites* in Him were purer than snow, but in themselves their visage was blacker than a coal. Recollect what Isaiah saith of Jesus, when bearing the sins of his redeemed his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men, Isaiah 52:14.

#### **LAMENTATIONS 4:11-12**

The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured

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the foundations thereof. (12) The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem.

The accomplishment of God's purposes, and the astonishment of the heathen, in God's chastisements of his people are very striking observations in this Chapter.

### **LAMENTATIONS 4:13-20**

For the sins of her prophets, *and* the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her, (14) They have wandered *as* blind *men* in the streets, they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments. (15) They cried unto them, Depart ye; *it is* unclean; depart, depart, touch not: when they fled away and wandered, they said among the heathen, They shall no more sojourn *there*. (16) The anger of the LORD hath divided them; he will no more regard them: they respected not the persons of the priests, they favored not the elders. (17) As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation *that* could not save *us*. (18) They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets: our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is come. (19) Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness. (20) The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.

Here the Prophet traceth the cause to its source, and by proving the corruption and sin of Israel to be universal, most fully justifies the judgment of the Lord, in making the punishment universal. Reader! is not this altogether gospel, and intended for the introduction of that grace in Jesus, which universal sin and corruption must make so highly necessary? Romans 3:9-26.

### **LAMENTATIONS 4:21-22**

Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked. (22) The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins.

*Edom* is put here as the representative of all the enemies of the Church. It was an old grudge, which begun in *Esau's* heart against *Jacob*: yea, it began long before in the person of *Cain* against *Abel*: and the enmity still runs, and ever will run, while the world continues, through the whole race, Galatians 4: 29. But the hour of reckoning must come: and an awful one it will be, when all the enemies of God and his Christ will be made to drink of *the cup of trembling*, and be driven from the presence of God *with everlasting destruction*. And perhaps, the heaviest of all their condemnation and punishment, will arise from the hatred and opposition they have been found to make in this life to the people of God. Taking away the children's bread, or endeavouring to make that bread unpleasant to them; tempting them to call in question God's love, and the like; it should seem from the general standard of scripture, that this will be more to their everlasting peril and sorrow, than all the other sins which they have committed in this life, against the light of nature and of revelation. In confirmation of this, I refer to the prophecy of Obadiah.

## REFLECTIONS

READER! Let us, in beholding the sad consequences of sin, in the case of the Church of old; seriously consider, to what the same cause might justly reduce the Church in any, and in every age now; if the Lord were to enter into strict judgment with his people. Was there ever a period more alarmingly distressing on this account than now? And as the Lord hath not promised exemption from the rod in case of sin: though in Christ he hath assured the Church of an exemption from

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everlasting ruin on that account, have we not just reason for fear? And should the Lord arise to visit our national offences with a rod, who but would tremble?

Precious Jesus! though we are gone away as a people, yea, far away in rebellions: though for profaneness and impiety, sabbath-breaking and transgression, the land mourneth: yet, Lord, turn to us, and turn our hearts to thee, that we may fear thy name. Oh! come to us, and bless us with awakening, converting, renewing, confirming grace. Be as the dew unto Israel, that *we may revive as the corn, and grow as the vine*: and that our scent in thee and from thee, may be *as the wine of Lebanon*. For then, and then only, when thou comest to bless, shall we go forth to meet thee, and have our souls renewed in *the light of thy countenance*.

## CHAPTER 5

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*In this Chapter the Prophet puts a close to his lamentations in prayer; and a most sweet and gracious prayer it is!*

#### **LAMENTATIONS 5:1-5**

Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach. (2) Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. (3) We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers *are* as widows. (4) We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us. (5) Our necks *are* under persecution: we labor, *and* have no rest.

I cannot sufficiently admire the strain of reasoning and of pleading with the Lord, which the Prophet here useth in prayer. Reminding the Lord of their relationship, by virtue of God's covenant with their fathers, and at the same time, spreading before the Lord the ill treatment they received from

the heathen; these became blessed pleas in prayer. Reader! there are no arguments now (for it is the same in all ages) that we can bring before the throne, but what hath first come to us from the throne. God's covenant love in Christ, and the everlasting and unceasing efficacy of Christ's blood and righteousness; these are they which must be our sole dependence, when the enemy from without, or sin within, bring the soul into trouble!

### **LAMENTATIONS 5:6-18**

We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread. (7) Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities. (8) Servants have ruled over us: there is none that doth deliver us out of their hand. (9) We got our bread with the peril of our lives because of the sword of the wilderness. (10) Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine. (11) They ravished the women in Zion, and the maids in the cities of Judah. (12) Princes are hanged up by their hand: the faces of elders were not honored. (13) They took the young men to grind, and the children fell under the wood. (14) The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music. (15) The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. (16) The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned! (17) For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim. (18) Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it.

The Prophet harps upon this string of the enemies' oppression, knowing, that God's jealousy for his people would be justly excited thereby. The Prophet knew, that Jehovah had himself declared, in instances that were past, that he would have scattered his people into corners, had it not been that the enemy would have triumphed. And as this restrained the Lord's hand then, he pleaded this with an hope, that the same cause would work now. See Deuteronomy 32:26-27. Reader! mark this scripture; and take it with thee to the throne in times of oppression. Jesus's cause is his people's cause; and our foes are his foes.

**LAMENTATIONS 5:19-22**

Thou, O LORD, remainest forever; thy throne from generation to generation. (20) Wherefore dost thou forget us forever, and forsake us so long time? (21) Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. (22) But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us.

How blessedly the Prophet here takes hold of the eternity, and unchangeable nature and purposes of God's faithfulness and mercy in Christ. And how earnestly on these grounds doth he plead for grace, being given to the Church, that the Church thereby may be turned unto God. And like another powerful pleader among the Prophets, how passionately doth he plead for God's sore wrath to be taken away. Isaiah 63:15-19. May the Lord write upon the heart of both Writer and Reader, a deep sense of these several pleas: and yet more especially lead them to see, that the whole is only founded in Christ Jesus!

**REFLECTIONS**

I CANNOT prevail upon myself to close this Book of Lamentations, without once again blessing the Lord for having endued the mind of his servant the Prophet with such large portions of grace, so to take part in the afflictions of his people. And I take occasion therefrom, to beg the Reader to join my spirit in prayer also, that He would of his infinite grace and mercy, give to his praying people now, large portions of the same precious frame of mind, that all selfish considerations may be lost in the view of the present languishing state of Zion. Surely there never was a period when her interests were less regarded. Where are the praying seed of Jacob to be found? Who is there that lays it at heart, how very low she now is? Moreover, are not, as in Jeremiah's days, the Lord's judgments in the earth? And may we not, without danger of committing an error, trace up the cause to the Lord's jealousy for his Zion? Did Jesus purchase the

Church with his blood; and can he be indifferent to her best interests? My soul! lay these things to heart. Reader! I charge it upon you, do the same! Whatever the event of the present commotions of the earth may be, let a throne of grace be enabled to witness for both, that Zion is there remembered by us in our warmest prayers, and her welfare preferred above our chief joy. Oh! that every nerve was exerted, and every heart-affection on the stretch, under the Holy Ghost's influence, and that we entered into the retirings of our God in Christ, to plead with him for Zion. *Spare Lord, I would say, spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them.* Reader! the Lord prepare both for his holy will and pleasure, that we may sing our song upon *Alamoth*, what was composed for the Lord's hidden ones, *when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.* Amen.