

The Works of Robert Hawker

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THE PROPHET

EZEKIEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

STILL prosecuting the subject of prophecy, we enter now upon the inspired scripture written by Ezekiel. This Book of GOD very properly follows that of *Jeremiah*, in that, as *Jeremiah* predicted the captivity of the Church: *Ezekiel* becomes a confirmation of it, in dating his prophecy from among the captives in Babylon.

The author takes his name from an Hebrew word, of striking signification, meaning, that he was upheld, or *strengthened* by the LORD. The burden of *Ezekiel's* writings is chiefly of events to be accomplished in the Church; and his Sermons, which he delivered to the people, are many of them recorded with his prophecies. Many of the predictions he uttered, had their accomplishment after the return of the Church from captivity: and some remain to this hour to be fulfilled: and perhaps some are now fulfilling in the earth.

The time of *Ezekiel's* ministry is easy to be gathered, from calculating the duration of the *seventy years* captivity. *Ezekiel* began to be favoured with visions from the LORD, about the *thirtieth year* (which was the *fifth* year of the captivity) of

Jehoiakim: and his prophecy continued near *three and twenty years*; so that it is no difficult matter to fix, the era of *Ezekiel's* ministry. But we do not find it so easy to unravel and explain the great scope and tendency of his prophecies. There are in it many dark, mysterious, and deep things of GOD. Some indeed, have been so blessedly explained, when accomplished in their corresponding events, as have called forth the admiration, love, and praise of the faithful to the LORD GOD of the Prophets, for giving to the Church such tokens of his favor, in watching over their interests in those periods. And these remaining to be fulfilled, will no doubt in due season lead to the same end. Every part of prophecy is discovered, when accomplished, to have been pointing to Him, *of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote*. And in the mean time, they serve by their obscurity, to call up the attention, and to exercise the faith of the Church, in waiting their accomplishment. And as very much of JESUS is in the writings of these holy men; yea, as the whole have no one object ultimately considered, but as holding forth Him: so it is to the unspeakable joy of the Church, when through the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, believers are led to discover, that to *Him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins*.

I beg the Reader, before he enters upon this precious book of GOD, that he will bend the knee of the heart in prayer with me, that He, who directed the Prophet's pen, may influence the Reader's heart to a right apprehension of the great truths contained in it. And as the HOLY GHOST hath taught the Church to understand, that *no prophecy of the scripture was of any private interpretation*; he will be always on the lookout for the

divine leadings of the same Almighty Author of his Sacred Word, in the discovery of the LORD JESUS. And having such a sure word of prophecy, he may *take heed unto it, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star shall arise in his heart.* Amen.

CHAPTER 1

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The Chapter opens with an account of the time and place of Ezekiel's prophecy. Some remarkable visions the Prophet describes, with which he was favoured.

EZEKIEL 1:1-3

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the river of Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. (2) In the fifth *day* of the month, which *was* the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, (3) The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

Let the Reader call to mind, through the whole of this prophecy, the state in which the Prophet as well as the Church was, at the time of those visions with which he was favoured. GOD's people are peculiarly blessed, when brought into peculiar situations. *Jeremiah* was in the dungeon, *Ezekiel* in captivity; and *John* in exile in the desolate island of *Patmos*, when the LORD manifested his special tokens of favor. Reader! it is very blessed to be withdrawn wholly from men, in order to enjoy communion with GOD. It appears by this account, that four whole years had run out, in which we hear of no

vision. And it should seem, that all this while the Church lay without ordinances and means of grace, or Sabbaths; as a Wife deserted of her Husband! Reader! think of your privileges, and mark the LORD'S mercy to Israel. Though a wife of whoredoms; and though sent into captivity; yet the LORD hateth putting away. He will not leave himself without witness. *Ezekiel* shall be commissioned. Reader! look to those scriptures! Isaiah 42:22-25. Jeremiah 31:20. Malachi 2:16.

EZEKIEL 1:4-5

And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness *was* about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. (5) Also out of the midst thereof *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

I desire to speak with all possible diffidence, and with an holy awe upon my mind, when I say, that I conceive, the close of this fifth verse, throws a light upon the whole of this vision. Those four living creatures, are said to have the likeness of a man. Is not this evidently in allusion to the human nature of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? If the Reader will compare the account which the beloved Apostle gives, of the vision he saw, in an age so distant as *John* lived from *Ezekiel*, (Revelation 4:6-8.), he will I think, be led to conclude, that the vision is one and the same. At least it must have proceeded from one and the same Almighty Teacher. And the situation of both *Ezekiel* and *John*, at the time of this vision was similar. *Ezekiel* in captivity, and *John* a banished exile. Sweet thought to GOD'S people! A prison or banishment may shut his people up; but nothing can shut GOD out!

EZEKIEL 1:6-27

And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. (7) And their feet *were* straight feet; and the sole of their feet *was* like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. (8) And *they had* the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. (9) Their wings *were* joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. (10) As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. (11) Thus *were* their faces: and their wings *were* stretched upward; two *wings* of every one *were* joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. (12) And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; *and* they turned not when they went. (13) As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, *and* like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. (14) And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. (15) Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. (16) The appearance of the wheels and their work *was* like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work *was* as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. (17) When they went, they went upon their four sides: *and* they turned not when they went. (18) As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings *were* full of eyes round about them four. (19) And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. (20) Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither *was* *their* spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature *was* in the wheels. (21) When those went, *these* went; and when those stood, *these* stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature *was* in the wheels. (22) And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature *was* as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. (23) And under the firmament *were* their wings straight,

the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies. (24) And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. (25) And there was a voice from the firmament that *was* over their heads, when they stood, *and* had let down their wings. (26) And above the firmament that *was* over their heads *was* the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne *was* the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. (27) And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

It is worthy the Reader's closest attention, how often during this account the appearance of a man is spoken of. Was it, (for I only ask the question, and do not presume to decide,) to lead the Prophet, and the Church by the Prophet's ministry, to the contemplation of the assumption of our nature into the GODHEAD? Knowing the infinite importance of the thing itself, that the union of the GODHEAD with the Manhood was the grand comfort of the Church, by every way and in every representation the blessed doctrine shall be revealed. It was, and hath been from everlasting, the delight of the SON of GOD to marry our nature, for the grand purposes included in it, and therefore, the Church shall be comforted during their exile in these outlines of redemption. Precious JESUS! was it thus thou wert pleased to manifest thyself in those early ages, to show thy love to thy people.

EZEKIEL 1:28

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so *was* the appearance of the brightness round about. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And

when I saw *it*, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Reader! observe the effect on the Prophet's mind! So was it with *Daniel!* So was it with *John!* So must it be with all the faithful! GOD is awful, in his very mercies. Daniel 8:17, 18. Daniel 10:8. Revelation 1:17.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause at your entrance on this sacred book of GOD, and ponder well over the great things recorded in this Chapter. Observe the grace of the LORD in following his Church into Babylon. Though his people, are led into captivity for their sins and rebellion: yet the LORD will not, because he cannot, forget his Covenant-relation to them. Blessedly was it said ages before this, that *though he gave them into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them: yet he remembered for them his Covenant, and made them to be pitied, of all them that carried them away captives.* Oh! for grace to remember this, in all and amidst all the unworthiness of our own hearts. The efficacy and worthiness of the LAMB *slain from the foundation of the world* continues the same; though there be new transgressions in the LORD'S people, from day to day.

Observe also, how graciously the LORD raised up for his people, this faithful servant the Prophet, that while the people had no temple, no service, no sanctuary, to repair to; the LORD'S ministry by his servant, might be the LORD'S witness. Oh! how sweet is it, in the absence of ordinances, to have a

faithful friend sent from the LORD, to remind us of his grace, and that his mercy endureth forever!

And Reader! do not forget the awfulness of this vision, by which the Prophet was taught. No doubt, *Ezekiel* contemplated what he saw, with the most profound humility. And in the reading of it, may our souls go forth under similar impressions, crying out with the heavenly host, *Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD Almighty which is, and which was, and which is to come*. What can be more becoming than for creatures such as we are, to fall low to the dust of the earth, in the contemplation of His divine majesty, before whom *all the nations of the earth are but as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust of the balance!*

One word more by way of reflection, on this most sublime but precious Chapter. May both Writer and Reader never forget, that amidst all the mysteries of this vision, the face of a man was held forth in it, and a voice was heard by the Prophet, which he distinctly observed. Surely, this could be no other than the LORD JESUS: and the design of it to represent the incarnation of the LORD JESUS, as the most blessed of all revelations to the Church. Reader! pause once more over this view, and ask your own heart, whether such visions of the LORD hath been made to your soul's joy? Have you seen GOD in CHRIST, and hath the LORD the SPIRIT formed GOD'S CHRIST in your heart *the hope of glory?* Oh! the blessedness of thus knowing CHRIST! Oh! the mercy manifested to any, and to every poor sinner, whom the LORD JEHOVAH hath given *the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*. Every place is then a *Chebar*, and every day then a *Sabbath!*

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

The Prophet is here ordained, and a most blessed ordination it was The LORD showeth him what is to be the nature of his ministry, and aids him to be armed for the service.

EZEKIEL 2:1

And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

We have here the divine ordination of the Prophet to his ministry. The LORD having prepared his mind by the solemn vision in the foregoing Chapter; and that vision having caused the Prophet to fall upon his face before the LORD! The Ordination now begins. Oh! how devoutly to be prayed for is it, that the ministers of GOD'S sanctuary, were all thus prepared under impressions of grace, and humbled to the dust of the earth before the LORD, in a consciousness of their own nothingness, when expecting ordination, to go forth to tell others of their nothingness, and the LORD JESUS'S all-sufficiency. I detain the Reader at this verse just to remark the peculiarity of expression by which the Prophet is called, *Son of Man!* None of the Prophet's but *Ezekiel*, as far as I recollect, was ever called by this name; and he no less than *ninety times* in his prophecy. Was it as a type of JESUS? I ask the question, but determine it not. Certainly it is remarkable. For it is a phrase peculiarly made use of for the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And of Him it is used in the Gospels more than *threescore times*.

EZEKIEL 2:2

And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

Let the Reader, while observing the Prophet's sacred ordination, fail not to observe with it, what is here said: that the SPIRIT *entered into him, and set him on his feet*, so that he heard him that spake. How truly blessed is that ordination, (and none else can be blessed), which hath the LORD JESUS, as the Great Bishop of souls to ordain, and the HOLY GHOST inwardly to move, and to qualify for the arduous work of the ministry! Reader! pray that the LORD will suffer none to go, but such as are thus ordained!

EZEKIEL 2:3-5

And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even* unto this very day. (4) For *they are* impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. (5) And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they *are* a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

Observe the characters to whom the Prophet is sent. *The house of Israel*. So the LORD JESUS declared. Matthew 15:24. But then observe, Israel included the whole Church of CHRIST. Nor so the HOLY GHOST, in after ages, taught by *Paul*. *If ye be CHRIST'S, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*, Galatians 3:29. And so GOD the FATHER before had declared: Isaiah 49:6. John 17:2. Observe farther, the character of Israel, *stiff-necked, rebellious, impudent children*. But still *children*. Never lose sight of this neither. Though as the Prophet saith, they were all this *and* more, and had a whore's forehead, Jeremiah 3:3. yet were never they

otherwise than *children*. Rebellious children, but not *rebels*. The HOLY GHOST makes a nice distinction in the two terms all over the Bible. And I believe, that the LORD hath never once called his children *rebels!* yea, the LORD appears to have been angry with *Moses* for calling them so. Numbers 20:10. But the LORD expressly called those *rebels* among them, which were not in the Covenant. *For all are not Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham,* (for such were the children of the bond-maid *Hagar* and of *Keturah*,) *are they all children,* that is, *children of promise.* Romans 9:6, 7. If the Reader wishes a clear apprehension of this subject, (and it is a blessed subject to the Church of the living GOD,) let him see if he can find in all the Bible a child of GOD called a *rebel*. But on the contrary, he will find the reprobate expressly called by this name. Hence in the instance of *Korah* and his company, so are they called. Numbers 17:10. Again in Ezekiel 20:38. the LORD saith, he will *purge out from among his people the rebels.* But when at anytime, as in this Chapter, the LORD speaks of his children, his chosen, he calls them still children, though *rebellious* children: and pronounceth a woe upon them, (that is, great sorrow of heart, when recovered by grace to a sense of sin), but not everlasting woe for their rebellion. See Isaiah 30:1, 8, 9. Isaiah 65:2. Psalm 78:8. And that this woe is only meant temporary, the LORD speaks of those rebellious children, which he had before described, that he waited to be gracious to them. Isaiah 30:18. See Chapter 20:29-37.

EZEKIEL 2:6-8

And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns *be* with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be

dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house. (7) And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they *are* most rebellious. (8) But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

Observe, how the LORD arms his faithful servants to a boldness in his cause: and what assurance he gives them of his support. So he did *Jeremiah*. Jeremiah 1:7, 8, 17, 18. So did the three worthies. Daniel 3:16-18. So CHRIST his disciples. Mark 16:18. Luke 10:3. Acts 5:19, 20.

EZEKIEL 2:9-10

And when I looked, behold, an hand *was* sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book *was* therein; (10) And he spread it before me; and it *was* written within and without: and *there was* written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Here by type the Prophet is shown the illustration of the LORD's charge to him, and the tokens of the LORD's anointing him to his ministry. It is worthy remark, that *Isaiah* had a similar open manifestation given him at his ordination: and *John* the beloved Apostle, in the visions he saw. Isaiah 6. Revelation 10:8-10. Perhaps, by these outward tokens, it was intended to teach the Church, both ministers and people, that the words of the LORD are not to be heard or read only, but eaten and lived upon. So the Prophet *Jeremiah* expressed himself, Jeremiah 15:16. and 20:9. And if the written word be so blessed, what must be the Uncreated Word, even CHRIST the *living bread*? John 6:33, &c.

REFLECTIONS

IF my humble commentary could be supposed to fall under the eye of any of the ministers of GOD'S sanctuary, I would venture to say to such an one, behold, my brother! the solemnity of *Ezekiel's* ordination; and then enquire, whether it can be supposed, that in the Church of JESUS now, the ordination of any can be less solemn, or less important? Did One like the SON of man, ordain *Ezekiel*? And did the SPIRIT enter into the Prophet, as the LORD spake to him? And can there be any real ordination now, but under the same Almighty authority? Did I say at mine ordination, that I believed myself to be inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon me that holy office? And have I never enquired since, whether that Almighty SPIRIT hath spoken *in* me to my own soul, and *by me* to the souls of others? Oh! what an awful thing it must be, in any, to rush into the ministry unsent, uncalled, unauthorized, unanointed. Oh! for grace to be given to the ministers of my GOD, to be faithful to GOD and to souls! LORD JESUS! do thou fulfil thy gracious promise, and give to thy Church, *Pastors according to thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with understanding and knowledge.* LORD JESUS! impress it upon the minds of unfaithful Pastors, how truly awful must it be, When the sins of the priests make the offerings of the LORD to be abhorred by the people. 1 Samuel 2:17. Reader! join my soul in prayer to GOD, that none may go forth to the LORD'S ministry, but such as are of the LORD'S ordination. And then like *Ezekiel*, whether *men will hear, or whether they will forbear, they shall know that there hath been a Prophet among them!*

CHAPTER 3

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The ordination of Ezekiel is continued through part of this Chapter. About the middle of the Chapter we find the Prophet beginning his ministry. The Prophet relates, how powerfully the hand of the LORD was upon him.

EZEKIEL 3:1-14

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. (2) So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. (3) And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat *it*; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. (4) And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. (5) For thou *art* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, *but* to the house of Israel; (6) Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. (7) But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel *are* impudent and hardhearted. (8) Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. (9) As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house. (10) Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. (11) And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. (12) Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place. (13) *I heard* also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing. (14) So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

I beg the Reader to pause again and again, while going through the very solemn service of *Ezekiel's* ordination. What an idea doth it awaken in the mind of its importance. Though the LORD JESUS himself is the Bishop who layeth on hands: yet no haste is observed. With what earnestness is the Prophet reminded of his charge! Eating and feeling the effects of the roll, plainly set forth, how GOD'S word is to be received, as well by ministers as people. The preacher that doth not first preach his sermon to his own soul, will feel no interest that it should be felt by his hearers to their eternal salvation. But those words are warmly delivered, which come from the heart. Jeremiah 15:16. Luke 9:44. Revelation 10:9. What is here said of the SPIRIT'S taking him up and carrying him away, may serve to teach faithful ministers of JESUS, how graciously the LORD, the HOLY GHOST watches over them for good, and sends them forth to his service. Acts 13:2-4.

EZEKIEL 3:15-21

Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days. (16) And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (17) Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. (18) When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. (19) Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. (20) Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. (21)

Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

I cannot but admire the silence, both of the Prophet and of the people, during the seven days waiting upon the LORD. When we come to enter into the retirings of the LORD, surely a silent, humble, solemn waiting until the HOLY GHOST gives a door of utterance, seems to be but the necessary conduct of poor polluted sinners, coming into the presence of an Holy GOD. How blessedly the Prophet gives this charge to the people. Isaiah 41:1. And what servant, what minister of the LORD, that reads the LORD'S commands here given to the Prophet, but must feel concerned in all the exercises of his ministry!

EZEKIEL 3:22-27

And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee. (23) Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face. (24) Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house. (25) But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them: (26) And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they *are* a rebellious house. (27) But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they *are* a rebellious house.

The renewal of the vision by the river *Chebar*, seems to have been intended for the encouragement of the Prophet; and serves to show, what a gracious regard and attention the

LORD is always manifesting to his ministering servants. It speaks the same language, though not in the same way as, in after ages, the Redeemer expressed himself by, when he said, *Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,* Matthew 28:20.

REFLECTIONS

How few, how very few would rush into the ministry unsent, uncalled, unanointed; did they but study the commission of *Ezekiel* closely, and well ponder over what the LORD here saith to him, of demanding the blood of souls at his hand, if found negligent and unfaithful! Surely it is enough to make the heart of the most upright and conscientious minister to tremble, lest after all his diligence, somewhat should he overlooked; some precious souls should be forgotten; or through ignorance or inattention, *that which is lame should be turned out of the way*. And what tremendous judgments must be in the final issue of that man's ministry, whose sole object is not to win souls, but the world; and like the unworthy descendants of the old *Eli*, desire to be put *into the priest's office* only that they might *eat a piece of bread*. Gracious High Priest and Bishop of thy Church and people! do thou send forth faithful men in thy service, and give, as thou hast promised, *Pastors* to thy sanctuary, *after thine own heart and mind, that shall feed thy people with understanding and knowledge!* LORD! make them what thou wouldest have them to be, and take both ministers and people, under thine own divine teaching, that they may be found faithful, when thou comest to take home thy Church, in the great day of account.

CHAPTER 4

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In this Chapter the Prophet is engaged to instruct the people; and which he doth under the similitude of a siege, to show the state of their captivity.

EZEKIEL 4:1-3

Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, *even* Jerusalem: (2) And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set *battering* rams against it round about. (3) Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it *for* a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This *shall be* a sign to the house of Israel.

There is somewhat very striking in the ministry of *Ezekiel*, different from that of other Prophets for the most part. He was not only to deliver GOD'S truths by word of mouth: but also to represent by lively images the signification. *Jeremiah* wore a yoke of wood, constantly about him, in order to be a living testimony of the people's bondage; but *Ezekiel* constantly preached by type, in a great variety of ways.

EZEKIEL 4:4-8

Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: *according* to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. (5) For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. (6) And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. (7) Therefore thou shalt set

thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm *shall be* uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it. (8) And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.

I cannot but think somewhat more than *Ezekiel*, as a servant, and the captivity of the people in Babylon, was intended by this type. At least it is hardly possible to overlook CHRIST, the one and only suited burden-bearer of his people's sins, as here alluded to JESUS, indeed, not only on his side, but in his whole person in his body-sufferings, and soul-travail, bare the sins of his redeemed, and carried their sorrows. And most blessed it is to eye Him under this divine character.

EZEKIEL 4:9-15

Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, *according* to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. (10) And thy meat which thou shalt eat *shall be* by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it. (11) Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. (12) And thou shalt eat it *as* barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. (13) And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. (14) Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth. (15) Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.

The Reader will have a better idea of the coarse and scanty fare of the Prophet, if he understands, that this mixed grain not only made the whole unpleasant, but the allowance was scarcely enough, (and to a poor man confined to lay on his

side, still harder) to keep life. A *shekel* was only about half an ounce; and an *hin* only eight ounces, or half a pint. And what a filthy and loathsome method of dressing was enjoined the LORD's servant. And though the LORD, at his representation, permitted an exchange from man's dung to cow dung for the purpose; yet still the poor Prophet had poor fare. What would some high fed and dainty characters among our clergy think of this! And yet *Ezekiel* was an eminent servant of the LORD!

EZEKIEL 4:16-17

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: (17) That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

Melancholy as this was, when the bread and water were given out by weight and measure, yet infinitely more distressing is it, when the LORD makes a famine, not of the bread that perisheth, but that which endureth to everlasting life. Oh LORD! keep to us the blessed and invaluable privilege of our Sabbaths, and of JESUS *the bread of life*. Amos 8:11. John 6:35, &c.

REFLECTIONS

READER! amidst many very sweet and profitable subjects suggested to our contemplation by the several types in this Chapter, I feel my mind constrained to one or two more immediately striking; and may the LORD direct yours also to the contemplation of the same. Who can overlook the LORD CHRIST as the great burden-bearer of his Church and people, while reading of GOD'S appointment of *Ezekiel* to represent the

bearing of iniquity: or, who that knows the blessedness of abundance, both in temporals and spirituals, but must be instantly led to eye CHRIST, as the bread of life, and the sanctifying mercy in the bread that perisheth with using, when sitting down to the enjoyment of either. Surely the Prophet was but the faintest type of JESUS, under the character of a burden-bearer, when laying on his side. Painful as the posture must have been, yet, what was it to JESUS hanging on the cross, suffering not only agonies of body, but the deepest anguish of soul when dying, *the just for the unjust to bring us unto GOD!* Precious LORD! may my soul behold thee often under this blessed character! And may I daily know, what it is to live upon thy fulness, and that the HOLY GHOST breaketh to me daily of thee the staff of life, *of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever.* LORD! *evermore give me this bread!*

CHAPTER 5

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The Prophet in this Chapter, is still carrying on his instruction by similitudes. Under the type of hair shaven from the head, and beard, is shown, how the LORD will bring under close punishment the people of Jerusalem.

EZEKIEL 5:1-4

And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause *it* to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the *hair*. (2) Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, *and* smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter

in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. (3) Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. (4) Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; *for* thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

The type is very expressive, and full to the purpose. And if we consider the judgment here spoken of spiritually, (and no doubt it was so intended,) the head and the hair, represent CHRIST and his Church. During the separation of the people by captivity, they were as hair shaven off and carried away: and the LORD's anger is most strongly expressed under the image and figure. The relief to the soul under this view the HOLY GHOST hath given, Romans 11:15-23. I would have the Reader look at CHRIST'S commendation of his Church, under the similitude, Song Of Solomon 7:5. The different exercises of the Church, are as strongly represented, under the threefold sentence of the hair. See Zechariah 13:9. And I cannot forbear adding, that according to my view of this scripture, the *few in number*, the Prophet was commended to *bind in his skirts*, carries with the precept a strong presumption, that the LORD thereby referred to that few chosen, which in the worst of times the LORD hath reserved among the remnant of his people. Isaiah 11:16.

EZEKIEL 5:5-17

Thus saith the Lord GOD; This *is* Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries *that are* round about her. (6) And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that *are* round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them. (7) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that *are* round about you, *and* have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the

judgments of the nations that *are* round about you; (8) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, *am* against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. (9) And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. (10) Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. (11) Wherefore, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish *thee*; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity. (12) A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. (13) Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken *it* in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them. (14) Moreover I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that *are* round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by. (15) So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that *are* round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I the LORD have spoken *it*. (16) When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for *their* destruction, *and* which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread: (17) So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken *it*.

How often the LORD complains of his people in the Old Testament, that in their sins, they were more stupid and senseless than the idolatrous nations around them. Never was it known, that heathens changed their dung-hill gods for others: but the LORD's people changed their glory for that which could not profit them. Jeremiah 2:10, 11. I appeal to

the Reader, if so be he hath been taught of the LORD, and knows anything of the plague of his own heart, whether the same is not but too applicable to the people and Church of GOD in all ages. Unbelief in a child of GOD is more heinous, more offensive, than the infidelity of the unawakened. How pathetically the LORD seems to lament the degeneracy in his people, concerning himself. Psalm 81:11, 12, &c.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us in the perusal of this Chapter, observe the gracious mercy of a Covenant GOD, who in the midst of judgments, will have his people regard his love. Hence the Prophet shall be commissioned to preach to them, as well by type as sermon, to show the people, that, though rebellious children, they are not forgotten by him. So that though the man of GOD is to cause the razor to pass upon his head, and the hair is partly to be burnt, and partly divided with the knife, and partly scattered to the wind: to intimate, the separation for a time of the people from their glorious head; yet still in covenant-relations, the LORD will not finally cast away his people whom he foreknew, though he will reprove them for their wickedness.

Reader! we shall find a sweet subject of consolation from the contents of this Chapter, in hearing how CHRIST comforts his Church under a similar similitude. *Thine head upon thee, saith JESUS, is like Carmel; and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!* And when we behold JESUS, as the Head of his body the Church; and the hair intimating the innumerable members which grow upon him; JESUS is held by

virtue of this union, in the galleries of covenant grace, and the purple vesture of his blood becomes the token of cleansing from all sin. Though by sin and departure from him, the children of GOD lose sight of their privileges; yet his grace and mercy remains the same: *though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* Precious Redeemer! how blessed is it to see our safety and security in thee. Truly LORD, all thy redeemed may say with one of old, and in reference to every individual of thy family, *though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

CHAPTER 6

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This Chapter is but a continuation of the former. the LORD is still expostulating with his people. We have in the middle of the Chapter a gracious promise.

EZEKIEL 6:1-7

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, (3) And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, *even I*, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. (4) And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain *men* before your idols. (5) And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. (6) In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. (7)

And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

By the mountains of Israel, is meant the higher order of the people of Israel; such as exalted themselves above their fellows, and perhaps prided themselves in being exempt from popular fear and apprehension in the captivity. To such the LORD will speak, and in an alarming voice. The judgments threatened are very awful, and the common level to which the whole kingdom shall be reduced, becomes a full proof, that mountains and valleys with the LORD are the same. *The soul that sinneth it shall die.* We have a striking prophecy to the same amount, Isaiah 24:2, 3.

EZEKIEL 6:8

Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have *some* that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.

Reader! do not too hastily pass away from this blessed verse. Behold in it the grace and faithfulness of JEHOVAH! Recollect what one of the Prophets was commanded to say: and one of the Apostles as fully confirmed. *Though thy people Israel* (said Isaiah) *be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.* Isaiah 10:22. Romans 9:27. And Reader! do not overlook another grand thing here promised, namely, this remnant is the LORD's leaving. Yes! no merit, no foresight, no labour of theirs, in the least contributing to this great salvation. It is very blessed to see our mercies: and doubly blessed when we can trace them to their source, and behold the same Almighty hands which laid the foundation, finishing it also in grace. Zechariah 4:9. And Reader! I pray you yet further to observe, the LORD's design in all this, namely, that

the Church may have some that shall escape the general ruin. And what is the cause, but that JESUS may he glorified in his Church, in his redeemed. What would the LORD do for his great name, if the LORD's cause was to be totally lost in the ruin of his people? How would the great head of his Church be glorified, if any of the members of his body perished? Precious, Precious LORD JESUS! how blessed is it to find our safety in thee! Joshua 7:8, 9. Exodus 32:11-14. Numbers 14:11-21.

EZEKIEL 6:9-10

And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. (10) And they shall know that I *am* the LORD, *and that* I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

Perhaps there is not a more blessed account of gospel grace, and of that whichever was and ever must be gospel, than what is contained in these and the foregoing verses. In the *former* we have the whole cause of mercy; namely, JEHOVAH'S sovereign will and pleasure. In these *latter*, we have the gracious effects of it. JEHOVAH in his threefold person and character, is the sole cause of all: and his glory the first and ultimate end and design of all: And the consequence of it, as it concerns the happiness of his people; in grace here and glory hereafter, is linked in the same chain. And Reader! do not fail to remark the sweet properties of his grace, in the hearts of that remnant whom the LORD leaves. They shall remember the LORD; they shall loath themselves; and they shall know JEHOVAH in his Covenant relation; and they shall

most freely and frankly confess, the LORD's justice in all the LORD's dispensations. Reader! here learn the truest evidences of a regenerated heart. Self-loathing, self-abhorring; GOD-glorifying, GOD-exalting, these were in *Ezekiel's* days, as truly as they are in ours, the surest tokens of the soul's real conversion towards GOD. The LORD give them both to him that writes, and to him that reads! Amen.

EZEKIEL 6:11-14

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. (12) He that is far off shall die of the pestilence; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish my fury upon them. (13) Then shall ye know that I *am* the LORD, when their slain *men* shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols. (14) So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

It should seem, from what is here said, that the Prophet was to enforce the truths he had to deliver, by action of body as well as expression of mind. Indeed, so solemn a subject might well be supposed to excite animation. *Diblath* or *Diblathaim*, as it is called in Numbers 33:46. was the wilderness Moses describes, Deuteronomy 8:15.

REFLECTIONS

READER! amidst numberless subjects, which arise everywhere and in every part of the word of GOD, some there are, which

from their vast importance, arrest the mind more earnestly, and call up the warmest attention. Such in an eminent degree, is what is here said, of *the remnant* the LORD would leave among his people in the worst of times. It was so in the Church of GOD in the Prophet's days: and the same is so in ours. Never, I believe, did the waters of the sanctuary run at a lower ebb, than in the present period of the Gospel; but yet, even now the LORD hath not left himself without witness. He hath *a seed* that serve him: *a people near to himself*, that *dwell alone*, and are not *reckoned among the nations*. And indeed, we may well exclaim with the Prophet, and say, *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah!*

Shall not you and I be anxious to know whether we are of this happy number? Surely it is a momentous concern. Behold here then, in this Chapter, are their characters faithfully and clearly drawn by JEHOVAH himself. The LORD saith, that they are *a remnant* among a multitude, and *such as have escaped*. They are brought into an acquaintance with themselves, and know the plague of their own heart; and from this conviction, *they loath themselves for all the evils which they have committed, and for all their abominations*. They are brought *to remember the LORD also*, and are made acquainted with his salvation. And from the grace of JEHOVAH manifested to them, and the conscious state of their own undeservings; they discover, that their mercy all flows from JEHOVAH'S covenant relations, and in that discovery they learn to know the LORD. My brother! say, hath the LORD thus wrought for his great name's sake in your soul? Oh! the blessedness of GOD the

HOLY GHOST's teaching, in convincing *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*. It is thus that all the LORD's remnant are *taught of GOD as his children*, and great then *is the peace of his children!*

CHAPTER 7

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The Prophet still continues to bring his alarming message to the house of Israel: and having in several preceding Chapters announced the judgments that were coming upon them; here in this Chapter, by several awakening forms of expression, informs them, that those judgments are now at the very door.

EZEKIEL 7:1-4

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. (3) Now *is* the end *come* upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. (4) And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

There is somewhat very striking in the manner of the Prophet's opening this Chapter. It is like an alarm, rousing up and imperiously demanding attention: and not unsimilar to what our LORD represented in the parable. *At midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* Matthew 25:6. Reader! it is always midnight in that soul that is living in a careless state! But I would ask the question of the Reader, (I mean the awakened and truly

regenerated Reader), doth it not strike him, as it doth me, that in the midst of these alarms, there is still discoverable somewhat of divine love? Methinks, it is the expostulations of grace, mingled with the just rebukes of a much injured LORD. Under the frowning countenance of the threatened dispensation, we can, I think, discern strong features of mercy. See similar passages, Chapter 20 throughout. Hosea 11:8, 9.

EZEKIEL 7:5-13

Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. (6) An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. (7) The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble *is* near, and not the sounding again of the mountains. (8) Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. (9) And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations *that* are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD that smiteth. (10) Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded. (11) Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them *shall remain*, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither *shall there be* wailing for them. (12) The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof. (13) For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision *is* touching the whole multitude thereof, *which* shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life.

The same alarm is here given under another figure, to rouse Israel. The *evil come*, and the *morning arrived*, when sentence is to be carried into execution: these are strong intimations to work upon the heart. But no calls, no alarms, no threatenings avail, until grace enters the soul. How truly

blessed it is, when with an eye to JESUS, the heart is led to see redemption from all evils, and from all alarms, only in him. When that effect the Prophet speaks of is wrought by grace, the LORD's mercies in all dispensations are seen. Zechariah 12:10.

EZEKIEL 7:14-27

They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof. (15) The sword *is* without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that *is* in the field shall die with the sword; and he that *is* in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. (16) But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity. (17) All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak *as* water. (18) They shall also gird *themselves* with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame *shall be* upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. (19) They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity. (20) As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations *and* of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them. (21) And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it. (22) My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret *place*: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it. (23) Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. (24) Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled. (25) Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and *there shall be* none. (26) Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. (27) The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land

shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

I include the whole under one reading for the sake of shortness. In these verses is contained, the effect which must always follow GOD'S judgment. No rank, no state, no condition of man is exempt. When the sword is without, and the pestilence within, both the king and the beggar fall under the sweeping visitation. Grace only makes a difference, when the LORD comes *to discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth him not,* Malachi 3:18.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! help both Writer and Reader in the perusal of this solemn Chapter, to make application of the awakening contents to themselves, as it concerns the great day of the LORD. Yet a little while, and as it relates to either, the cry will be, *the end is come, now is the end come upon thee.* My soul, if the archangel's trump was now to sound, how art thou prepared? There is indeed laid up for them that fear GOD, a crown of glory, which the LORD the righteous Judge will give them at that day, and to all them that love his appearing. But the question is, do we love his appearing? Is JESUS in his person, in his work, in his saving grace, in the conversion of sinners, and the comforting of saints, precious. If so we may look forward with holy joy, and hail the approach of this great day of GOD. Blessed we shall then say be the day, when the end is come to sin and sorrow; to pain, sickness, and care.

Oh,! for grace thus *to be looking for, and hasting to the great day of GOD!*

Reader! as we pause over the review, let us bless our gracious Covenant GOD in CHRIST, if so be our souls are both prepared for the troubles coming upon the earth. The day is coming, when, as this scripture solemnly assures us: *all hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water.* In the *outward* calamities of national judgments, the same flame that burns up the city, consumes both the righteous and the wicked in it. All swim in the same ship. All are saved or stranded together. But in respect to *inward* comforts, grace lifts the soul above all danger. Oh! the blessedness to be found in that day among the redeemed of the LORD, and sealed as the LORD's hidden ones, by the HOLY SPIRIT unto eternal redemption. Grant, heavenly FATHER! for the LORD JESUS's sake, if it be thy heavenly will, both to Writer and Reader, such rich assurances of faith, that when the great day of the LORD shall come, and JESUS himself shall appear, *we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming!*

CHAPTER 8

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Under the similitude of the image of jealousy, the Prophet in this chapter sets forth the awful state of the people. And in the figure of the idol Tammuz, the deplorable condition to which all orders were reduced by sin, is described.

EZEKIEL 8:1

And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, *as* I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.

We here enter upon a most interesting Chapter, full of solemn truths. The date of the vision, the Prophet hath marked. No doubt the impression wrought upon *Ezekiel's* mind made it memorable. *Jacob* never lost sight of *Beth-el*; neither *Moses* of the bush. The Reader will recollect, that *Ezekiel* was in *Babylon* at this time among those of the captivity; though in his visions the scene represented to his mind was Jerusalem. If the Reader be curious to calculate, and will compare this latter vision with *Ezekiel's* former (Chapter 1st), he will find, that a period of fourteen months had elapsed between. There is somewhat worth remarking in what *Ezekiel* hath said, of sitting in his house at the time, and he elders of *Judah* sitting before him. Probably they were assembled for worship or meditation. And if so, how gracious was the LORD to be in their midst. Reader! what an encouragement this is to public as well as social worship! The promise of the LORD is absolute. Matthew 18:20. And again, Matthew 28:19. And I cannot help further remarking, that while Jerusalem herself was now barren, and deprived of ordinances; the LORD's poor captives in Babylon found their solemn meetings blessed with the hand of the LORD GOD upon them. And how often have GOD'S dear children found JESUS in the wilderness, while multitudes miss him in the Church. How blessed was *Patmos* to *John*; and the prison to *Peter* and his companions. Revelation 1:9-11. Acts 5:17-19.

EZEKIEL 8:2

Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

I do not presume to say as much, but I venture to believe, that this glorious vision was similar to *Ezekiel's* former, (Chapter 1:26) And was not this the LORD JESUS, the glory-man? Surely there can be no doubt, but that this Almighty Mediator, from the first hour he stood up at the call of JEHOVAH the FATHER in his office character, as the Great Head of his Church and people; had *his delights*, as he himself tells us, *with the sons of men*, Proverbs 8:31. No sooner had he gone forth in acts of creation, but his holy soul longed for the open display to enter upon his acts of redemption. And until the fulness of time, already fixed on in the ancient settlements of eternity, for his manifestation in substance of our flesh openly and fully to appear; he gave proofs to his Church and people how earnest he was to enter upon, and finish the work the FATHER gave him to do, by the various appearances he made before them: sometimes in the form of man, and sometimes in that of an angel. Yes, thou dear LORD! thou didst plainly and clearly testify thereby, that thine own heart was with thy people, and all the tendencies of thy manifestation was love.

EZEKIEL 8:3-4

And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where *was* the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. (4) And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel *was* there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.

There is somewhat particularly striking in this act of the LORD. *The putting forth the hand*, implies the SPIRIT of the LORD being *upon* him, or rather *in* him: and the *lifting him up between the earth and the heaven*, to bring him in visions of GOD to Jerusalem, was meant most probably to show, that the Prophet's mind was now wholly under divine teaching; so that in the visions of GOD which followed, there could be no doubt of their reality. That it was the same glory which he had before seen, became a further confirmation of the whole, and was intended to this end. Thus prepared, the LORD opened to his astonished mind the vision. He saw the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. It is not said what image this was; but, as the LORD declared himself a jealous GOD, jealous of his honor, and that honor particularly insulted by the setting up of graven images, it is more than probable, that this was some one of these several figures, which Israel under different reigns had made their idol. What an awful representation doth this give of the depravity of the human heart! Though the bulk of the people had been carried away into captivity for idolatry, and only a few left as vine-dressers, and to till the ground; yet even that few will continue to insult the LORD, though their brethren were in bondage for the same. Reader! do not such views humble your very soul before GOD? Do you not tremble to think what a nature you belong to, which in all the sons of men, is, and would forever be alike capable of perpetrating the same sins, did not grace restrain? Precious JESUS! I feel my soul humbled to the dust in the recollection: and were it not, that from the same nature it is by thy taking it upon thee I feel conscious of being related to thee, thou holy, blessed, glorious LORD, I should blush at the very name of man. Oh! thou divine and

Almighty head of thy body thy Church! what unknown and unnumbered glories are folded up in this one view of thee, that *we are bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh!*

EZEKIEL 8:5-6

Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. (6) He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? *even* the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations.

It should seem by what is said in those verses, that the LORD meant his servant the Prophet should be enabled by such facts brought before his eyes, to tell the elders that sat before him, in what justice the LORD's punishments on Israel were founded. How tender, but yet cutting is the LORD's expostulation. *Son of man seest thou what they do.* Was it not enough to make the LORD depart, when such dunghill gods were set up against him; but yet, as if these provocations were not enough, the LORD will show *Ezekiel* greater, or as it might be rendered, more of the like abominations. Reader! let us not in Israel's history, overlook our own. What are the chambers of imagery in our hearts, is the question? LORD! I would say with one of old, *cleanse thou me from my secret faults.* Psalm 19:12.

EZEKIEL 8:7-10

And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. (8) Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. (9) And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. (10) So I went in and saw; and

behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.

What tended to aggravate those crying sins yet more was, that they were committed in the very sanctuary. And they had thrown up a wall to conceal from every eye, and none but his eye who seeth in secret could discover. Alas! when sin is made yet more exceeding sinful, both from the place and persons, where and by whom it is wrought, the evil riseth to a greater malignity. LORD! I pray thee give to me grace to recollect, that my *secret sins are in the light of thy countenance; and all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* Psalm 90:8. Hebrews 4:13.

EZEKIEL 8:11-12

And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. (12) Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

Oh! what an awful account is here. The Prophet hath discovered now through the LORD's teaching him, by looking in through this hole in the wall, that it is not the common people, not the ignorant, not the unlearned only, that were given to idolatry; but the very elders, the ancients of the house of Israel, from whom the people ought to have received knowledge. The prophet saw *seventy in* number, that is, the whole *Sanhedrim*; meaning *all* the elders. Perhaps the vision meant to say, that even those who sat before *Ezekiel* in Babylon were to be included. And one more daring

than his fellows the Prophet saw, whose person he knew, and to his everlasting disgrace he is mentioned by name. And the whole party were active and alive, ministering as the priests of the true GOD were used to do, in the temple service, with their censers. LORD! what is man! The LORD's *second* appeal comes in after such a representation uncommonly striking! Reader! have you and I seen such things in our day, in which the divine goodness is provoked? Oh! what chambers of imagery are there now in the world, yea, in the professing world! The LORD himself hath said, and who can unsay it: *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Jeremiah 17:9.

EZEKIEL 8:13-14

He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. (14) Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which *was* toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

What are there more views, more of the same like abominations? Yes! here are the women of Israel introduced as well as the men, in their open and daring impiety. The *former* transgressions were in the chambers of retirement, but these *latter* are open; they seem lost to all shame; they are at *the door of the gate*. It is not said what this *Tammuz* was: most probable an idol of a peculiar kind, for the women are said to be weeping for it. But it hath been thought by some, that with their idolatry they mingled whoredom; and as such, like the crocodile, were found shedding tears over this pitiful image, the more easily, perhaps to take their prey, in such as stopped to remark their great tenderness. 1 Samuel 2:22. Oh! LORD! to what a state hath sin humbled our nature!

EZEKIEL 8:15-18

Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations than these. (16) And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. (17) Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. (18) Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, *yet* will I not hear them.

Here is a picture, which holds forth the most finished representation of all. Here are about *five and twenty men*, with an uncovered front, got absolutely between *the Porch and the Altar*; that sacred spot, where the priests, the ministers of the LORD, presented themselves before the LORD, on the days of humiliation: (See Joel 2:17.) and as if it were not enough to withhold worship from the LORD, they turn their backs toward the temple, and their faces toward the east, to bow down to the creature of the LORD, even the sun, while standing with an unbent knee before the Creator, *who is over all, GOD blessed forever*. Amen. As these five and twenty men are said to be between the Porch and the Altar, there can be but little question but that they were the priests. So awful, so tremendously awful, was this abomination! And now the LORD makes an appeal to the Prophet, and shows the justice of his cause, in the vengeance that follows. And who but must acknowledge it, when he beholds all Israel, with the elders,

and the women; the priests, and the people; all given to idolatry!

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READER! let us pause over the sad view of this Chapter, in the contents of it, for it is most solemn: and consider well, the dreadful representation here given, of the human heart! Could it have been conceived possible, that while a whole nation was reeking under the LORD's chastisements, in one of his sore judgments of captivity; that the few which were saved by divine mercy, could have braved divine justice, with such horrible impiety! But Reader! in Israel, we only read the history of all the world, and every heart. So very true, and so universally just, is that scripture, *all the world is become guilty before GOD*. Who shall count the many transgressions which arise in one heart, and in one day only, against the sovereignty of GOD? Who shall write down the multitude, which in the aggregate, are found in that day, in a single town or village? And who shall describe the patience, and long suffering of GOD, before whose view, and to whose all discerning eye, the great mass of human transgressions, from the whole earth, comes up every day, and all the day, in an accumulated cloud of daring offence? Oh! how blessed, how truly blessed that proclamation made by the LORD of himself, in the holy mount, when *he passed by and proclaimed, the LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness, and truth!* Precious LORD JESUS! how truly is it seen in thee, and in thy great salvation, the evidences of this divine truth! Here indeed thy Church behold the wondrous grace and mercy displayed to the full. In thee

the LORD JEHOVAH hath shown, that he *keepeth mercy for thousands, and forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin*. In thee, and by thy blood, and righteousness, the LORD hath clearly testified that *he doth by no means clear the guilty*, without an equivalent sacrifice. LORD! help both Writer and Reader, to fall down under the deepest sense of sin, and to look up, under the humblest hope of acceptance, in JESUS. Blessed forever, blessed be the LORD, who so *loved the world that he gave his only begotten SON, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*.

CHAPTER 9

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The Prophet is following up the subject of the former Chapter in this, with an account of divine judgments. The destruction of the ungodly, and the salvation of the righteous, are here solemnly related.

EZEKIEL 9:1

He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man *with* his destroying weapon in his hand.

The Reader will keep in remembrance the glorious person who was showing *Ezekiel* this vision, in the former chapter, (verse 2.) The same it is that here cried with a loud voice in the ears of the Prophet. The LORD speaks loud indeed, when he speaks in judgment. It should seem, that by those that have charge over the city, is meant Angels. Scripture

represents them as sent, both for destruction and mercy. 2 Samuel 24:16. Acts 12:21-23. Hebrews 1:13, 14.

EZEKIEL 9:2

And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them *was* clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

I beseech the Reader, to pay the greatest attention to what is here said, and may GOD the HOLY GHOST, be his Instructor. I should conceive, that by what is related of *six* persons, and *one* particularly distinguished among the rest, is meant seven in number; six angels, and one person yet more, eminent. And who could this be but the glory-man CHRIST JESUS? *They* were for destruction: but *his* office is mercy. The writer's inkhorn by his side, seems to define his character. Surely JESUS marked down the names of all his redeemed, when first he received them from the FATHER in the book of life. He did not die peradventure, and at an uncertainty, for an undetermined number; for he saith himself, that the power he had given him over all flesh, as mediator, (and no power could be *given* to him but as mediator, for all power was his as GOD, originally and underived, in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, for all eternity,) was for this express purpose, that *he should give eternal life to as many as were given him*. John 17:2. And therefore, as this was secret, known only to the Persons of the GODHEAD, angels not being privy to the solemn transactions, yea, not in being, when done; it was proper that the great Mediator, and Redeemer, should be present, when the angels came to destroy; and to mark his own, as a security from their destroying weapons. And I

cannot but think, that the figure of a writer's ink-horn by his side, (alluding perhaps to the custom among men, who when they write abroad, fasten the ink-horn for convenience to their side) hath no unapt resemblance to the pierced side of JESUS on the cross, from whence issued *blood and water*. For as all the redeemed of the LORD are washed in his blood, so the mark by which they are known is the same. I do not presume to say, that this conjecture is right: but I confess to me it appears highly probable, and I love to discover JESUS everywhere, and in everything of mercy: for sure I am there can be no mercy but in him, and where he is. Who should write the names of his people in the LAMB'S book of life, but the LAMB? Revelation 20:15. Who shall mark the flock, but the owner of the flock? John 10:14. And who shall finally count them over, and see that none is wanting, but He who first numbered them? and of whom it is said, that in *all the cities of the mountains, and of the vale, the flocks shall again pass under the hand of him that telleth them*. Jeremiah 33:13. Precious JESUS! bring my soul under thy divine markings, and the sprinkling of thy blood, that when the destroying angels go forth, to execute their awful commission, like the houses of Israel, in the midst of the Egypt of this world, I may be found secured in thee, the LORD my passover. Exodus 12:29, 30. 1 Corinthians 5:7. I only detain the Reader with a short observation more, on this wonderful verse, just to remark, that the destroying angels, taking their stand beside the brazen altar, might perhaps be intended to intimate, that when the LORD's judgments really begin, they begin at the house of GOD. And therefore, what the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle hath said, may well impress our minds. *For the time is come (saith he) that judgment must begin at the house of*

GOD: *and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them, that obey not the gospel of GOD. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* Solemn scripture! 1 Peter 4:17, 18.

EZEKIEL 9:3-4

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer's inkhorn by his side; (4) And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

There is somewhat most solemnly affecting in what is here said of *the glory of the GOD of Israel*, being gone up. Probably, the expression is in allusion to the withdrawing of the *Shechinah*, that is, the manifestation of the divine presence, from the mercy seat and, intimating perhaps, that when the LORD retires, judgment follows. Oh! how ought every truly awakened soul, to cry out with David; LORD! *take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from me!* Psalm 51:11. Reader! observe what is here said of the call to the man clothed with linen, and the commission given to him. Yes! it is a grand point in the gospel, and the great warrant to faith, that GOD *sent* the SON to be *the Saviour of the world*. 1 John 4:14. And here again, as in the former verse, of the writer's ink-horn, the linen garment is a further testimony of the Saviour. The High Priest, who was a type of CHRIST, was so clothed. Leviticus 6:10. Revelation 19:13, 14. It is well worthy our observation, how the LORD notifies his care over his people, and to show who they are. The sighs and sorrows for sin, are the true tokens of a broken and contrite heart. Therefore, doth any

wish to know whether he is marked? The answer is direct! Do you sigh, and cry, for all the abominations that are done in the midst of the land? Are you humbled before GOD for sin, and seeking justification alone, by the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST? Where these effects are found, there is the sure mark of JESUS. John 16:8-11. Acts 5:31.

EZEKIEL 9:5-7

And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: (6) Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house. (7) And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

I beseech the Reader to remark with me, the order which the LORD hath here observed, in his visitations. He first secures his people, before he executes judgment on the ungodly. He first marks, and gathers his sheep into his fold; and then the wicked, as goats, are driven from his presence, with everlasting destruction. So the LORD JESUS hath himself pointed out, the order of his judicial proceedings, at the last day. See Matthew 25:31-46. There is another observation to be made in these verses, and it is a very solemn one, namely, the universal destruction of the ungodly: neither age, sex, nor condition, admits of exception. None can be saved, but those on whom is the mark. Reader! think how important it must be, to be found in JESUS! Think how tremendously awful to be found not in him! And observe yet further, the destroying angels, are to execute their high commission, in all the severity of it, without feeling pity or compassion. Yes! most certain it is, that to their intelligent minds, there can be no

object to excite regard, but such as love the LORD. Those who admire the souls which bear the mark and image of JESUS, will abhor those who bear the image of the beast. Revelation 19:19, 20. And what an awful idea is it, that the beginning of this destruction of the wicked, is at the sanctuary: plainly showing, that there will be many found among this number, at the last day, who minister in holy things with unregenerated hearts. So the LORD JESUS hath taught his disciples to expect. *Many will say to me (saith JESUS) in that day, LORD! LORD! have we not prophesied (that is, preached, or administered ordinances) in thy name: and in thy name have cast out devils;* that is, probably have been made useful to the LORD's people, in helping them by the administration of his word, who never partook of it themselves. (For rather than the LORD's heritage shall go hungry, JESUS will feed them from their enemies table.) Wonderful works, these are, no doubt. But yet in common life, the same is found. Bad men may be appointed, thus to act for the good of others, and like the directing post to the traveler, guide to the right way, who never move a step towards it themselves. Think Reader! however; how very awful is such a situation! Matthew 7:22.

EZEKIEL 9:8-10

And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? (9) Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not. (10) And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their way upon their head.

The Prophet's situation is strikingly marked. While they were slaying, *he was left alone*. How must he have felt? What must have been his views? He knew, that it was distinguishing grace and mercy alone, that made all the difference. He knew, that in point of merit, he had none to shelter him; and that he was left alone, was the LORD's favor, and not his desert. Well might he fall on his face, and in such general desolations pray for Israel. Reader! think what an awful day of GOD that will be, when these judgments will be fully realized! The contemplation of it even at this distance is solemn. Surely though the LORD's people; who now rejoice in their mark of JESUS, *rejoice with trembling*. Who that now mourns in secret, for the abominations of sinners, but must feel for their final destruction. Here in this life these feelings are right: indeed they are unavoidable; but in the great day of GOD, they will be felt no more. The LORD's answer to the Prophet is most solemn. And it is well worthy our remark, that *the wrath of the LAMB* is spoken of, as being the token of long incensed patience and meekness; and not the wrath of the Lion of the tribe of Judah; that is to mark the fierce anger of the LORD at the last day. Revelation 6:16.

EZEKIEL 9:11

And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which *had* the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

This is a blessed conclusion to the subject. JESUS as Mediator, the CHRIST of GOD, is said in the New Testament, to deliver up the kingdom to GOD, even the FATHER: when *he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power*. For having received from the FATHER, in his office-character the

government, the kingdom of grace, when grace is consummated in glory, ceaseth, and the kingdom of glory in perfection begins. So that JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, having commissioned, and set up, CHRIST the Glory-man Mediator, it becomes needful that the Mediator should be faithful to him that appointed him. And here, having marked and secured his people, and seen the destruction of his enemies, returns with the report, saying, *I have done as thou hast commanded me.* 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. Hebrews 3:1, 2. with Isaiah 42:1-4. John 17:4.

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PAUSE, my soul, and dwell with long, and solemn meditation, over this sacred scripture, which holds up to thy view a double aspect; like the pillar of cloud in the camp of Israel; brightness and defense to the LORD's friends; darkness and destruction to his enemies. Recollect, my soul, as thou ponderest over what is here written, that voice the Prophet, heard, thou wilt shortly hear; and a loud voice, to awaken all that are in the graves it will be. And at that voice, the angels will assuredly come forth, to destruction, with JESUS at their head. *The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from Heaven, (the Scripture saith) with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the gospel of CHRIST.* Precious LORD JESUS! hast thou marked me as thine own? Do I sigh, and cry, for the abominations that are done in Jerusalem? Do I mourn in secret, for the languishing state of Zion, in the present hour? Is it indeed a grief to my soul, that so few are asking the way to Zion, and

so few live up to their high christian calling? Yea, is it a grief to my very soul, that my own enjoyments of divine things are at so low an ebb, and that I live so far from Him *whom. my soul loveth?* Are these among thy daily exercises; and dost thou sigh, and cry, both for Zion's low estate around thee, and the low estate in divine things, within thee. Yea! dust thou groan, being burdened, as holy Paul did, for that thou carriest about with thee, this body of sin, and death? Pause, my soul, over the solemn consideration; and amidst these sighs and sorrows, recollect that these are the features of the LORD's holy mourners. These are the spots of GOD'S children. These are the evidences that the man, the glory-man, the man CHRIST JESUS, from his pierced side, hath marked thee, and sealed thee, unto the day of eternal redemption. Take comfort my soul! The LORD hath in thine instance, fulfilled that precious promise, and hath poured out upon thee, a *spirit of grace;* thou art looking unto Him, *whom thou hast pierced;* and thou art mourning for Him, *as one mourneth for his only son, and as one in bitterness for his first born.* And look up, and hope with full assurance of faith; *he that soweth in tears, shall reap in joy.* Shortly the LORD will come, to be *glorified in his saints,* and to be *adorned in all that believe.* And while the ungodly, and unbelieving, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power, the LORD will own thee for his own, and number thee among his jewels.

CHAPTER 10

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The Prophet is here introduced into other visions of GOD. Under the similitude of coals of fire, between the Cherubim, and the form of a man's hand, the Prophet hath his attention greatly excited.

EZEKIEL 10:1-4

Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. (2) And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, *even* under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter *them* over the city. And he went in in my sight. (3) Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court. (4) Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and stood* over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory.

We are here brought to visions and revelations of GOD. The HOLY GHOST hath not been pleased to give the Church any certain account what is implied in the solemn things here spoken of; therefore humble waitings upon the LORD are more suitable, and becoming, than mere conjectures. One point, indeed, seems abundantly evident; that the man clothed with linen, is the same as is spoken of in the preceding chapter; and there should seem to be but little doubt, that this is the GOD-MAN, CHRIST JESUS. His going in between the wheels, and filling his hand with coals, and scattering them over the city, may perhaps be intended to show, that the whole government, both in nature, providence, grace, and glory, is his.

EZEKIEL 10:5-15

And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard *even* to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh. (6) And it came to pass, *that* when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels. (7) And *one* cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that *was* between the cherubims, and took *thereof*, and put *it* into the hands of *him that was* clothed with linen: who took *it*, and went out. (8) And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings. (9) And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels *was* as the colour of a beryl stone. (10) And *as for* their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel. (11) When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went. (12) And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, *were* full of eyes round about, *even* the wheels that they four had. (13) As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel. (14) And every one had four faces: the first face *was* the face of a cherub, and the second face *was* the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. (15) And the cherubims were lifted up. This *is* the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.

This last verse seems to throw some little light upon the subject, to guide us in our apprehension of the meaning of this mysterious scripture. If we compare what is here said, with a similar account, given in the book of the Revelations, we shall be able perhaps, in some degree, by the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, to form an humble judgment of the glorious truth veiled under these expressions. See Revelation 4 throughout. The Prophet tells the Church, that the vision was one and the same with that which he was favoured with by the river *Chebar*, See Chap. 1:10. And as in that vision, one of the cherubims had the face of a man, as well as in this, there

should seem to be no difficulty in supposing, that this denoted the human nature of CHRIST. And perhaps the whole of the representation of the cherubim, had an allusion to the glorious persons of the GODHEAD. And if so, while the distinction of person was thus preserved, the unity of the divine essence was no less implied, in what is said of one wheel, to whom a voice cried, and was heard by the Prophet, to this amount. But, as I before remarked, as GOD the HOLY GHOST hath not been pleased to explain this wonderful scripture, it becomes us, with humble waitings, to be silent before him.

EZEKIEL 10:16-22

And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them. (17) When they stood, *these* stood; and when they were lifted up, *these* lifted up themselves *also*: for the spirit of the living creature *was* in them. (18) Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. (19) And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also *were* beside them, and *every one* stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above. (20) This *is* the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they *were* the cherubims. (21) Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings. (22) And the likeness of their faces *was* the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themselves: they went every one straight forward.

The glory of the LORD going up, and departing, which is twice spoken of in this short chapter, evidently testifies the importance of the thing. But, except we interpret it with an eye to the withdrawals of the LORD, in seasons of

ordinances, and the like, there is no certainty what is implied by it. Very awful it is, when at any time the LORD hides his face from his people; but his withdrawals are still more to be feared. Precious LORD! hear and answer the cry of every exercised soul under this affliction, and take not, oh! *take not thine* HOLY SPIRIT *from us!*

REFLECTIONS

LORD! I pray thee to give both Writer and Reader, a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS: without which this scripture, yea all the scriptures of our GOD, will be as a sealed book, and a vision not opened. And if, Almighty LORD, there be anything leading to JESUS in this divine chapter, oh, do thou lead my soul also to the knowledge of him, that knowing him, I may be growing up to the knowledge and love of him forever. And oh, precious LORD JESUS! as in thine infinite condescension thou didst once appear, as the intercessor of thy redeemed, give me to look up, and view thee in the same character still: yea, LORD, may I follow thee by faith, when thou goest up from the cherub, and see thee entered into the holy of holies, yea, into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us. Oh! thou dear, thou glory-man CHRIST JESUS; give me to be clothed with thy righteousness, that when thou comest finally to judge the world, and to scatter indignation and wrath upon all the adversaries of GOD, as the fire here spoken of was scattered between the wheels; in thy righteousness I may have confidence, and *not be ashamed before thee at thy coming*. Even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 11

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The Prophet is still on the subject of the visions of GOD. A striking judgment is recorded of the immediate effects of Ezekiel's preaching. The LORD gives also many exceeding great and precious promises before the close of the Chapter.

EZEKIEL 11:1-4

Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. (2) Then said he unto me, Son of man, these *are* the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city: (3) Which say, *It is* not near; let us build houses: this *city is* the caldron, and we *be* the flesh. (4) Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

It is remarkable here again in this place, how the LORD taught his servant the Prophet by vision, and though in prison at Babylon, yet in spirit he is led to Jerusalem. Sweet teaching of the LORD, when his gracious impressions are upon his people. The LORD makes every place a *Bethel*, and all events as the blessed teaching of visions. So was the beloved apostle. Revelation 1:10.

EZEKIEL 11:5-12

And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; Thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, *every one of* them. (6) Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain. (7) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they *are* the flesh, and this *city is* the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of

the midst of it. (8) Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD. (9) And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgments among you. (10) Ye shall fall by the sword; I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. (11) This *city* shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; *but* I will judge you in the border of Israel: (12) And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that *are* round about you.

The same Almighty SPIRIT, which lifted the Prophet up, here fell upon him, that he might not fall down. And I pray the Reader to observe, the gracious effects which follow, in the LORD's promises, in these verses.

EZEKIEL 11:13

And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?

I detain the Reader, and stop his progress, at this single verse, in order that he may remark, with me, the solemn effects of *Ezekiel's* preaching and ministry. And observe what mercy to the Prophet was mingled with judgment to *Pelatiah*. Well might the Psalmist declare his intention to sing both of *judgment and mercy*, and to direct his song to the LORD, Psalm 101:1.

EZEKIEL 11:14-21

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (15) Son of man, thy brethren, *even* thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, *are* they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession. (16) Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord

GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. (17) Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. (18) And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. (19) And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: (20) That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (21) But *as for them* whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.

It should seem, that this is not only a new sermon, but delivered at a different period from the former, though the interval was not perhaps long. And it is a very sweet and gracious sermon, and full of the most blessed promises. And what is here said is truly gospel, and evidently delivered with an eye to CHRIST. The Reader will observe, not only what the promises are, but how they are assured and confirmed in covenant faithfulness: they all run up, and are founded in this grand security; *they shall be my people, and I will be their GOD.*

EZEKIEL 11:22-25

Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above. (23) And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city. (24) Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me. (25) Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.

What a peculiar situation of divine favor *Ezekiel* was in, when thus sent by the LORD on his ministry. When he had finished his vision at Jerusalem, he is brought back by vision again to the place from whence he set out. And having been thus taught of the LORD those solemn truths, he communicated them by way of comfort and encouragement, to the people of the captivity. How gracious the LORD is, in thus making his servants to minister to every state, and to every circumstance. Precious LORD JESUS! is it not so now? Both angels and men ordinances and means of grace; all minister by thine appointment to them *who are the heirs of salvation*. Hebrews 1:14.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD beg the Reader to pause over this Chapter, and behold the Prophet in his faithfulness, and the people in their folly. With what earnestness the whole events which were brought before the Prophet in vision, did appear; and how was his heart melted in the review of them! And with what indifference, perhaps contempt, did *Pelathiah* receive the Prophet's commission, and what a solemn judgment followed! LORD! give grace to sinners, in this our day, of the public ministration of thy word, that they may receive thy truth, in the love of it, and it may prove a savour of life unto life in the soul. Oh! blessed JESUS! come forth in a preached gospel, subduing the hearts of sinners to the sceptre of thy grace, causing every knee to bend before thee, and making every tongue to confess, that thou art LORD, *to the glory of GOD the FATHER*. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

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The Prophet is here, at the LORD's command, preaching by type. Several situations he is placed in, purposely to follow up the more advantageously, the LORD's purposes.

EZEKIEL 12:1-16

The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they *are* a rebellious house. (3) Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they *be* a rebellious house. (4) Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity. (5) Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby. (6) In their sight shalt thou bear *it* upon *thy* shoulders, *and* carry *it* forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee *for* a sign unto the house of Israel. (7) And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for captivity, and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought *it* forth in the twilight, *and* I bare *it* upon *my* shoulder in their sight. (8) And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, saying, (9) Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou? (10) Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; This burden *concerneth* the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that *are* among them. (11) Say, I *am* your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove *and* go into captivity. (12) And the prince that *is* among them shall bear upon *his* shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with *his* eyes. (13) My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon *to* the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he

not see it, though he shall die there. (14) And I will scatter toward every wind all that *are* about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them. (15) And they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries. (16) But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

It is very proper for the Reader to remark what the LORD so often repeats to his servant the Prophet concerning his people, that they are a *rebellious house*. For this consideration will help the Reader to make a double improvement of the subject; *first*, of their unworthiness; and *secondly*, of the divine mercy, and long sufferings, manifested towards them. What, but covenant faithfulness in JEHOVAH, could have held out against such hardened wickedness? And what but JESUS'S person, blood, and righteousness, could have been found to plead forbearance? Oh! how precious thus to behold the efficacy of salvation in JESUS, to the old Church, before that JESUS came to render it effectual both to the old and new? The figure of *Ezekiel's* removing his stuff, was happily chosen, to show the removal of all Israel into captivity. Probably the captives in Babylon hoped somewhat might yet be done by the prince *Zedekiah*, and the people that still remained at Jerusalem, for bringing them back. And therefore these false hopes Ezekiel is here, by type, throwing down; and showing, that even Zedekiah himself, with all that remained in Jerusalem, except a few, should follow the captives into Babylon.

EZEKIEL 12:17-20

Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (18) Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness; (19) And say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *and* of the land of Israel; They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein. (20) And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

We have here *another* sermon of the Prophet; which though short is solemn, and full of significance. The whole nation of Israel is under divine correction. The portion already carried away into Babylon, and those that remained at Jerusalem, were all alike brought under the rod. In such seasons, fear, and sorrow, and distress of mind, are the suited and becoming feelings of the heart. *Ezekiel* is to set the example. For it is highly proper the prophets of the LORD should be first in having a lively sense of divine judgments, who are to speak of them to the people. It is well both in joy, and sorrow, that they should take the lead. I beg the Reader not to overlook the grand design of all, in the LORD's chastisements of his people, with which this sermon closeth, like the former, namely, that they may know JEHOVAH to be the LORD. It is a blessed close to every ordination, and to every event, when this is induced!

EZEKIEL 12:21-25

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (22) Son of man, what *is* that proverb *that* ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? (23) Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. (24) For there shall be no more any vain vision nor

flattering divination within the house of Israel. (25) For I *am* the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD.

Here is a *third* sermon of the Prophet; and it is to the same purport as the former. It should seem, that it was become almost proverbial, if judgments did not immediately follow the commission of sin, the sinner took confidence, and said, *the days are prolonged, and every vision faileth*. Solomon had remarked, much to the same purpose, long before. Ecclesiastes 8:11. But the LORD here reproves the presumptuous thought. One of the Apostles had it in commission to tell the sinner, in yet more awful terms, the sad mistake of such reasoning. See 2 Peter 3:3-11.

EZEKIEL 12:26-28

Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (27) Son of man, behold, *they of the house of Israel say*, The vision that he seeth *is for many days to come*, and he prophesieth of the times *that are far off*. (28) Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.

This *fourth* Sermon closeth as the former, and the purport is to the same amount. The LORD's ways are sure, and none of his words can fall to the ground. And what a sweet thought is this, to the believer in JESUS: how alarming soever it becomes to the despiser of His great name! Precious LORD JESUS! be it my portion ever to keep in remembrance thy word, and do Thou fulfil that sweet promise to my heart. John 14:23.

REFLECTIONS

READER! if we spiritualize this chapter, in the several sermons contained in it, may not you and I read the LORD's word as addressed to ourselves? Child of man, saith JEHOVAH, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house; yea, we may answer, true, LORD, for we carry about with us, in ourselves, a rebellious heart. Everything, indeed, both within and without; the remains of indwelling corruption, the whole world that lieth in wickedness, and the great enemy of souls, make open rebellion but too often in the soul. And ought we not, under such circumstances, to do as the Prophet was commanded, prepare for removing; and from one place to another, from strength to strength, in the sight of all the people, testify to every beholder, that *here we have no continuing city, but are seeking for one to come*. Surely the people of GOD should be for signs and wonders, as *Joshua* and his fellows were, *men wondered at!* yea! the bread of life and the water of life, even while the children of GOD receive it, and live upon it, in the review of our unworthiness, and distinguishing grace, which makes all the difference between the precious and the vile, may well be eaten with holy fear and with Godly astonishment. Believers, while they rejoice, *rejoice with trembling*. Precious LORD JESUS! how increasingly precious dost thou appear, when the undeservings of thy redeemed are kept in remembrance. Well may every child of GOD cry out with the Prophet, on beholding visions of his glory, *woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King the LORD of Hosts*. What a relief to a soul under these awakening views of sin and uncleanness is it to behold, and with *an eye of faith*, *the LAMB of GOD taking away the sin of the world*.

CHAPTER 13

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In this chapter the Prophet is reproofing the false prophets, and denouncing a woe upon them and the lying prophetesses.

EZEKIEL 13:1-16

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; (3) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! (4) O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. (5) Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. (6) They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made *others* to hope that they would confirm the word. (7) Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith *it*; albeit I have not spoken? (8) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I *am* against you, saith the Lord GOD. (9) And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD. (10) Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and *there was* no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered *morter*. (11) Say unto them which daub *it* with untempered *morter*, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend *it*. (12) Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where *is* the daubing wherewith ye have daubed *it*? (13) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even rend *it* with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in *my* fury to consume *it*. (14) So will I break down the wall that ye have

daubed with untempered *morter*, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. (15) Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered *morter*, and will say unto you, The wall *is* no *more*, neither they that daubed it; (16) *To wit*, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and *there is* no peace, saith the Lord GOD.

There is somewhat very striking and awful in this scripture. One should hardly conceive it possible that any men, much less a multitude of men, should ever go forward unsent, and without authority from the LORD, to speak in his name, and more especially in times of public danger; yet we find the history of the Church furnisheth numberless instances of the kind. It hath been the custom in all ages. Reader! it is much to be feared that it is so now. The ministry is with some a genteel profession; with others, a lucrative one; and when worldly motives prevail, and men assume the office for filthy lucre's sake, they run unsent, and speak lies in the name of the LORD. Oh! that every one about to enter the service of the Sanctuary would pause at the threshold, and recollect that the question put, *are you inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon you this office*, is answered to GOD, and not to man. What awful expressions the LORD makes use of to deter: *behold I am against you, saith the LORD*. Oh! for grace, to have a right understanding in this weighty matter!

EZEKIEL 13:17-23

Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them, (18) And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the *women* that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the

souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive *that come* unto you? (19) And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear *your* lies? (20) Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make *them* fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, *even* the souls that ye hunt to make *them* fly. (21) Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. (22) Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: (23) Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

There were, it should seem, in *Ezekiel's* days, women also that prophesied, and those prophesied falsely. We read of one *Anna*, a prophetess in the Church, just at the birth of CHRIST; and the promise of the gift of the HOLY GHOST, we know, was both on sons and daughters. Luke 2:36. Joel 2:28. But the women here spoken of are expressly declared to be *lying* prophets, and such as prophesied for gain. The *pillows* for arm holes, and *kerchiefs* for covering, are figurative: it is to be supposed intimating, the false security they held forth to quiet the alarms of a guilty conscience. But, Reader, do not fail to remark the sweet assurance given by the HOLY GHOST to the people of GOD, to preserve them from such preachings. *I will deliver my people out of your hands.* So that the LORD undertakes to preserve *his people* from their delusions. And while a woe is pronounced against false prophets, the LORD's Israel are assured, that the LORD will *reveal* himself to his

people otherwise than he doeth to the world, and *they shall know*; saith JEHOVAH, *that I am the LORD*.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a mercy is it, in our day, that amidst all the false prophets and heresies; which have come in like a flood, the SPIRIT of the LORD hath lifted up, and doth continue to lift up, a standard against them; so that if any precious child of GOD is at a loss to know the truth, amidst the multitude of pretenders to it, there is a promise, which, if duly attended to and regarded, cannot fail to preserve from error. *Though the LORD give you* (saith one of the Prophets) *the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more; but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, this is the way, walk ye in it when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left*. And, as if this was not enough, there is another absolute promise made by the LORD to all the children of CHRIST, namely, that *they shall all be taught of GOD*. Here therefore the LORD engages for them, that they shall be kept from false prophets, and be brought under true teachers; and the LORD JESUS makes this a standing testimony or mark, that all that are truly taught of GOD come to him. Reader! I beseech you, let this be your improvement and mine from the perusal of this chapter. Do we dread lying prophets? Are we earnest to discover *the chaff from the wheat*? Is it a momentous concern to know the truth, that *the truth may make, us free*? What then are we taught of CHRIST? What do the present prophets, I mean the preachers of the present generation, tell us of JESUS? Do they hold Him up as

the Scriptures reveal Him, *the way and the truth and the life?* Do they delight to speak of the glories of His person, and of the everlasting and eternal merit and efficacy of His blood and righteousness, as GOD the HOLY GHOST delights to glorify him? If so, these are the true Prophets, because they lead, as the star guided the wise men, unto CHRIST; *and hereby know we,* saith the Apostle, *the spirit of truth from the spirit of error.*

CHAPTER 14

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We have here the Prophet Ezekiel surrounded with certain of the Elders of Israel, to hear him preach. The LORD himself answers them.

EZEKIEL 14:1-3

Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. (2) And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (3) Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

What a striking representation is here of the Church in all ages! As it was with *Ezekiel in Babylon*; so is it now in the Egypt of the present world. In our congregations we know not who they are that sit before us. But the LORD knows who they are, and all the motives of their coming. And, oh! that all hypocritical followers of the Church of GOD would listen to what the LORD here saith, *the LORD will not be enquired of such,* but will give them his own tremendous answers!

EZEKIEL 14:4-8

Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; (5) That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. (6) Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn *yourselves* from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. (7) For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself: (8) And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

There is a great beauty in the original, both at this verse and at verse 7th. Thus saith the LORD GOD, *every man*; it is *man, man*, intimating somewhat stronger than the phrase *every man*, the doubling or reiteration of *man*. I beg the reader to remark also those *two* grand and solemn expressions in this passage, *first*, the LORD's answering him *by himself*; and, *secondly*, the LORD's setting his face against that man. Reader! can your imagination fancy anything more solemn or alarming!

EZEKIEL 14:9-11

And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. (10) And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh *unto him*; (11) That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all

their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord GOD.

There is somewhat most awful in what the LORD here saith of deceiving the Prophet. The sense seems to be this. When men heap to themselves teachers *having itching ears, and turn away from the truth, and are turned unto fables*, the LORD gives them up *to strong delusions to believe a lie*. Awful judgment! 2 Timothy 4:3, 4. Job 12:16. But I beg the Reader, when he hath paid due attention to this part of the subject, not to overlook, but earnestly keep in view, the LORD's design in all this, and the over-ruling power of GOD to make good spring out of evil, for Israel's sake his glory. That the house of Israel go not any more astray, but remember their covenant relations to GOD; that *they may be my people, and I their GOD, with the LORD GOD*: Oh! how blessed, how infinitely blessed and gracious this is!

EZEKIEL 14:12-21

The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, (13) Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: (14) Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver *but* their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. (15) If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts: (16) *Though* these three men *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate. (17) Or *if* I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it: (18) Though these three men *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves. (19) Or *if* I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and

beast: (20) Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall *but* deliver their own souls by their righteousness. (21) For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?

We have no difficulty in explaining sin as the cause of sorrow. The four sore judgments of GOD, famine, the sword, wild beasts, and pestilence, are among the rods by which guilty nations, in all ages, have been scourged. But when Noah, Daniel, and Job, are spoken of as beings saved from general destruction by their righteousness, this can only be explained upon Gospel principles. The unerring language of the Word of GOD is, all have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD; and, therefore, by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified in GOD's sight. I humbly conceive, therefore, that those three men are here introduced as types of CHRIST. Noah by faith is said to have prepared an ark for the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Hebrews 11:7. This explains the whole. These types of CHRIST represent the person and righteousness of JESUS, by whom alone they, and every individual heir of faith, could obtain salvation.

EZEKIEL 14:22-23

Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, *both* sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, *even* concerning all that I have brought upon it. (23) And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD.

What a gracious close is made to this solemn chapter! I hope the reader will not overlook it or lose sight of it. Can anything be more lovely, more interesting, or more recommending, in proof of the Divine mercy? Observe the several sweet particulars contained in those two verses: *Yet*, saith the LORD—it forms a blessed *yet*, as if the LORD had said, *Yet*, in spite of all Israel's sins and Israel's unworthiness, *there shall be a remnant that shall be brought forth*. Yes, Reader, there is, there must be, in the worst of times a remnant *according to the election of grace*. Romans 11:5. And observe further, this remnant shall *be brought forth* from the general wreck and ruin of the pestilence and sword. Genesis 19:29. And observe yet more, this remnant shall be *both of sons and daughters*. Yes, *there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for they are all one in CHRIST JESUS*. Galatians 3:28. Still more: the LORD saith, they shall come forth to His Church to His people. Yes! *all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it*. Isaiah 40:5. Neither is this all. The LORD's people shall see their way, and shall be comforted concerning the evil brought upon Jerusalem. Yes! while the redeemed of the LORD sing their songs of salvation on the sea of glass, they no less shout in the view of the ruin of the enemies of GOD, and of His CHRIST. They then finally and fully know, that the LORD hath not done without cause all that He hath done, in the overthrow of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous. Then will that song burst forth from ten thousand times ten thousand tongues: *Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD GOD Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints*. Revelation 15:2, 3.

REFLECTIONS

READER! have you never seen a congregation like the one here described by the Prophet? But what a bubble is man to himself, that thus trifles with the LORD and deceives his own heart? LORD! help both Writer and Reader to keep the foot when, going to the house of GOD, and earnestly desire to worship GOD, *who is a Spirit in spirit and in truth.*

Precious LORD JESUS! do I set in Thy types *Noah, Daniel, and Job*, behold yet more and more Thy glorious person, work, and righteousness? What but Thine holiness, O Thou LAMB of GOD! can shelter from Divine wrath in the day of Divine visitation? And what but Thy blood, sprinkled on the consciences, can keep the destroying angel from entering in on the day of slaughter the houses even of thy Israel? Oh! Almighty GOD and FATHER! we bless Thee for Thy grace and mercy, and the fulfillment of all Thy covenant engagements, in bringing out from destruction, and bringing home to everlasting safety, the remnant of Thy sons and daughters. Blessed forever be JEHOVAH, in all his doings and all his ways. Truly, LORD, it must be said, both in judgment and in mercy the LORD hath done all things well. He hath made all things for himself, *yea, even the wicked for the day of evil!*

CHAPTER 15

CONTENTS

The LORD is still by His servant the Prophet preaching to Israel. He here useth similitudes. Under the figure of a vine-

tree as unfit for timber, he showeth the unsuitableness of Jerusalem, in her dry and withered state, to any good.

EZEKIEL 15:1-5

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, *or than* a branch which is among the trees of the forest? (3) Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will *men* take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? (4) Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for *any* work? (5) Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for *any* work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?

The figure of a vine-tree is most happily chosen to describe what the LORD meant to teach the Prophet concerning Jerusalem. The vine in its flourishing state is the most luxuriant and prolific perhaps of any trees of the garden. But when that fruitfulness is interrupted or spoiled, the tender stalk is fit for nothing. In application of this figure to Jerusalem, the LORD showeth the Prophet, that while the LORD's blessing was upon Jerusalem she was the praise and glory of all lands. Jerusalem was planted as a choice vine, *wholly a right seed*. Jeremiah 2:21. But now *the wild boar out of the wood doth root it up*, what is it fit for? See the Psalmist's account, Psalm 80:8, &c. Reader! pause over this view, and remark the beauty contained in it, and observe how graciously the LORD is condescending to reason with his Church and people.

EZEKIEL 15:6-8

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (7) And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from *one* fire, and *another* fire

shall devour them; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I set my face against them. (8) And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.

Here, as in other parts of the word of GOD, we find judgment following conviction. The LORD seems to expostulate, as it were, in the same language as by another Prophet: *And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?* Isaiah 5:3, 4. Reader! it is a very solemn thing when men trifle with the LORD. Sin is sin, wherever it be found. But sill in the Church of God becomes more exceedingly sinful. The weed in the garden is more offensive than in the hedge. And when the LORD sets his face against a people, against an individual, how tremendously awful are the judgments which follow. *Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.* Hosea 4:17. If the LORD ceaseth to correct, destruction is not far off.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! who can read this chapter, and call to mind Thy wonderful condescension in calling Thyself the vine, without connecting with it Thy people's everlasting safety in Thee. Thou, dearest LORD, wert the true vine of the LORD's right hand planting. Thou wert the branch of growth. And though, from the unequalled humbleness of Thy person, Thou didst appear nothing more than as a root out of a dry ground, as unpromising as the stalk of the vine, yet Thy branches have run over the wall. And though the archers sorely grieved Thee, and shot at Thee, yet Thy bow abode in strength, and

the arms of Thine hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty GOD of Jacob.

Thy Jerusalem, Thy holy city, O LORD, hath found redemption from being united to Thee. As branches in Thee Thy people flourish and bring forth fruit. Without Thee they are nothing. Oh! for grace to live wholly *in* Thee and *upon* Thee, and forever to be tasting of the precious fruit of Thy soul-strengthening grapes; yea, LORD, to drink of the fruit of the vine which Thou didst yield for Thy people, when trodden in the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty GOD. LORD JESUS! *I would take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the LORD. I would sit under Thy shadow with great delight, for Thy fruit is sweet to my taste.*

CHAPTER 16

CONTENTS

Under the similitude of a new-born female infant cast out and left to perish, this chapter describes the hopeless state of human nature by the fall. The riches of grace in the salvation of such is beautifully represented, and both are very strikingly and elegantly described.

EZEKIEL 16:1-3

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, (3) And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity *is* of the land of Canaan; thy father *was* an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

The Prophet is still preaching to Jerusalem, though himself in Babylon. He is commissioned by the LORD to trace the history of the Church from her birth; and that she might not vaunt herself over the Gentiles, the LORD reminds her of her extraction; for though sprung from *Abraham*, and in covenant, yet this was wholly from adoption and grace. *Abraham* was an idolater at the time the LORD called him, and came from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*. Genesis 11:31.

EZEKIEL 16:4-5

And *as for* thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple *thee*; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. (5) None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

We have not only the weakness and helplessness of every man's state by nature here represented to us, but, what is more to the purpose, and indeed the great object intended to be shown from *Ezekiel's* preaching, we have the total ruin of that nature by the fall set forth. Every son and daughter of *Adam* may be truly said to be cast out to the loathing of their person, and left everlastingly to perish for any help or any pity all the creatures of God could give. Reader! pause over it, and contemplate a state so very awful! and then recollect, that this was and is both yours and mine, and both by original sin and actual transgression.

EZEKIEL 16:6

And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live.

Here is the grand cause and the only cause of man's recovery. JESUS passing by, as the divine Samaritan, and beholding our nature in our blood. His grace, and not man's merit, is the sole source of all that follows in mercy. For though the LORD takes occasion from our misery to magnify the riches of his grace, yet his love and mercy are both before our misery. Sweet thought! And there is another uncommonly great beauty in this verse, I mean in the LORD's repeating, and thereby the more confirming, His love to His people: *When thou wast in thy blood I said live; yea, when thou wast in thy blood (not when thou hadst crept out of it) I said live.* Reader! may we not, without violence to the passage, conceive that thus the LORD JESUS speaks to His redeemed now as living, though in their blood all the days of their unregeneracy? Precious thought! Was it not to this sovereign decree that you and I were preserved all the while from going down to the pit, whilst living as without GOD and without CHRIST in the world?

EZEKIEL 16:7-14

I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare. (8) Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. (9) Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. (10) I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. (11) I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. (12) And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon

thine head. (13) Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. (14) And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was* perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Let the Reader mark, one by one, the several precious things here said by the LORD, and explain the whole by gospel language, and what will it amount to but this, that when JESUS passed by, that is, came into this world to seek and save that which was lost, He saw His Church in the very state of this poor female child, cast out and loathsome in her person to every beholder but Himself. It was JESUS that spread His skirts over her, that took her into covenant, that made her His own by union and by interest. It was JESUS that washed her in His blood, clothed her with the garment of His salvation, which, like fine linen, and gold, and silk, are the beautiful robes for her covering. It was in JESUS'S righteousness the Church was made comely, so that the spouse of CHRIST became the admired object of all the world. Reader! is it not blessed to see in whom and from whom the Church derives all her beauty and loveliness, even from her adorable LORD? And as in grace here, so in glory to all eternity, it is in JESUS and from JESUS her perfection is wholly owing. How beautiful the Church sings to this. Isaiah 61:10.

EZEKIEL 16:15-34

But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. (16) And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: *the like things* shall not come, neither shall it be *so*. (17) Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of

my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them, (18) And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. (19) My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, *wherewith* I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and *thus* it was, saith the Lord GOD. (20) Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. *Is this* of thy whoredoms a small matter, (21) That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through *the fire* for them? (22) And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, *and* wast polluted in thy blood. (23) And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;) (24) *That* thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street. (25) Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms. (26) Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger. (27) Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary *food*, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way. (28) Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied. (29) Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. (30) How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these *things*, the work of an imperious whorish woman; (31) In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire; (32) *But as* a wife that committeth adultery, *which* taketh strangers instead of her husband! (33) They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom. (34) And the contrary is in thee from *other* women in thy whoredoms, whereas none

followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

We have here, under the same figure, carried on, of the sad departures which, even after grace, is too often discoverable in the Church. Israel, of old, to whom the Prophet is speaking, was remarkable for this apostacy and rebellion through their whole history. And the Church of GOD now may but too justly be arraigned to the question, *What then are we better than they? No in no wise.* Romans 3:9. Reader! let us seek personally for the profiting by this sacred scripture, and leave Israel's history to look into our own. May not you and I both behold in what is here said, as in a mirror, our own features. If we trace it to the days of our unregeneracy, we shall find the sole cause of our conversion was to the LORD's passing by, and bidding us live. And may we not equally refer our present state, that we have not totally fallen, and have been cast away, to the same cause? Had the LORD been extreme to mark what hath been amiss since, what would have been our present state? Doth not everything in us and about us say, *it is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed?* Lamentations 3:22. Yea! may we not both frequently hear, as it were with faith, that expostulating voice, *Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knowest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened; for I know that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb?* Isaiah 48:8.

EZEKIEL 16:35-59

Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: (36) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers,

and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; (37) Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all *them* that thou hast loved, with all *them* that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. (38) And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. (39) And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. (40) They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. (41) And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more. (42) So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. (43) Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these *things*; behold, therefore I also will recompense thy way upon *thine* head, saith the Lord GOD: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations. (44) Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use *this* proverb against thee, saying, As *is* the mother, *so is* her daughter. (45) Thou *art* thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children; and thou *art* the sister of thy sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother *was* an Hittite, and your father an Amorite. (46) And thine elder sister *is* Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, *is* Sodom and her daughters. (47) Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as *if that were* a very little *thing*, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways. (48) *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. (49) Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. (50) And they were haughty, and committed abomination

before me: therefore I took them away as I saw *good*. (51) Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done. (52) Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters. (53) When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then *will I bring again* the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them: (54) That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them. (55) When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. (56) For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride, (57) Before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of *thy* reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all *that are* round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about. (58) Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD. (59) For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.

What is here said comes in as the suitable conclusion of such daring rebellion as Israel had, in the preceding paragraph, been accused of. If Israel hath thus played the harlot, what shall arise, or who will interpose, that she should not have a writing of divorcement, and be put away? Such open and barefaced adultery exceeded, in the LORD'S view, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Punishment shall follow punishment, as one wave of the sea follows another. The LORD is very jealous of His honour, and will not let Israel go unpunished. Reader! how greatly is that sweet intercourse and communion between JESUS and his people interrupted by a loose and

unguarded conversation in life and manners? Sweet and blessed is that precept, *Grieve not the spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.* Ephesians 4:30.

EZEKIEL 16:60-63

Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. (61) Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. (62) And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: (63) That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

What a beautiful and gracious close is this to the whole chapter! Do not fail, Reader, to remark the sole cause of such unparalleled mercy, namely, GOD'S covenant faithfulness in CHRIST. Here, as in another example of the kind, the LORD refers it unto this source. Ezekiel 36:16. to the end. And do not fail also to remark, the gracious effects the LORD saith shall take place in the hearts of his people. Shame and confusion of face are blessed tokens of a real reform in the heart. The truly converted sinner, in the moment he pleads forgiveness for CHRIST'S sake, with all the earnestness of a soul that is seeking it in covenant love and the merits of JESUS, will acknowledge in the same moment his unworthiness of it, and while adoring GOD and the LAMB in the higher strains of praise, will take shame and confusion of face in the self-loathing and abhorring of himself. See striking instances, Ezra 9 throughout. Luke 15:17 to 21.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this most beautiful and interesting chapter until that, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we have gathered some of the many blessed instructions it contains for our Improvement, both in humblings and consolations.

Behold what a complete representation the LORD here makes of every sinner as brought into perishing circumstances by the fall! What are we, what is any man, yea, every man, by nature and by practice, but like this poor, helpless, and unconscious infant thrown out to perish in the open field! We are not only exposed to endless ruin, and unable in ourselves, like the new-born babe in nature, to put forth a helping hand to our own recovery; but we are, like the babe, unconscious of our danger, and not sensible of our wretched state.

Hath JESUS passed by and bid us live? Hath He, notwithstanding all our vileness, when loathsome to angels and to all the creation of GOD, beheld us and loved us in our low estate, married our nature, united us to Himself, washed us, clothed us, fed us, sustained us, and, even in the midst of all our after back-slidings and departures from Him, still, from His covenant love, kept us by His almighty power through faith unto salvation? Oh! what shall recompense, or, since all recompense fails, what shall testify a sense of His grace and our undeservings? Precious, precious JESUS! do Thou, by Thy blessed SPIRIT, *work in us both to will and to do, of Thy good pleasure*. Oh! make us to know indeed and in truth, as Thou hast said, that Thou art the LORD; for surely none but the long-suffering and patience of JEHOVAH could hold out against the continual provocations and whorish heart of Thy people. LORD! I do pray Thee, that, as a sweet and precious testimony

of our being still within the rich covenant mercies, both the heart of him that writes and him that reads may have those blessed properties of grace here recorded. *That we may, indeed, remember and be confounded, and never open our mouth any more* in a way of self-justification or self-delight, *because of our shame when thou art pacified towards us for all that we have done, O LORD GOD.* Amen.

CHAPTER 17

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The LORD, by His servant the Prophet, is still teaching by parable. Under the similitude of two eagles and a vine is showed GOD'S judgments upon Jerusalem. The Chapter, however, closeth with sweet promises.

EZEKIEL 17:1-10

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel; (3) And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: (4) He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he set it in a city of merchants. (5) He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed *it* by great waters, *and* set it *as* a willow tree. (6) And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs. (7) There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers: and, behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation. (8) It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. (9) Say thou, Thus saith

the Lord GOD; Shall it prosper? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. (10) Yea, behold, *being* planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.

Perhaps this great eagle represents *Nebuchadnezzar*, who carried *Jeconiah*, when quite a youth, and, like a tender twig, unable to resist any bird of prey, into *Babylon*. 2 Kings 24:8-13. The land of traffic exactly answers to *Babylon*. The other great eagle perhaps might mean the King of *Egypt*. And by the vine, which is intended for *Israel*, whom the LORD originally planted a choice vine, Jeremiah 2:21. is shown how Israel was looking to Egypt for help when under tribute to Babylon. But the LORD's sentence upon Israel was not to be altered. Ruin as a nation had been determined from the LORD.

EZEKIEL 17:11-21

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (12) Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these *things mean?* tell *them*, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon; (13) And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land: (14) That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping of his covenant it might stand. (15) But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such *things?* or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? (16) *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place *where* the king *dwelleth* that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, *even* with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. (17) Neither shall Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounds, and building forts, to cut off many persons: (18) Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the

covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these *things*, he shall not escape. (19) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; *As I live*, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head. (20) And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. (21) And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken *it*.

We have here the LORD's own explanation of the parable. Israel is called a rebellious house, for it had been so to the LORD, and also to the King of Babylon. Indeed, if a nation be unfaithful to the LORD, it could not be expected that it would be found faithful to men. But what I beg the Reader more particularly to notice in this part of the chapter is, the LORD's resentment of the King of Israel's unfaithfulness to the King of Babylon. Twice the LORD swears by His great name that he will punish him for it, and that he did so, the history by Jeremiah proves. See Jeremiah 52:1-11. The oath that is here spoken of we read in the account, 2 Chronicles 36:12. The sin was doubly, yea, ten-fold aggravated, because the King of Babylon, for greater security, had made him swear by the God of Israel for the performance of it.

EZEKIEL 17:22-24

Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set *it*; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* upon an high mountain and eminent: (23) In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. (24) And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green

tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done *it*.

Reader! how refreshing is it, after going through a long chapter full of the history of the perfidy and baseness of man, to come to a portion of it, however short, yet full of grace, to show the goodness and loving-kindness of GOD. Not more grateful to the parched traveler over a long and dreary desert, is it, when he meets with a cooling stream. We have here the LORD's gracious provision for the recovery of his people, when to all human appearance the whole seed of Israel was destroyed. The LORD calls upon the Church to attend to his promise concerning it. There shall be deliverance, for the highest branch of the cedar of Lebanon is still left, and which shall be planted. This shall become a goodly tree full of branches. Under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing. And though now the Church is in Babylon, this branch shall be planted in the mountain of the height of Israel. And to give certainty to the promise, the LORD saith, that *He* will plant it; yea, that all the trees of the field shall know it. Reader! see, behold, and admire, with thankfulness and praise, how, under this similitude, JESUS, that *plant of renown*, is promised. And do not fail to remark, under the figure, the many delightful features of the LORD'S CHRIST, which point to His person, and offices, and character. And how fully is the whole made to answer in the Church of the LORD, when, in the use of ordinances and means of grace, the people of JESUS sit down under His shadow with great delight, and find His fruit *sweet to their taste*. Truly hath GOD the HOLY GHOST recorded it of Him, that *His branches shall spread, and His beauty shall be as the olive tree, and His smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under His shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn,*

and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon. Hoses 14:6, 7.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read a chapter of this nature but with wonder and astonishment, while beholding the baseness and deep-rooted sin of man, and the overflowing and preventing mercy of GOD! To view Israel as a nation and people overturned, in captivity and ruin, and yet unhumbed under such alarming providences! To behold them, from the king to the peasant, unfaithful, perfidious, and base; adding falsehood to rebellion; and, by the solemnity of an oath, calling in GOD himself to witness to a lie, and to bear testimony to an assurance which they never intended to perform! LORD! what is man, even when brought down under the most humbling providences? How evident is it from such a view of human nature, that no sufferings, no trials, no afflictions, can work any change, unless the sovereign grace of GOD commissions and sanctifies!

From such distressing subjects of human worthlessness, LORD give both Writer and Reader grace to turn unto Thee. Surely, blessed LORD, in the representation here made of our natural depravity, and the riches of thy mercy, taking occasion therefrom to the greater display of thy goodness, that sweet scripture is most blessedly fulfilled, *Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace through righteousness unto eternal life, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

Blessed LORD! help us to praise Thee, that Thou didst not only promise, but hast performed, that great work of redemption,

in planting that *branch* of renown in Thine holy mountain! Yea, LORD, in the person of Thy dear SON Thou hast manifested Thy grace and Thy glory, and opened to Thy Church a blessed and everlasting tree of life in the paradise of GOD. Oh! for grace to come under the healing branches of it here, and under the full enjoyment of it hereafter, when there shall be no more curse, but all the captivities of sin, sorrow, and death shall be done away.

CHAPTER 18

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This chapter is a beautiful commendation of divine justice, and no less a condemnation of human folly.

EZEKIEL 18:1-4

The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, (2) What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? (3) *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.* (4) Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

It should seem by the scope of reasoning the LORD is pleased to adopt in this chapter, that the proverb here used was an indirect reflection upon GOD. It was probably the scoffer's comment upon the *second Commandment*. But so great was the general delinquency of the times, that both Father and Son were involved in it; and, therefore, as all had sinned and come short of GOD's glory, all were justly exposed to the displeasure of GOD. And in justifying divine proceedings, the

LORD lays claim to His undoubted right, as sovereign creator of all men: *all souls are mine*. They are so by original creation, and by the mercies of redemption; therefore it must be right for GOD, as it is for man, to do what he will with his own. This point being settled, the LORD, in the following verses, advances to an illustration of the doctrine.

EZEKIEL 18:5-20

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, (6) *And* hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, (7) *And* hath not oppressed any, *but* hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; (8) *He that* hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, *that* hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, (9) Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he *is* just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD. (10) If he beget a son *that is* a robber, a shedder of blood, and *that* doeth the like to *any* one of these *things*, (11) *And* that doeth not any of those *duties*, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, (12) Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, (13) Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. (14) Now, lo, *if* he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, (15) *That* hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, (16) Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, *but* hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, (17) *That* hath taken off his hand from the poor, *that* hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall

surely live. (18) *As for* his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did *that* which *is* not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity. (19) Yet say ye, *Why?* doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, *and* hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. (20) The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

I include all these verses under one view in reading, the better to gather also into one view the just and unalterable reasoning of the LORD upon them. Here are *three* cases stated, in a father, and a son, and the son's son, to show and illustrate the truth by. *One* is supposed to be a just man, who makes a conscience of his ways; and *another* is supposed to be the reverse of all this, and abounding in iniquity; while the *third*, like the *first*, is enabled to take warning from the awful example of his father, and follows the steps of his grandfather. Now, from these very opposite characters, the LORD draws the just conclusion, that the soul keeping his statutes should live, and the sinner, breaking and despising them, should die. All which proves the equal dealings of the LORD. Here the Reader, in order to a clear apprehension of the doctrine, and especially on gospel principles, will consider, that the LORD is all along speaking on the presumption that men lived up to the observance of the *divine law*, and were judged by it. This kind of reasoning is frequently made use of by the sacred writers, in order the more fully to make way for, and to prove the absolute necessity of the Gospel. The LORD sends His people, as it were, to judge themselves by a covenant of works, in order to show the blessedness of grace. *For* (saith the Apostle Paul) *if there had been a law given*

which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of JESUS CHRIST might be given to them that believe. Galatians 3:21, 22. Such is the reasoning on those cases, if considered with an eye to the divine law in a covenant of works, in which the LORD's equity and just judgment is most plainly proved and illustrated. But if we consider the doctrine yet closer on *gospel* principles, (and which, I humbly conceive, is the way in which it should be forever considered,) in this case the sum and substance of the whole passage will be found from every instance, both of father and children, to be among the highest confirmations of the necessity and absolute expediency of the Gospel of CHRIST. The *just* persons here spoken of, both in the case of father and son, are justified souls in CHRIST; and this appears from what is said, *the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him.* What righteousness but that of CHRIST? This indeed is truly *upon* the justified soul; for CHRIST was made *sin for his people*, though he knew no sin, that they might be made *the righteousness of GOD in him.* 2 Corinthians 5:21. Hence He is called, *the LORD our righteousness.* Jeremiah 23:6. And he is said to be *made of GOD, both wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* 1 Corinthians 1:30. And hence the LORD himself saith, *This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.* Isaiah 54:17. Hence this scripture, *the righteousness of the righteous,* meaning JESUS CHRIST *the righteous.* 1 John 2:1, and *the wickedness of the wicked,* meaning the awful ungodliness inwrought in the heart by the wicked one at the fall, and never done away in CHRIST by His holy spirit and regeneration, shall be upon each respectively. Read, in this

point of view, the whole passage is pure gospel from beginning to end.

EZEKIEL 18:21-22

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. (22) All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

Here the LORD puts the case of a soul recovered by grace out of the snare of the devil, and the LORD's pleasure in that recovery, and very blessed it is. LORD! I would say, grant that this saving work of Thine almighty love may be daily carrying on in the Church!

EZEKIEL 18:23-29

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: *and* not that he should return from his ways, and live? (24) But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. (25) Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? (26) When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. (27) Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. (28) Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. (29) Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

When the LORD puts the question, *Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, and not that he should return from his ways and live?* We cannot suppose that the sense is, the LORD hath no pleasure in securing the honour and glory of His holy name, by the destruction of sin and evil. This cannot be the case, for all the parts of scripture prove the reverse. But the sense is, that while sinners, whose hearts are *savingly* turned by grace to the LORD, are his glory and delight, the incorrigible and unreclaimed, when punished, are fearful monuments of his justice. So, in like manner, when it is said, *when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.* This cannot be said of a righteous man in CHRIST; and, strictly and properly speaking, there can be none righteous but in CHRIST; and from this righteousness he cannot turn, neither can it be lost, for the LORD hath said, *My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.* Isaiah 51:6. *Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.* Isaiah 45:17. But the sense is, when the moral man and one that counteth himself righteous, turneth from it, as that he will sooner or later, and lose all his vain confidence and proud boasting, when such an one falls into trespasses, he hath no resource in CHRIST, no hope of salvation in his blood and righteousness; and therefore dies in his iniquity, unwashed, unregenerated, unrenewed in the spirit of his mind. This point is more plainly shown in the parallel passage, Ezekiel 33:13. where the LORD denotes this self-righteousness *a trusting to it*; so that, by comparing both together, the reader may be able, under divine teaching, to discern the poor, imperfect, law-

righteousness of men, which never did, nor ever will save a soul, and that rich and all-perfect gospel righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which becomes the believer's most complete and justifying robe of salvation before the LORD JEHOVAH, in grace here, and glory forever. Isaiah 45:24, 25.

EZEKIEL 18:30-32

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. (31) Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (32) For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.

Here, in conclusion, is a most striking and just appeal from the LORD, followed up with the strongest assurance of mercy. But here again, as before, the expression concerning the LORD's pleasure in the death of the sinner must be accepted agreeably to the general tenor of GOD's revealed word. The glory of GOD is concerned in the destruction of sin; and, finally, he will root out all things that offend. Matthew 13:41, 42. And when he doth it, the glory and pleasure of JEHOVAH is in it. Proverbs 16:4.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both pause over this solemn chapter, and ponder well the contents of it, looking up to GOD the HOLY GHOST, with an humble eye of supplication, that He will be our teacher. Here we learn most awfully the sure end of sin. Here also we learn in what must consist the righteousness and everlasting safety of the redeemed.

Precious LORD JESUS! how increasingly precious is thy righteousness in this point to every truly awakened heart, convinced by the HOLY GHOST *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*. Truly, O LORD, there is, there can be no righteousness but Thine to be depended upon or trusted in. *All our righteousness is as filthy rags*, in which there is no confidence. From every fancied goodness of ours, for it is but fancied, not real, we should all apostatize, and die in our iniquity. Truly, LORD, in Thee alone is salvation found. LORD! turn poor sinners to behold Thee and Thy loveliness, and to seek Thy face in Thy strength, that their souls may be saved in the great day of the LORD!

Dearest LORD JESUS! help both Writer and Reader to praise Thee, in the consciousness that *Thy salvation is for ever, and Thy righteousness that which cannot be abolished*. Thy people, kept by Thee, upheld by Thee, and justified by Thee, and in Thy righteousness, cannot turn away. If, dear LORD, the righteousness was their own, and wrought out in their own strength, then indeed both themselves and their merit might and would be lost, and as it came, so it would go. But founded in Thee, and in the power of Thy might, they are *strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS*. Help then, O LORD, both Writer and Reader, to be forever looking unto Thee for righteousness and strength. Let it be the constant language and experience of both our souls to say, as one of old did, and to rest in the same blessed assurance, *I will go forth in the strength of the LORD GOD; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only. My mouth shall show forth Thy righteousness and Thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof*.

CHAPTER 19

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The Prophet, at the command of the LORD, is, in this chapter, lamenting for the princes of Israel. The language is, as usual, figurative.

EZEKIEL 19:1-4

Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, (2) And say, What *is* thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. (3) And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men. (4) The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

This is a very instructive chapter, especially to Ministers of the Gospel. The Prophet, under the similitude of a lioness bereaved of her whelps, sets forth the desolate state of the royal house of David, and the kings of Israel and Judah; and the LORD commands the Prophet to feel for the ruined state of the land, and especially for the princes of it. She had sat as a queen among the nations, and in Solomon's days all the people of the earth had paid tribute to her. But now, like a lion fallen into a pit, and there taken in chains and carried to a cage, the LORD's heritage was given for a prey into the hands of her enemies. Reader! if we spiritualize the subject, and in what is here said, behold the Church of JESUS (for His Church it was before the after-fall in Adam), what a sad representation doth it afford! Who can behold the melancholy state of Zion, from the fall to the present hour, but must sensibly feel for the desolations the enemy of souls hath

induced. And although, blessed be GOD, redemption is secure, and like Israel from Babylon, when the seventy years determined were run out, deliverance came, yet it behoves, the people of GOD to mourn during the triumphs of the accursed foe. Lamentations 1:12.

EZEKIEL 19:5-9

Now when she saw that she had waited, *and* her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, *and* made him a young lion. (6) And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, *and* devoured men. (7) And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring. (8) Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit. (9) And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

The Prophet is adverting to the Babylonish captivity, as he had before to that of Egypt, and from both raiseth a subject of lamentation. Reader! it is a very solemn consideration to the people of GOD, that amidst their security in CHRIST the LORD will not allow the slightest inattention to his precepts. In the charter of grace the covenant thus runs, *If his children (the seed of CHRIST) break My laws, and keep not My commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.* Psalm 81:30, 31.

EZEKIEL 19:10-14

Thy mother *is* like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters. (11) And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches. (12) But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground,

and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them. (13) And now she *is* planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground. (14) And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, *which* hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod *to be* a sceptre to rule. This *is* a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

The Prophet here useth another figure similar to the one adopted In the 15th chapter. The former prosperity of Jerusalem is elegantly represented, as a vine planted in a fruitful place by the rivers of waters: her present state as that of a wilderness. Spiritually considered, it is ever so when the soul becomes lean, in the divine life. A coolness and inattention to ordinances, and a neglect of the several means of grace, tend to bring the soul into captivity, and induce similar circumstances of sorrow to that of the Church in Babylon, when they hung their harp upon the willow. See Psalm 139 throughout.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how truly blessed it is, that, amidst all the lamentable circumstances attending Israel and Judah, the God of Israel and Judah is the same, and the worth and efficacy of His salvation is forever and ever. Though Israel, like a lion's whelp, may be taken in a pit, and carried in chains into captivity, yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah must prevail, and all his enemies be brought under His feet. The royalties of His person and majesty, the courage and constancy of His labours, the triumphs of His glory and salvation, these open to our souls unceasing subjects of delight and joy, and especially when, from our union and oneness with Him, we know our interest in all His victories. Hail! Thou glorious,

gracious Lion of the tribe of Judah! in Thy blood and righteousness our sure triumph, over death, hell, and the grave, is already accomplished, and we are now *more than conquerors through Thy grace helping us.*

CHAPTER 20

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In this chapter we have a brief relation how the LORD had dealt with Israel through a long series of years, and how sadly they had requited His mercy. There are many sweet tokens of divine love here and there interspersed through the relation.

EZEKIEL 20:1-3

And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth *month*, the tenth *day* of the month, *that* certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me. (2) Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying, (3) Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

The Prophet is exact to state the time of those elders coming to him; perhaps it was the Sabbath day; and though ordinances were lost in Babylon, yet, no doubt, some kept a remembrance of the LORD's day. Reader it is blessed to any precious souls who are remote from means of grace still to keep up a Sabbath in the mind. It should seem, however, from what the LORD saith concerning these elders, that they did not reverence the Sabbath, for the LORD refused to be enquired of by them.

EZEKIEL 20:4-7

Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge *them?* cause them to know the abominations of their fathers: (5) And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I *am* the LORD your God; (6) In the day *that* I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands: (7) Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

The LORD seems to appeal to the Prophet for his judgment to decide the equity of the LORD's cause; and, in order to enable the Prophet so to do, the LORD enters upon their history, from the servitude of Israel in Egypt, from the first moment of the LORD's forming them into a Church, when He promised them *Canaan*. There is great beauty in the expression of the LORD's *espying Canaan*. The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof. But espying *Canaan as* the glory of all lands, means, that there the LORD would make known His more especial presence, and there fix His sanctuary among them. I pray the Reader to observe and take notice with me, of the several parts of the divine mercy. The very choice of Israel, and forming them into a Church as His people, resulted from His own free sovereign mercy. Deuteronomy 7:7, 8. And the manifestation which the LORD made of himself to Israel was altogether originating in His own mind, no merit of theirs moving him to it. His entering into covenant with them, and the assurance He gave of His favor, all these were so many evidences of the divine mercy, and wholly to be referred into His own sovereign will and pleasure. Malachi 1:2, 3. Romans 9:15, 16.

EZEKIEL 20:8-9

But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. (9) But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they *were*, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

We see here the striking proof of Israel's rebellion, and the LORD's forbearance. Though Israel lost all sense of duty, the LORD will not lose showing all manifestations of His love. The name of JEHOVAH is interested in the salvation of His people, for the LORD will not suffer the enemy to triumph in the ruin of Israel. Sweet thought! the blood of JESUS pleads more powerfully *for* his people, than all their undeservings plead *against* them.

EZEKIEL 20:10-17

Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. (11) And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. (12) Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them. (13) But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. (14) But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out. (15) Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them*, flowing with milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands; (16) Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. (17) Nevertheless mine eye spared

them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

Here we have the history carried on to the wilderness dispensation. If, as some say, the direct road to *Canaan* might have been accomplished in a few days, the LORD's keeping them there forty years plainly proves, that it was for punishment and the trial of their faith. Here the LORD manifested that they were under his peculiar care, for he gave them Sabbaths as a sign between Him and them, and ordinances as a means of grace to keep up holy fellowship and communion all the way. But when the people polluted the LORD's Sabbaths, and defiled His statutes, the LORD seemed ready to enter into judgment upon them. But here again as before, that the holy name of the LORD should not be polluted and profaned in the sight of the heathen, the LORD suppressed the judgment, and His eye spared them in mercy. Reader! to preventing mercy, sparing mercy, and the mercy which forms itself in the heart of JEHOVAH before judgment goeth forth, who shall take upon him to state the amount in every man's debt-book before GOD?

EZEKIEL 20:18-26

But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: (19) I *am* the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; (20) And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I *am* the LORD your God. (21) Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness. (22) Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it

should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth. (23) I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; (24) Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. (25) Wherefore I gave them also statutes *that were* not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; (26) And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through *the fire* all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I *am* the LORD.

Thus slighted and despised by the fathers, the LORD looked to their children, that the rising generation might not be rebellious as their fathers had been. But the sin of rebellion, like a chain of many links, the LORD found to run alike in father and son. The LORD therefore gave them *statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live*. This could not refer to the law of GOD given, on Mount Sinai, for the Apostle saith, that *the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good*. Romans 7:12. Nevertheless, in one sense, (and so the Apostle considers it,) such was and is the nature of the law, that no man could live by it or have life from it. But *by the law is the knowledge of sin*; and the knowledge of sin loudly proclaims CHRIST. Reader! it will be a blessed improvement of this scripture, if, from the perusal of it, such effects are wrought in our hearts to lead us to CHRIST.

EZEKIEL 20:27-28

Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me. (28) *For* when I had brought them into the land, *for* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw

every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings.

Here seems a gracious pause, that the Prophet, having brought the many solemn things contained in the preceding part of the chapter, might stand and ponder well the divine forbearance in the midst of such contumacy as Israel manifested towards the LORD, both the fathers with the children.

EZEKIEL 20:29-37

Then I said unto them, What *is* the high place whereunto ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day. (30) Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations? (31) For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you. (32) And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. (33) *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: (34) And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. (35) And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. (36) Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. (37) And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

The LORD is still expostulating with His people for their transgressions; and the LORD shows the folly, as well as the

sin, of Israel in going to those high places for sacrifice, for what could any or the whole of those dunghill gods do in a way of comfort or help? All and every one of them may well be called *Bamah*, an high place of vanity and disappointment; for where GOD in covenant is not, all is vanity. But I beg the Reader to mark the grace of the LORD in the midst of His people's undeservings. He will bring them into wilderness straits; but it shall be to give them mercies there. He will bring them to pass under the rod; but it shall be the rod of the covenant. Still in grace; all in mercy. The LORD's corrections of his children are all of this kind. Hence one saith, and saith very blessedly, Thy *loving* corrections shall make me great. Psalm 18:35. See Hosea 2:14, 15, &c. Psalm 89:30-35.

EZEKIEL 20:38-39

And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. (39) As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter *also*, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.

I detain the Reader at this passage purposely to beg of him to remark with me, the vast difference in scripture between rebels and rebellious. If the Reader will look, carefully over the whole Book of GOD, I believe that he will find, that while the LORD calls His children rebellious, and frequently complains of their rebellion, he never once calls them rebels. And though we find a woe pronounced upon the church, Isaiah 30:1-8. and a dreadful woe in deed followed, when the Church was sent into Babylon, yet the sorrow was wholly *temporal*, not an everlasting woe, of being cut off from the

LORD. So far from it, that in the 18th and following verses of that same chapter, the LORD declares that He waits to be gracious, and His people shall weep no more; so that though in many scriptures we find the children of GOD declared to be *rebellious*, yet never once are they called rebels. See Psalm 78:8. Isaiah 65:2. Ezekiel 2:3-5. Hence therefore, *rebels*, in scripture language, means the seed of the serpent, of whom the LORD saith, as in this chapter, He will purge them out from among His people. So He did, by Korah and his company. See Numbers 17:10. And though Moses did once in his haste call the people of GOD rebels, Numbers 20:10. as David did, upon another occasion, call the LORD's people, as well as the ungodly, *liars*, Psalm 116:11. yet it should seem by the history that the LORD was displeased for his doing so.

EZEKIEL 20:40-44

For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. (41) I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. (42) And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *for* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. (43) And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. (44) And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

Nothing can be more striking in proof that love and grace and mercy are at the bottom of all the LORD's corrections to His

people, than what those verses express. The LORD's holy mountain, namely, the Gospel Church, shall be the place where JESUS will bring all His redeemed, and where they shall all be accepted in Him. The sweet savour of His person, blood, and righteousness, will be the one gracious cause wherefore they shall all be gathered, and all blessed, and made everlastingly happy.

EZEKIEL 20:45-49

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (46) Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop *thy word* toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field; (47) And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein. (48) And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched. (49) Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?

This seems a new discourse, or, if it be not, it is only as a postscript to a letter. The former was delivered concerning the Church in Babylon, and this is directed concerning the people at Jerusalem, which, of course, lay south of Babylon. Awful is the message: but it seems the Prophet himself entertained no hope, from the delivery of it, of any good. It was like the first account of the LORD JESUS's resurrection; the words seemed to them that heard it as idle tales, for they believed them, not. Alas! it is but too general a complaint with faithful ministers in all ages. Isaiah 53:1. Luke 24:11.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful account is here given, and by the LORD Himself, of a congregation of worshippers. Are there any such in the present hour? Alas! it is to be feared but too many; for, in every age, there are multitudes who draw nigh to GOD to honour Him with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him. *Thou art ever in their mouth* (saith the LORD by the Prophet,) *and far from their reins.*

It will be no unprofitable improvement of this chapter, if, from beholding the deception of the heart, in this instance, of the elders of Israel before the Prophet, you and I, Reader, bring home the subject to ourselves. In how many ways, and by how many avenues, evil enters into the soul. Corruption within and temptation without, rob the soul of sweet communion and fellowship with the LORD, even where a work of grace hath passed upon the soul; so that every true believer in JESUS finds but too often cause to complain with the Apostle, *When I would do good, evil is present with me.* And if so, what must it be in the heart wholly unawakened by grace, unregenerated by the HOLY SPIRIT, and uninterested by any sense of the divine goodness? Precious LORD JESUS! how eminently here, as in a thousand other instances of grace and mercy, is the recollection of Thy High Priestly office, in bearing away *the iniquity of our most holy things!* Thy one offering once offered, and the everlasting and eternal efficacy of it, pleaded in Thine unceasing intercession, become the only cause of Thy Church's acceptance. Yea, LORD our very prayers, but for this, would seal our condemnation, Reader! let us both beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to impress these soul-reviving considerations upon the mind and heart of each. While you and I but too often, in the great congregation, hear

as though we heard not, and pray or sing as though we felt not, oh! what a relief to my poor soul is the conviction; that in the same moment there is one with the FATHER whom the FATHER heareth alway, and *Who is the propitiation for our sins*. His glorious person and His finished work become the security and sanctity of all His redeemed. And while the LORD JEHOVAH hath respect to Him, and the Church in Him, in all the purposes of grace, so the everlasting acceptance and joy of the Church will only arise out of the same, in all the manifestations of glory.

CHAPTER 21

CONTENTS

The Prophet is still going on with his commission of preaching to the people. In this chapter he prophesieth against Jerusalem, under the image of a sword.

EZEKIEL 21:1-7

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop *thy word* toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel, (3) And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I *am* against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked. (4) Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north: (5) That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more. (6) Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of *thy* loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes. (7) And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit

shall faint, and all knees shall be weak *as* water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD.

It should seem that this was but a continuation of the preceding chapter, where the LORD had commanded the Prophet to set his face toward the south, and prophecy. For, as the Prophet complained that the people would only deride him, and say it was but a parable, the LORD bids him to show that it would be a dreadful reality, in which the very loins of the hearer would tremble and be loosened, like a woman in travail. So awful would be the visitation, that the sword of the LORD would slay both the righteous and the wicked. And though the *eternal safety* of all His redeemed ones in CHRIST could not be affected by this visitation, yet in *temporal* things the inhabitants of Jerusalem would all partake alike in the dreadful slaughter, like mariners in the same vessel, which, if it founders at sea, all the crew are drowned. And the Prophet is commanded to tell the reason, *Behold I am against thee, saith the LORD*; as if the LORD had said, You are groaning because the King of Babylon is against you, but what will ye do when the LORD of Hosts is against you? Reader! pause and consider the awfulness of such a state! The Apostle saith, *If GOD be for us, who can be against us?* But we may add, if the LORD be against us, of what avail is it who is for us? Romans 8:31.

EZEKIEL 21:8-17

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (9) Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished: (10) It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, *as* every tree. (11) And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it

into the hand of the slayer. (12) Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it *shall be* upon all the princes of Israel: terrors by reason of the sword shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon *thy* thigh. (13) Because *it is* a trial, and what if *the sword* condemn even the rod? it shall be no *more*, saith the Lord GOD. (14) Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite *thine* hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it *is* the sword of the great *men that are* slain, which entereth into their privy chambers. (15) I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that *their* heart may faint, and *their* ruins be multiplied: ah! *it is* made bright, *it is* wrapped up for the slaughter. (16) Go thee one way or other, *either* on the right hand, *or* on the left, whithersoever thy face *is* set. (17) I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the LORD have said *it*.

This seems to be another sermon to the same amount as the former. The LORD directs His servant to continue his alarming message, and again and again to cry concerning the sword of the LORD's slaughter. And the Prophet himself is to be a sign also to the people, and to cry and howl, and to smite upon his thigh. The ministers of the LORD are expected, in times of national calamity, to take interest in all the LORD's judgments; *to weep between the porch and the altar*; and to look to the Great Intercessor to spare His heritage. Joel 2:17.

EZEKIEL 21:18-24

The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, (19) Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place, choose *it* at the head of the way to the city. (20) Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced. (21) For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made *his* arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver. (22) At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice

with shouting, to appoint *battering* rams against the gates, to cast a mount, *and* to build a fort. (23) And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken. (24) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, *I say*, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.

Perhaps by the two ways is intended the double attack which the king of *Babylon* made on Jerusalem and the chief city of the *Ammonites*; but concerning which, as this scripture represents, he stood undetermined for a while which to destroy first. But what the Prophet is commissioned more particularly to declare thereby is, that had not sin been found in the LORD's people, no weapon of the King of *Babylon* could have prospered. Reader! think how more than ordinarily offensive is sin in the people of GOD.

EZEKIEL 21:25-27

And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity *shall have* an end, (26) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this *shall not be* the same: exalt *him that is low*, and abase *him that is high*. (27) I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no *more*, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it *him*.

Here the LORD speaks personally to the King of Israel, and a very awful address it is. But, what I beg the Reader more immediately to observe is, the promise of One coming, whose right the crown and diadem of Israel is, and of the royal dignity being lost until His coming. And who could this point to but CHRIST? Thrice the LORD declares the overturning of his people in this verse, as if to show what a degraded state the

children of Israel should be reduced to before CHRIST'S coming.

EZEKIEL 21:28-32

And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword *is* drawn: for the slaughter *it is* furbished, to consume because of the glittering: (29) Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of *them that are* slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity *shall have* an end. (30) Shall I cause *it* to return into his sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity. (31) And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, *and* skilful to destroy. (32) Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; thou shalt be no *more* remembered: for I the LORD have spoken *it*.

The prophecy here is of *Ammon*, whom the King of *Babylon* also subdued as well as Jerusalem. The LORD hath been pleased to intersperse the history of Israel, here and there, with the account of other nations, by way of manifesting the sovereignty of His government, and to prove Himself to be King of Nations as well as King of Saints.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the perusal of this chapter will be rendered very profitable, both to your heart and mine, if, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we gather from it the instructions evidently intended from it to the people of GOD; namely, how blessed it is to have the LORD for our GOD; and when outward afflictions abound, inward consolations abound also in JESUS. When a child of GOD is under trouble, still, be the trouble

what it may, while he hath a gracious covenant GOD to fly to, and the righteousness and blood-shedding of JESUS to trust in, all is well. But to have the LORD coming forth as our enemy, when the world presses hard upon us, it is that which aggravates the sorrow, and renders the load unbearable indeed. *Saul*, King of Israel, felt this to the full when he cried out, *The Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me*. Here was the bitterness of the affliction. The war of the Philistines had been nothing, for Saul had constantly subdued them when the LORD went with him to battle; but every sword, every arrow of the angry Philistine, became doubly dreadful when the LORD was seen in the appointment. Reader! let you and I learn from it the blessedness of having JESUS always with us and for us. To Him let us go, and in Him always confide. When He undertakes our cause, victory is sure; yea, we are made *more than conquerors through His grace helping us*.

CHAPTER 22

CONTENTS

The Prophet is still prosecuting the sad subject of the sins of Jerusalem; and the LORD's displeasure, and threatened punishment, added.

EZEKIEL 22:1-16

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations. (3) Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. (4) Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou

hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come *even* unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries. (5) *Those that be* near, and *those that be* far from thee, shall mock thee, *which art* infamous *and* much vexed. (6) Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. (7) In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. (8) Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. (9) In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. (10) In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. (11) And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. (12) In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD. (13) Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee. (14) Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken *it*, and will do *it*. (15) And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. (16) And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

The opening of this chapter, in the words of the LORD, is put into the form of a question, not only of *judging*, but it seems as if the LORD condescended to ask His servant, whether he had ought to say in justification of *the city of bloods*, for so the original is; meaning much evil abounded in Jerusalem. And then, as if the LORD knew the Prophet could not say anything by way of the least apology, the LORD adds, *Then say thou*; that is, then pronounce both their guilt and their

punishment; and all that follows in this paragraph is to this amount. Crimes upon crimes, and sins of the blackest nature. And all this found in the Jerusalem of the LORD! *Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon.*

EZEKIEL 22:17-22

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (18) Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they *are* brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are *even* the dross of silver. (19) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. (20) *As* they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt *it*; so will I gather *you* in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave *you there*, and melt you. (21) Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. (22) As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.

The figure here is very striking of dross, the refuse of the coarser metals, brass, iron, lead, and tin; whereas Jerusalem in her holy days had been of the purest gold. The very streets were full of silver as stones in the days of Solomon. But, alas! it must be now said with the Prophet, *How is the gold become dim how is the most fine gold changed?* 1 Kings 10:27. Lamentations 4:1. Reader! think what a striking representation this is also, in a spiritual sense, in the ruin wrought in our whole nature by the fall! Think also, at the same time, how blessed the change wrought in the circumstances of the Church, in the recovery of His redeemed by the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

EZEKIEL 22:23-31

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (24) Son of man, say unto her, Thou *art* the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. (25) *There is* a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. (26) Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed *difference* between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. (27) Her princes in the midst thereof *are* like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, *and* to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. (28) And her prophets have daubed them with untempered *morter*, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. (29) The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. (30) And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. (31) Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.

The close of this chapter is uncommonly beautiful, if we read it with an eye to JESUS. Many had been the intercessors for perishing sinners in the earlier ages, and all of them were types of CHRIST. *Abraham* interceding for Sodom, Genesis 18:23. &c. *Moses* and *Joshua* for Israel, Exodus 32:31. &c. Joshua 7:6. &c. And *Aaron* in the matter of *Korah*, Numbers 16:47. But here the LORD seems to be on the look-out, as it were, for someone to arise for Israel. Let the Reader turn to the 63rd chapter of Isaiah, and he will find CHRIST making use of the same language; and then taking to himself this great power of redemption. Isaiah 63:5.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a sad catalogue of sins and transgressions hath the Prophet here charged Jerusalem with. Surely to read it, is like the roll of Ezekiel written with *lamentations, and mourning, and woe*. Reader! What an awful state of degeneracy is the heart of men capable of falling into! What a still more awful consideration is it, that this is Israel of whom these things are written!

Precious, precious LORD JESUS! what a relief is it to the souls of thy people, the consideration of thy holiness and thy finished salvation! Didst thou not know, dearest JESUS! when thou didst undertake the redemption of our nature, what polluted, sinful nature it was, and would be? And was not thy love chilled in beholding such vileness? Oh no! *I knew* (thou saidst) *that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb*. And is it so that all this and worse, did not check the workings of thy compassion; but rather made thee, long for the fulness of time, when thou shouldest enter upon thy great work, *to seek and save that which was lost*. Surely then, blessed LORD, thou wilt still have compassion on the poor, wretched, lost, and undone creatures of thy grace and mercy; and wilt save thy Jerusalem sinners from all their filthiness, and from all their idols! Yea, LORD, thou wilt give them a *new heart, and a right spirit wilt thou put within them. Thou wilt be their GOD and they shall be thy people*. Even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 23

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Under the similitude of two adulterous women, the Prophet is here taught to speak of the spiritual fornication of Samaria and Jerusalem. The Prophet sets forth the iniquity at large, and the just displeasure of Israel's GOD upon the occasion.

EZEKIEL 23:1-35

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother: (3) And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. (4) And the names of them *were* Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus *were* their names; Samaria *is* Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah. (5) And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians *her* neighbours, (6) *Which were* clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. (7) Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them *that were* the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted: with all their idols she defiled herself. (8) Neither left she her whoredoms *brought* from Egypt: for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her. (9) Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted. (10) These discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her. (11) And when her sister Aholibah saw *this*, she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she, and in her whoredoms more than her sister in *her* whoredoms. (12) She doted upon the Assyrians *her* neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men. (13) Then I saw that she was defiled, *that they took* both one way, (14) And *that* she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion, (15) Girded with girdles upon their

loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity: (16) And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. (17) And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them. (18) So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister. (19) Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. (20) For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh *is as* the flesh of asses, and whose issue *is like* the issue of horses. (21) Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth. (22) Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side; (23) The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, *and* all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses. (24) And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, *which* shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments. (25) And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire. (26) They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels. (27) Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom *brought* from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more. (28) For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand *of them* whom thou hatest, into the hand *of them* from whom thy mind is alienated: (29) And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms. (30) I will do these *things* unto

thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, *and* because thou art polluted with their idols. (31) Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand. (32) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much. (33) Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria. (34) Thou shalt even drink it and suck *it* out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD. (35) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

The Reader will enter into the beauties of this Chapter, and the design of it also, if he takes with him the consideration all the way along as he reads it, that the whole scope of the Chapter is to set forth the wonderful baseness and stupidity of the LORD's Israel in committing fornication against the LORD. The Reader will not, I should hope, need to be put in mind, that the LORD all along, and in every part of his blessed scripture, is continually expressing his attachment to Israel, under the figure of the marriage state. And while we consider that sweet union of our nature with the person of CHRIST the *SON of GOD*, it will appear, that nothing can be more just and proper. Now then, when the *SON of GOD* by the assumption of our nature, becomes one with his people, for his Church to commit fornication with stocks and stones, and to set up dunghill gods, when brought into covenant relation with the LORD of life and glory; surely such base, worthless, unprincipled conduct, could not but be most glaringly offensive to the LORD GOD. And accordingly we find, not only in this Chapter, but in the writings of other Prophets, with what indignation the LORD speaks of it. See Hosea, Chapters

1, 2, 3 throughout. Jeremiah Chapters 2 & 3 &c. I hope the Reader will not fail to follow up the doctrine as relating to the Gospel Church in the present hour. Is not every one, who calls himself a truly converted soul to GOD in CHRIST, in the present day of the Church in a greater or less degree guilty of the same spiritual fornication, that is, not living wholly to the LORD, in resting altogether for salvation upon the merits, blood, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? To mingle anything with this, or to be looking to any object in a way of salvation but CHRIST, is in the language of this Chapter, to *be doting upon our lovers, whose flesh is the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses*: neither of which can profit or bring advantage. The LORD deliver all his redeemed ones from so dreadful a delusion!

EZEKIEL 23:36-49

The LORD said moreover unto me; Son of man, wilt thou judge Aholah and Aholibah? yea, declare unto them their abominations; (37) That they have committed adultery, and blood *is* in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through *the fire*, to devour *them*. (38) Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. (39) For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house. (40) And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger *was* sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments, (41) And satest upon a stately bed, and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil. (42) And a voice of a multitude being at ease *was* with her: and with the men of the common sort *were* brought Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads. (43) Then said I unto *her that was* old in adulteries, Will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she *with them*? (44)

Yet they went in unto her, as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot: so went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah, the lewd women. (45) And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they *are* adulteresses, and blood *is* in their hands. (46) For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled. (47) And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire. (48) Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness. (49) And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

We have here only a continuation of the same melancholy rehearsal of crimes, of one sister that had been charged also against the *other*. The subject is but one, though lengthened so many verses. I will not unnecessarily swell the pages, and therefore shall add no further comment. It will be a blessed sanctified subject, both to the Writer and Reader, if from the whole our minds are led to the conclusion of the HOLY GHOST by the Apostle; GOD *hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*. Oh! that it may be found, that *where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our LORD*. Romans 11:32. and 5:20, 21.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what are your own views of human nature at large, in reading the sad account of sin and rebellion in this Chapter? And yet more what think you of the Israel of God, in

beholding the baseness here manifested by a professing people to the GOD of Israel? What will any man think of taking confidence in himself, after such views of a fallen nature. Reader! is it not enough to cause every believer to go softly all his days? And will not such humbling representations of nature, serve, through grace, to keep open a perpetual spring of repentance and sorrow in the soul? Will it not prove, under GOD, the best and strongest of all arguments to hide pride from our eyes, and to divorce the heart from all legal frames and self-righteousness? Will it not also prompt the soul to look to GOD continually for grace, that by his HOLY SPIRIT, we may be enabled to *mortify the deeds of the body and live*, in a suitable deportment of holy conversation and godliness? Above all, can anything tend equally to endear CHRIST in all his loveliness, and in all his glory? Oh! precious, precious JESUS! how doth every view of ourselves and all around us, bring home with increasing conviction in the soul, the absolute need we have of thee, and thy great salvation? Oh LORD! let the great improvement of this Chapter, and indeed of all thy Holy Scriptures, be to lead our hearts to thee; to live *upon* thee, to walk *with* thee, and everlastingly to enjoy thee, as the whole sum and substance of all our happiness. Truly blessed Redeemer, thou art indeed the all in all to thy people: and most gracious was it commanded the Church, to call thee by thine adorable name: the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

CHAPTER 24

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By the figure of a pot, the Prophet is commanded to set forth the ruin of Jerusalem. And the Prophet is again made a type to the people, in respect to the not mourning for the death of his wife, to show, that Jerusalem's chastisements merit no sorrow.

EZEKIEL 24:1-2

Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, write thee the name of the day, *even* of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

The Prophet is commanded to be very particular as to the precise day and time of this wonderful transaction. The *ninth* year of the captivity, in the *tenth* month called *Tebeth*; and even the *day* of the month. And this was no doubt with a view to testify the judgment of GOD, in the siege of Jerusalem. For that *Ezekiel* who was now in Babylon, should be able to tell the people there, as he did, what was at that very day going on in Babylon, could proceed from no other than the LORD himself.

EZEKIEL 24:3-14

And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set *it* on, and also pour water into it: (4) Gather the pieces thereof into it, *even* every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill *it* with the choice bones. (5) Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, *and* make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein. (6) Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum *is* therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it. (7) For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; (8) That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be

covered. (9) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great. (10) Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. (11) Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and *that* the filthiness of it may be molten in it, *that* the scum of it may be consumed. (12) She hath wearied *herself* with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum *shall be* in the fire. (13) In thy filthiness *is* lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. (14) I the LORD have spoken *it*: it shall come to pass, and I will do *it*; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

The parable of a boiling pot, with the choice pieces boiled over the fire, and then left to burn, became a very striking representation of the fiery indignation of the LORD against Jerusalem. Her scum had arisen indeed, to an enormous height, for her blood was in the midst of her, as the LORD said. Reader! what painful representations are these! And how increasingly painful, when it be considered that this is spoken of the LORD's Jerusalem. Precious LORD JESUS! how was thy soul melted in the days of thy flesh, when beholding thy Jerusalem, and weeping over it! Luke 13:34, 35.

EZEKIEL 24:15-27

Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (16) Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. (17) Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not *thy* lips, and eat not the bread of men. (18) So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded. (19) And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these *things are* to us, that thou doest *so*? (20) Then I answered them,

The word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (21) Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword. (22) And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover *your* lips, nor eat the bread of men. (23) And your tires *shall be* upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another. (24) Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD. (25) Also, thou son of man, *shall it not be* in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters, (26) *That* he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause *thee* to hear *it* with *thine* ears? (27) In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

See how the LORD is pleased to deal with his faithful servants! Here is a Prophet of the LORD bereaved of one that was near and dear to him; yea, the LORD himself calls her the desire of *Ezekiel's eyes*: a plain proof of his great affection for her. But yet he is not permitted to drop a tear, or to manifest the least token of grief. And all this that both by preaching and by type he might show forth the LORD's displeasure for the sins of his people. And what an awful judgment must it have been, when Jerusalem was thus taken and destroyed by the *Chaldean* army, and when such were the miseries of individuals, that none had power, or privilege, or even opportunity, to weep over one another!

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us for one moment place ourselves in the Prophet's situation, and suppose for the LORD's glory, and the instruction of his Church, such a breach was made in our domestic comforts, as this of *Ezekiel's* by death: how should you or I conduct ourselves? Alas! I fear, unless a full proportioned degree of faith and grace were to accompany the bereaving providence, *Ezekiel's* deportment would mortify ours. And yet, the Prophet lived under a dispensation of the Church, far less blessed with advantages than you or I are blessed with.

It is very blessed when believers can acquiesce, yea, more than acquiesce with the LORD's appointments; and can approve, and even rejoice in them, *Naked*, said one of old, (and a blessed frame of mind must he have been in when he said it,) *naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. the LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the LORD.* Precious JESUS! do thou give both to Writer and Reader, (for the gift is wholly thine to bestow,) grace for every exercise, and for every trial. And to whatever thou art pleased to call us in thy providence, give us suitable frames of mind by thy grace. May we under thy blessed teaching have always the same views of thee, and thy love towards us, whatever outward or inward circumstances may arise in, thy appointments. LORD, give us to hear thy blessed voice in every dispensation, as to thy servant the Prophet; *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

CHAPTER 25

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The subject of Jerusalem and her transgressions is dropped in this Chapter, because the Prophet is directed to set his face against the enemies of Jerusalem, the Ammonites, Moab, Seir, Edom, and the Philistines.

EZEKIEL 25:1-7

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them; (3) And say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity; (4) Behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk. (5) And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couchingplace for flocks: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. (6) For thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast clapped *thine* hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; (7) Behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

We have here the LORD reckoning with other sinful nations. And first with *Ammon*. This people had been a long enemy to Israel, and upon every occasion did all they could to distress them. 2 Samuel 12:26. &c. Here therefore the LORD begins to reckon with *Ammon*. And observe on what account it is done, namely, because they rejoiced in the transgression of Israel, and the LORD's displeasure with Israel. *Aha Aha! so would we have it*; is the language of all carnal men, when gracious souls

transgress and all into sin and trouble. Psalm 35:21. See also the whole prophecy of *Obadiah*.

EZEKIEL 25:8-11

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah *is* like unto all the heathen; (9) Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities *which are* on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Bethjeshimoth, Baalmeon, and Kiriathaim, (10) Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations. (11) And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

Moab comes next to be called to account for her joy at Israel's affliction. The Reader will connect with this account the history of *Moab's* hatred to Israel, when *Balak* hired an enchanter from the East to curse the people of God. And he will not fail to recollect the end of that business. Numbers Chap. 22, 23, & 24.

EZEKIEL 25:12-14

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; (13) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. (14) And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.

Edom, the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob, is the next brought to God's bar, and a solemn judgment and sentence is pronounced upon *Edom*. See, Reader! how plainly the different seeds of nature and grace ran through all the

generations of *Esau* and *Jacob*? Oh! to what can we refer distinguishing mercy but to GOD'S sovereign will and purpose! Malachi 1:2, 3. Romans 9:13-16.

EZEKIEL 25:15-17

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy *it* for the old hatred; (16) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast. (17) And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

Philistia makes up the last brought to judgment in this Chapter, for hatred to GOD'S people; and not the least in the soreness of it. Reader! do not overlook the sweet consolations such reviews hold forth to the LORD'S people, in that, while the LORD corrects his children as a father corrects them; and as proofs of his love, his displeasure is called forth to any, and to every enemy of his people as judgments, who take pleasure in the sorrows of his redeemed, and thwart them with reproaches while smarting under them. Hebrews 12:5-11.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I pray you do not hastily pass away from the perusal of this interesting Chapter. See! how the LORD takes notice of his people, even in those seasons, when for their backslidings, one might be prompted to fear the LORD took no part with them. Israel was at this time under chastisement, yea, heavy affliction. But will their enemies insult them in their misery? Will they rejoice when Israel profanes the LORD'S sanctuary: or feel glad when Israel's land lays desolate, and

the house of Judah is gone into captivity? Surely the LORD seeth the enemies triumph, and heareth their reproaches. JESUS takes up the quarrel as directed against himself, and woe to all such oppressors when He ariseth! Hear how the LORD, by another Prophet, undertakes for his afflicted ones, and reproveth the enemy for their sakes. *Shall I not*, saith the LORD (by Obadiah the Prophet) *in that day, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mouth of Esau? For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.* Reader! it is very blessed and most gracious, to find the LORD taking part with his redeemed against all their oppressors; and though He corrects them himself, they shall not be corrected by others uncommissioned by him. *Whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye.* Precious LORD JESUS! give thy people grace to see, and rightly to value their union and oneness with thee; and that even in their distresses for sin, and under thy displeasure, thou wilt not suffer the enemy to triumph; but wilt condemn every tongue that riseth against them in judgment; *for this is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.* Amen.

CHAPTER 26

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This Chapter, as well as the two which follow, contains the LORD's judgment upon Tyre, and upon the same account, her rejoicing in the afflictions of GOD's Israel. The King of Babylon is decreed to become the scourge of Tyre.

EZEKIEL 26:1-6

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken *that was* the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, *now* she is laid waste: (3) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. (4) And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. (5) It shall be *a place for* the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations. (6) And her daughters which *are* in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

That the Prophecy of *Ezekiel hath* a reference to events greater than the deliverance of Israel from Babylon is granted by almost all writers, both Jews and Gentiles, And hence, various have been the attempts of men to unfold and explain this scripture. *Tyre* particularly hath been considered, as spiritually referring to the latter ages of the Church; and while the Prophet, in the first and literal sense, had his eye on the events of the Babylonish captivity, somewhat of an higher nature is supposed to be included, as referring to the latter day under the Gospel dispensation. Be this however as it may, it is very evident that this Chapter is delivered with peculiar reference to the Babylonish captivity.

EZEKIEL 26:7-14

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. (8) He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. (9) And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his

axes he shall break down thy towers. (10) By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. (11) With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground. (12) And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. (13) And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. (14) And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be *a place* to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD.

I beg the Reader not to be alarmed, at the title here given to the Chaldean monarch. By a King of Kings, means no more than that by his victories, he had many Kings in tribute to him. The LORD was pleased to make use of this man, as he doth in numberless instances besides, as a suitable instrument for the accomplishing of his purpose. More than probable, yea, almost certain it may be said, Nebuchadrezzar had no consciousness who it was that led him on, and whose instrument he was, for humbling the LORD's people, and correcting other nations. Reader! it is very blessed, and very profitable to be setting the LORD always before us, and never to lose sight of that great truth: that *He it is that doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?* Daniel 4:35.

EZEKIEL 26:15-21

Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? (16) Then all the princes of the sea

shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at *every* moment, and be astonished at thee. (17) And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, *that wast* inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror *to be* on all that haunt it! (18) Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that *are* in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. (19) For thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; (20) When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; (21) I will make thee a terror, and thou *shalt be* no *more*: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.

Those that favor the idea of *mystic* Tyre being here spoken of, and not *ancient* Tyre, (which could never be so considerable in point of commerce and of riches,) conclude, that what is here spoken refers to that glorious era of the Church, when the LORD shall bring again his people. It is very probable, that the HOLY GHOST by the Prophet's ministry, directs the Church to this contemplation. The *great slaughter* to be made in Tyre; and the *cry of the wounded*; and the *Princes of the Sea*, coming down from their thrones to *clothe themselves with trembling*, and to *take up a lamentation*; these are no doubt most striking features of some very horrible visitation, and to some great maritime power. But what nation is here meant, I do not presume to say. The LORD in his own time will reveal; and that is consolation enough for the faithful in CHRIST JESUS. *Say ye to the righteous that it*

shall be well with him. Isaiah 3:10. This, let every real, regenerated follower of the LORD JESUS, carry in his bosom; and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to engrave the truth of it upon his heart. One point, here predicted, is abundantly plain, and in which I would wish the Reader to be more earnestly interested; namely, that when this mystic Tyre is brought down to the ground, then the LORD saith, *I shall set glory in the land of the living.* And what is JEHOVAH'S glory, but JEHOVAH'S CHRIST? the one only ordinance of heaven, for salvation, to his Church and people. And who are the living, but those who are regenerated, and become new creatures in CHRIST? Reader! let no man deceive you. *He that hath the SON! hath life: and he that hath not the SON of GOD, hath not life.* 1 John 5:12. Nothing short of the new birth, the *new* life, *hid with CHRIST in GOD*, will avail *in* that day, when GOD riseth to shake terribly the earth, (or what is the same thing to every individual as it concerns his own everlasting welfare,) the day of every man's death will determine for him finally and fully, whose he is, and to whom he belongs. Reader! are you in that blessed state now? Hath the LORD, as it concerns *you*, set glory in the land of the living? Is CHRIST formed in *you*, the hope of glory? Oh! precious testimony of GOD the HOLY GHOST, when witnessing with our spirits, that we are children of GOD. So that we can, and do, bear witness also, to that soul comforting truth, *Thy GOD, thy glory!* Isaiah 60:19.

REFLECTIONS

OH! Eternal SPIRIT, who by thy servant the Prophet, hath here brought us into visions of GOD! condescend blessed LORD, to be our Guide and Teacher in them: If by the *Tyre here*

spoken of as an enemy to the Church, we are to consider the ancient Tyre the foe to Israel, we bless thee, O LORD, for thus showing thy people how graciously thou hast always watched over them for good, notwithstanding their unworthiness; and considered the injuries shown to them, as directed against thyself. And if LORD, this prophecy hath a further reference to the after dispensations in thy Church; and this becomes some *mystic Tyre*, that shall be thrown down, and thy Church triumph over her, when *thou shalt set glory in the land of the living*; give, gracious LORD, wisdom, both to him that writes and to him that reads, humbly to wait at thy footstool, thy revelations, in their due season; and never presume to be wise above what is written. Grant Holy LORD, all suited and becoming grace to this purpose, and make the heart of each infinitely more studious, to be found among thy faithful people, when *thou shalt set glory in the land of the living*, than to be among the wise and prudent in their own conceit, from whom divine things are hidden. Oh! precious, precious JESUS! be it our one only desire, to be found in thee: that *when the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning*; it may be our portion *to be found written, among the living in Jerusalem!* Amen.

CHAPTER 27

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The subject of the former Chapter is continued through this, relating to the fall of Tyre. Her riches, and vast trade, are

described, and the Chapter closeth with an account of her humblings.

EZEKIEL 27:1-3

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, (2) Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus; (3) And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, *which art a merchant of the people for many isles*, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I *am* of perfect beauty.

It was said in the preceding Chapter, (verse 6,) that *Tyrus* should know by the LORD's judgments, that He was the LORD. In this Chapter, the LORD commands his servant to put *Tyrus* in mind of her pride, and of her impious saying, that she was a perfect beauty. And this seems to be done with a view, that after describing her greatness as a nation, she might then be led to see the cause of her humblings, in her pride and cruelty to the LORD's people. Whether the chief scope of this prophecy be intended for ancient history, at the time of the Babylonian captivity; or whether it hath respect to modern times, and this Tyre be mystical of some great maritime nation, I presume not to say. The situation of Tyre, as is here said, being *at the entrance of the sea*, might prompt one to suppose it had relation to some *European* power, if the prophecy hath a remote aspect to the times of the gospel. In this case it might be very easy for the imagination to form conjectures, and to fix it to some one of the great continental powers under the Romish superstition, which have been always, like Tyre of old, enemies to God's true Israel. But here a great difficulty ariseth, because in the following chapter (which is *a continuation of Tyre's history*) Tyre is said to have been *perfect in her ways, from the day that she was created, till iniquity was found in her*, (verse 15.) And this never could

be said of the Church of Rome, in any one period of it. To go back to the days of the Apostles for purity respecting Rome, and because *Clement*, one of the first bishops of Rome, is said to have had his name *written in the book of life*, (Philippians 4:3.) to fancy that this referred to this perfect state of Tyre, is a farfetched supposition, and a most improbable, founded, and unwarrantable, conclusion. It would be more suitable to the general plan of GOD'S government, who concerning his prophecies hath for the most part, if not invariably, been pleased to throw a veil over them, to keep men from penetrating into them, until the things predicted are fulfilled; and then, both the prediction and accomplishment, are found to be exactly corresponding. I fear that all bold conjectures concerning the LORD'S prophecies, which have been intruded upon the world, have not been sent forth under the teaching and direction of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And if they carry not that blessed testimony with them, they must be bold indeed. I would therefore recommend the Reader to take the word of the LORD as he finds it: and here in the instance of Tyre to receive it in the simplicity and truth of the relation. Tyre is represented as a proud, rich, and flourishing state. Tyre is said to have been lifted up with it: and Tyre is to be humbled. Here we cannot err. Pride and sin will bring down the LORD'S judgments on any nation, and on every nation. And as Tyre is before said to have oppressed Israel, here becomes the crying sin, for that she must be overthrown. Any, and every kingdom that comes up to those characters, may tremble in reading the threatened ruin of Tyre.

EZEKIEL 27:4-36

Thy borders *are* in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. (5) They have made all thy *ship* boards of

fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee. (6) *Of* the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches *of* ivory, *brought* out of the isles of Chittim. (7) Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee. (8) The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise *men*, O Tyrus, *that were* in thee, were thy pilots. (9) The ancients of Gebal and the wise *men* thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise. (10) They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness. (11) The men of Arvad with thine army *were* upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect. (12) Tarshish *was* thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all *kind of* riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs. (13) Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they *were* thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market. (14) They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules. (15) The men of Dedan *were* thy merchants; many isles *were* the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee *for* a present horns of ivory and ebony. (16) Syria *was* thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate. (17) Judah, and the land of Israel, they *were* thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm. (18) Damascus *was* thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool. (19) Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market. (20) Dedan *was* thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots. (21) Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these *were they* thy merchants. (22) The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they *were* thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold. (23) Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, *were* thy merchants. (24) These *were* thy merchants

in all sorts *of things*, in blue clothes, and broided work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise. (25) The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas. (26) Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas. (27) Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that *are* in thee, and in all thy company which *is* in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin. (28) The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots. (29) And all that handle the oar, the mariners, *and* all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land; (30) And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes: (31) And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart *and* bitter wailing. (32) And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, *saying*, What *city is* like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? (33) When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise. (34) In the time *when* thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall. (35) All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in *their* countenance. (36) The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt be* any more.

I have not interrupted the reading of the whole Chapter, for from the beginning to the close of the Chapter, it is but one and the same subject. The riches, trade, and commerce of *Tyrus*, fills the whole of the verses. The Reader will find cause on the perusal to lament, as the Prophet was commanded to do, that a place abounding with so many blessings, should have abounded also with so much sin. But alas! what is

human nature universally considered in the present fallen state!

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this Chapter, and remark the transitory state of everything earthly! What are become of all the great monarchies of the world? They, who made so great a noise, and boasted in their day, in giving laws to the world! Alas! the flood of time hath passed over them, and washed them all away!

Reader! in a view of such changeable, fluctuating circumstances of human life; shall not you and I look unto Him, who is the same *yesterday, and today, and forever!* Precious LORD JESUS! how blessed to my thoughts is it, that thy love, and thy salvation are unchangeably, and for ever the same. Though nations and empires rise and fall, and everything earthly is given to change, JESUS and his great salvation is forever, and his righteousness that which cannot be abolished. Sweet is that scripture, *The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.*

CHAPTER 28

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The same subject, concerning the LORD'S judgment upon Tyrus is prosecuted in this chapter, until, towards the end, Zidon also is arraigned at GOD'S tribunal.

EZEKIEL 28:1-10

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart *is* lifted up, and thou hast said, I *am* a God, I sit *in* the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou *art* a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: (3) Behold, thou *art* wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: (4) With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: (5) By thy great wisdom *and* by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: (6) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; (7) Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. (8) They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of *them that are* slain in the midst of the seas. (9) Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I *am* God? but thou *shalt be* a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. (10) Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD.

We have here the continuation of the sad overthrow of Tyre. The Prince of *Tyre* is particularly noticed, and his daring impiety pointed at. There are no leading characters to discover to whom, or to what period of the Church, this history of *Tyrus* and her prince refers, if we look for an explanation beyond the period of the *Babylonish* captivity. Indeed, as the LORD in this and the preceding chapters, as well as in several that follow, is pronouncing judgment upon many of the kingdoms of the earth, there can be no reason for singling out one more than another, to suppose it hath a reference to some nation in particular. It is sufficient for our purpose of improvement to learn from hence, that the LORD will reckon, sooner or later, with *all* nations, and especially with those that oppress his people.

EZEKIEL 28:11-19

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (12) Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. (13) Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. (14) Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *sø*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. (15) Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. (16) By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. (17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. (18) Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. (19) All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt* thou *be* any more.

From this passage I should be inclined to think that *Tyrus* is a figure of human nature in general, rather than referring to any one nation in particular; for of what one kingdom upon earth can it be said, that they were perfect in their ways from the day of creation, but of our nature generally speaking. To make application of it to any nation would be to contradict scripture. Those who would refer it to Papal Rome should seriously consider, that never, at any one period, could such things be said of her. To say, that she hath thrown down her altars, and defiled her sanctuaries, would be to give her what

she never had — altars and sanctuaries. CHRIST is the only New Testament altar, and the true sanctuary of his people.

EZEKIEL 28:20-23

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (21) Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, (22) And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. (23) For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

The judgment upon *Zidon* is but short; but that one single passage in it is enough: *Behold I am against thee, O Zidon, saith the LORD GOD!*

EZEKIEL 28:24-26

And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor *any* grieving thorn of all *that are* round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD. (25) Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. (26) And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God.

These are very sweet promises to Israel with which the chapter closeth, and plainly refer to the restoration of the LORD's ancient people. But how or when the LORD will gather them in; whether by instruments the LORD will work in the accomplishment, or by some miraculous interposition of his

own; nothing in scripture authorizeth us to determine. Certain it is, that the call of the Jews in the last day dispensation will be a glorious manifestation of GOD; and perhaps the work will be greater in the display of it, than the first bringing the Church out of Egypt, for then they were altogether, but now are scattered and dispersed over the whole earth. LORD! hasten in thine own time the mercy *when the Redeemer shall rise out of zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

REFLECTIONS

READER! among the several improvements to gather from this chapter, that is not the least which ariseth from the consideration, how dear Israel must be to the LORD, for whom, and on whose account the LORD thus chastiseth Israel's enemies. The LORD may, and the LORD will, correct Israel for her backsliding; but, in the midst of all, he will not suffer the foe of his redeemed to triumph. *I said* (said the LORD) *I would scatter them into corners; I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men; were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this.* Oh! how blessed is it to hear the LORD thus speak! And, Reader! if the LORD so loves his people, and so protects them, notwithstanding all their unworthiness, how ought the people to love the LORD, and delight to adore his distinguishing grace, in such unparalleled mercy. Well might David exclaim, under a deep sense of this, *Who am I, O LORD GOD, and what is my house, that thou has brought me hitherto?* Praised be the LORD for *his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 29

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In this chapter comes in the threatened overthrow of Egypt. The LORD is reckoning with the nations, and Israel's ancient foe must not go unpunished.

EZEKIEL 29:1-12

In the tenth year, in the tenth *month*, in the twelfth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: (3) Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river *is* mine own, and I have made *it* for myself. (4) But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. (5) And I will leave thee *thrown* into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven. (6) And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I *am* the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. (7) When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand. (8) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee. (9) And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD: because he hath said, The river *is* mine, and I have made *it*. (10) Behold, therefore I *am* against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste *and* desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. (11) No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. (12) And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries *that are* desolate, and her cities among the cities

that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

Here are sad things to be done for the humbling of Egypt, and which GOD will certainly accomplish. But what I particularly beg the Reader to observe, because it is indeed the general cause the LORD assigns for his judgments upon those various nations, is, that it is to punish Egypt for the having done evil to his people. *They have been*, saith the LORD, *a staff of reed to the house of Israel*. The Reader will not need, I should hope, any observation from me to show the importance of this doctrine, neither the graciousness of it. Here again, as before, I beg the Reader to make a right calculation, if he can, of the greatness of the mercy.

EZEKIEL 29:13-16

Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: (14) And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return *into* the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. (15) It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations. (16) And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth *their* iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

Remark, I pray you, Reader, the blessedness of this promise. Egypt, as a Gentile nation, is to be gathered; and though ever after she is to be kept in the greatest humbleness, yea, as a *base nation*, but this seems to be spoken of as no disadvantage, it is blessed to be vile in our own eyes, if lovely in CHRIST JESUS before GOD. *For GOD hath chosen base things*

of the world, and things which are despised, to bring to nought things that are. 1 Corinthians 1:28. Read that sweet promise, Isaiah 19:18-25.

EZEKIEL 29:17-21

And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first *month*, in the first *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (18) Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head *was* made bald, and every shoulder *was* peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: (19) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. (20) I have given him the land of Egypt *for* his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD. (21) In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

There was a long interval, even of seventeen years, between the first part of this chapter and the prophecy here delivered, and it should seem to have been the last of *Ezekiel's* prophecies. But there is certainly a great reason for its being placed here, because it is a confirmation of what was said before, so that the prediction and fulfillment of it might be read together. Reader! how beautiful and blessed the chapter ends. Is it not a gracious promise concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Who but CHRIST can be said to be the horn of his people? And what is the opening of the mouth, spiritually considered, but the LORD JESUS bringing redemption to his Church? Precious JESUS! well may thy people so often join in holy *Zacharias's* hymn, and say with him, *Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people,*

and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. Luke 1:68, 69.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold Egypt here humbled for all her sins, and all her oppressions over Israel. Think how long and grievous were her cruelties exercised over the LORD's heritage! But her time is come, and *woe to the oppressor when GOD ariseth.* Oh! how sure and certain it is, that JESUS will account with all the enemies of his people; sooner or later the LORD will recompense sevenfold into their bosom.

Reader! do not overlook, however, GOD'S grace in man's humblings. If Egypt be visited by grace, Egypt shall be brought from her captivity. The LORD can, and the LORD hath said he will, raise up an altar to the LORD in the midst of Egypt: and when they cry by reason of the oppressors, the LORD will send them *a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.* Precious LORD JESUS! what may we not hope from thee and thy great salvation? When the LORD JEHOVAH causeth the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and JESUS shall arise to bless his redeemed, then shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of Hosts shall bless, saying, *Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of mine hands, and Israel mine inheritance!* Amen.

CHAPTER 30

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Here is still the ruin of Egypt described, and those who come to her help. The LORD promiseth to strengthen the arm of Babylon for Egypt's destruction.

EZEKIEL 30:1-5

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! (3) For the day *is* near, even the day of the LORD *is* near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen. (4) And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. (5) Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

The language is very solemn, and the subject very affecting. Indeed the horrors of war in any and every nation are enough to make all men howl, and cry *woe worth the day*.

EZEKIEL 30:6-19

Thus saith the LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord GOD. (7) And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries *that are* desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities *that are* wasted. (8) And they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and *when* all her helpers shall be destroyed. (9) In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh. (10) Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. (11) He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. (12) And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken *it*. (13) Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also

destroy the idols, and I will cause *their* images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. (14) And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No. (15) And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No. (16) And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph *shall have* distresses daily. (17) The young men of Aven and of Pibeseth shall fall by the sword: and these *cities* shall go into captivity. (18) At Tehaphnehes also the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity. (19) Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

The LORD's anger will be excited against all that come to the help of Egypt; for this is rebellion against the LORD. Reader! it is an awful thing to be found fighting against GOD. When good King *Josiah* went up to *Megiddo* to battle in an unjust cause, though admonished to the contrary, he was punished with death. See 2 Chronicles 35:20. to the end. In a spiritual sense, to be found opposing the LORD in his gospel, what an alarming thing!

EZEKIEL 30:20-26

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *month*, in the seventh *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (21) Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword. (22) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand. (23) And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. (24) And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him

with the groanings of a deadly wounded *man*. (25) But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt. (26) And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

The subject of Egypt takes up another sermon of the Prophet, and at a distant period from the former; which may serve to teach us how sure the word of the LORD is, and that no word gone out of his mouth can fall to the ground. *Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Numbers 23:19.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, over this chapter, and connect with it the former; and learn from both the sure and certain purposes of the LORD in their accomplishment. When we thus view the LORD JEHOVAH going forth to punish the nations, and especially with an eye for the injuries done to his people, what a solemn representation doth it afford of the sovereignty of God? Oh! could we but learn more humbly to bend before the just and all-wise decision of the LORD, in his dispensations both of men and things, how differently would be our estimate of right and wrong to what it now is? Here, in this chapter as well as in several others around, we behold the LORD's jealousy for his people in the punishment of the nations; in all which we ought to mark his sovereignty, and to bow down implicitly before it. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Wherefore and whence his dispensations are so directed? why CHRIST, his great gift, is held forth to one nation with a full,

free, and extended hand, while others know not the LORD, nor the operation of his hand? who shall take upon him to determine? *It is the LORD*, (said an ancient deeply-exercised soul, under the heaviest afflictions,) *let him do what seemeth him good*. This was enough to stop all complaints. He adds no more. Blessed LORD! give me grace in the reading of thy judgments, and, marking thy mercies, to learn, like David, to sing of both, and to direct my song to thee. For sure I am thy glory is in all; and when this is the object to be attained, Egypt's destruction or Israel's deliverance, must be right. Again I say, *Shall not the Judge of the earth do right?*

CHAPTER 31

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The Prophet is still discoursing concerning Egypt. The great monarchy of Assyria is brought forward by way of illustrating, that as Nineveh fell, so shall Egypt.

EZEKIEL 31:1-9

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third *month*, in the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness? (3) Behold, the Assyrian *was* a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. (4) The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. (5) Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. (6) All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young,

and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. (7) Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. (8) The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. (9) I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that *were* in the garden of God, envied him.

It is worthy the Reader's remark, that while the LORD is chastising his own people, the rod is exercised over numbers of the surrounding nations. We have here the humbling of Egypt still threatened, as in the preceding chapters, and a great humbling it should seem to have been. In order to set it forth more fully, the Prophet is commissioned to state how the King of Assyria had been brought down, and to say that such should be the ruin of Egypt. The date of the Prophet's sermon is marked, by way of ascertaining more clearly the certainty of the thing itself. I hope the Reader, in going over those histories of the overthrow of nations, will not fail to connect with them the instruction they bring spiritually. Our whole nature, like those nations, is exposed to the just displeasure of Almighty GOD. But the gracious interposition of the LORD JESUS becomes the salvation of his redeemed.

EZEKIEL 31:10-18

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; (11) I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness. (12) And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. (13) Upon his ruin shall

all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: (14) To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit. (15) Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. (16) I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. (17) They also went down into hell with him unto *them that be slain with the sword*; and *they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen*. (18) To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with *them that be slain by the sword*. This *is Pharaoh* and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Nothing can be more highly figurative than what is here said, and nothing more beautiful and exact in description. Who is this mighty Monarch of *Assyria*, or of *Egypt*, but the proud foes of Israel? and who shall be our peace *when the Assyrian comes into our land*, but JESUS? Micah 5:5. I charge it upon the Reader's mind, as I pray for grace to keep the same in my own, that in all the destruction of nations, the LORD hath an eye to his people. Not indeed, as Moses told Israel, for their righteousness, but for the LORD's glory, and to magnify his covenant love and faithfulness through every dispensation. Reader! it is most blessed to see this, and to trace it in all the several parts of the word of GOD. Deuteronomy 9:4-6.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is hardly possible to read of the LORD's judgments of other nations, and of his tenderness to Israel, without being struck with astonishment at all we meet with concerning his distinguishing mercy and favor. Well might the people be called, *a people that dwell alone, and who should not be reckoned among the nations*. For we find marks and evidences of this distinguishing peculiarity of the LORD's chosen through all the Bible. They dwell alone from the very first notice taken of them in the written word, in GOD the FATHER's gracious purpose, council, and will; in GOD the SON's attachment to them, regard for them, and union with them; and in GOD the HOLY GHOST's bringing them to the knowledge, love, and enjoyment, of their singular character, as *not reckoned among the nations*. And, Reader! when you consider the fewness, the littleness, and personal poverty of Israel, and contrast their state with what is here said in this chapter of the grandeur and earthly glory both of *Egypt* and *Assyria*, what an amazing thought it awakens of the glory and grace of a covenant GOD in CHRIST? Reader! let us look up for every suited grace to follow up the blessed and merciful appointments of our GOD; and since the LORD's Israel *dwell alone*, may it be our desire and study to dwell indeed alone, by keeping aloof from all unnecessary acquaintance and connection with a world in whose friendship and interest we are not reckoned. Precious LORD JESUS! be it my portion to be living only to thee and to thy service, that every one may know whose I am, and whom I serve; that being redeemed from among men, and bought with a price, I may glorify *the LORD in my body, and in my spirit, which are his*, Amen.

CHAPTER 32

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This chapter is but a continuation of the former. The burden of it is still Egypt, for whom the Prophet is commanded to take up a lamentation.

EZEKIEL 32:1-16

And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou *art* as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers. (3) Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net. (4) Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee. (5) And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. (6) I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest, *even* to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee. (7) And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. (8) All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD. (9) I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known. (10) Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at *every* moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall. (11) For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee. (12) By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall, the terrible of the nations, all of them: and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed. (13) I will destroy also all

the beasts thereof from beside the great waters; neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them. (14) Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD. (15) When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I *am* the LORD. (16) This *is* the lamentation wherewith they shall lament her: the daughters of the nations shall lament her: they shall lament for her, *even* for Egypt, and for all her multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

I cannot but believe, though the thing is not plainly revealed, that the LORD hath in this place a spiritual meaning, and which is principally intended by these scriptures. Surely *Ezekiel* ministry would not be directed, in so large a part of it, to the relation of other nations in their sins, and judgment, and punishment, but with an eye to the people of GOD for their improvement from them. And what can open an higher improvement than spiritually to contemplate the destruction of all those monarchies for the rejection of GOD'S covenant in CHRIST? Indeed, from what is said in the book of the Revelation by St. John, we have some authority to look at the subject at least under this view, though not perhaps enough to draw positive conclusions therefrom. There we read that *the court which is without the temple is given to the Gentiles, and the holy city they were to tread under feet forty and two months*. And as the same scripture proceeds to tell us, that this great city *is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt*, we cannot but be led to conclude, that somewhat of this nature is intended from these scriptures. Revelation 11:2-8. And still more from what is said to be the general intention of the LORD in those chastisements of Egypt, namely, that when the LORD hath made Egypt desolate, and smitten all them that dwell therein, *then* (he saith) *shall they know that I am the LORD*. It

should seem to be the ultimate object of all visitations, that when Israel is gathered, the Gentile Church also shall be called. So speaks the LORD by the Prophet Isaiah: *The Gentiles shall come to thy (Church's) light, (in JESUS,) and kings to the brightness of thy rising.* Isaiah 60:3. Indeed the whole purport of prophecy is to this effect. Isaiah 2:2-4. Isaiah 4:1. &c. Haggai 2:6, 7. &c.

EZEKIEL 32:17-32

It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (18) Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, *even* her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit. (19) Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised. (20) They shall fall in the midst of *them that are* slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword: draw her and all her multitudes. (21) The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword. (22) Asshur *is* there and all her company: his graves *are* about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword: (23) Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living. (24) There *is* Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit. (25) They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves *are* round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of *them that be* slain. (26) There *is* Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves *are* round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living. (27) And they shall not lie with the mighty *that are* fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their

weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though *they were* the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. (28) Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie with *them that are* slain with the sword. (29) There *is* Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which with their might are laid by *them that were* slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit. (30) There *be* the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with *them that be* slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit. (31) Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, *even* Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD. (32) For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with *them that are* slain with the sword, *even* Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

The Prophet seems here to be closing the subject of the humiliation of men and princes, with all the great ones of the earth; and therefore includes in one and the same view the *Egyptian*, the *Assyrian*, and the *Persian* monarchies. *Edom* and the children of *Zidon*, all alike must fall before CHRIST and his people, and all go down into the grave of hell together, unless grace saves in the hour of visitation, by turning the heart to seek salvation in JESUS. The Psalmist long before had it in commission to admonish them to behold and bend the knee to JEHOVAH'S King, whom the LORD had set upon his holy hill of Zion. *Be wise now therefore, (said the Psalmist), O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the SON, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Psalm 2 throughout.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause, as the Prophet himself hath done, in closing this Chapter. He here finisheth his judgments upon the several nations around, and in the next Chapter, we find him returning to the instruction of Israel. Before we follow him to that service, let us look back, and in a short collected point of view, ponder over those solemn judgments of the LORD determined upon the heathen.

Sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin. This is the unalterable declaration of scripture. So that whenever sin be found, death must follow: temporal death, spiritual death, eternal death, *Death*, (saith the same authority) *passeth upon all men, because all have sinned.* Hence, where-ever sin is found, unless done away in CHRIST, there must be *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* Pause over the subject; and with these solemn scriptures in view, read over the whole that the Prophet hath said in this, and the many preceding Chapters, concerning the condemnation of the ungodly. Reader, may GOD the HOLY GHOST accompany by his Almighty teaching, both your perusal, and mine, of these solemn events. And from the uniform correspondence of scripture on those momentous things may both learn awfully to reverence the striking decrees of GOD. Here we find the LORD speaking in the same, or similar language, by his servant the Prophet *Ezekiel*, as in another scripture he doth by his servant the Apostle *John*. Here the LORD declares, that he will *cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark;*

that *many people shall be amazed, and their kings shall be horribly afraid.* And *there* the LORD saith, that *the sun shall become black as sackcloth, the moon shall be as blood, and the stars of heaven shall fall upon the earth.* And *the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men; and every bond man, and every free man, shall call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the LAMB.* Precious, precious LORD JESUS! grant to him that reads, and to him that writes, grace to know thee in thy love, and in thy great salvation, that when the LORD shall arise to shake terribly the earth, we may be found everlastingly safe in thee, as *the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!* Amen.

CHAPTER 33

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Under the figure of a Watchman, the LORD sets forth the duty of his Servants; in the blessed consequence of their giving warning, and the awful consequence if they neglect it.

EZEKIEL 33:1-9

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: (3) If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; (4) Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. (5) He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. (6) But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet,

and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. (7) So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. (8) When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. (9) Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

The Prophet here draws the figure of a watchman, and points out the distinguishing features of his office. After which, the LORD declares that he had set *Ezekiel* in this Character, to the house of Israel: and most solemnly admonisheth him of the great responsibility of the charge. And as the blood of souls becomes infinitely more important in this high trust, than the watchman of a city or garrison, in warning the people entrusted to him of the danger of their bodies; the subject riseth to an higher degree of magnitude. With what holy fear and trembling, if this thought were duly considered, would the spiritual watchmen in the Church of JESUS, enter into the priesthood! And how would all such cry aloud, and spare not, in admonishing sinners of their danger, and holding up CHRIST as the only city of refuge for the manslayer to flee to, who by sin had murdered his own soul!

EZEKIEL 33:10-20

Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins *be* upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? (11) Say unto them, *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (12) Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the

children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth. (13) When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. (14) Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; (15) *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. (16) None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. (17) Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. (18) When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. (19) But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. (20) Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.

That I may not swell the bulk of this Commentary more than necessary, I refer the Reader to the observations made on the 18th Chapter of this same prophecy, from the 23rd verse to the end; for the scripture itself is much to the same purport in both Chapters, and the remarks there made will for the most part be equally applicable to these verses here.

EZEKIEL 33:21-29

And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, *that* one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten. (22) Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb. (23) Then the word of the

LORD came unto me, saying, (24) Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we *are* many; the land is given us for inheritance. (25) Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land? (26) Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land? (27) Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; *As* I live, surely they that *are* in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that *is* in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that *be* in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence. (28) For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through. (29) Then shall they know that I *am* the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed.

By comparing what the Prophet *Jeremiah*, in his history of the Church hath recorded, with what is here written, we discover that it was a whole year, and more, from the destruction of Jerusalem to *Ezekiel's* knowing it. See Jeremiah 52:4-14. I desire the Reader to turn to the 24th Chapter, verses 24 to the end, as he reads what is here said. The LORD there promised *Ezekiel*, that he would send a Messenger to him when Jerusalem was overthrown; and that then the LORD would open his mouth. See here the accomplishment. How faithful is GOD to his promises! But I beg the Reader also to remark, the graciousness of the LORD, even in his judgments. *They shall know that I am the LORD*. This seems to be the great design, and the general close of all the LORD's dispensation, both in mercy and judgment. His people shall behold his hand in grace. His enemies shall discover the LORD's hand in judgment! Reader! is it not the same now? Doth not GOD the

HOLY GHOST in his divine office, *convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment!* John 16:8.

EZEKIEL 33:30-33

Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. (31) And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee *as my people*, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, *but* their heart goeth after their covetousness. (32) And, lo, thou *art* unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. (33) And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

Had the Prophet *Ezekiel* lived in the present day of the Church, it is highly probable he would have experienced much the same treatment now as then. Who so abused behind his back, as a faithful servant of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? What bitterness can equal the gall of the carnal heart, against the distinguishing truths of the gospel? Men may preach anything, yea everything, if they keep in the back ground CHRIST and his cross; CHRIST and his glory. But all hell is up in arms, when the blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST are insisted upon as the *only* means of salvation. Reader! make your own observation of this, as you go through life, and you will find it universally true. Do observe, however, though the talk both *by walls and in houses*, was all against the poor Prophet; yet they still find it necessary to attend his preaching. It is probable *Ezekiel* did not know that they were so ill disposed as to talk against him, but the LORD will show him of it. Sweet thought to a faithful servant of JESUS! To such

an one. I would say, from this scripture, remember JESUS knows all you go through, and observes all the conduct of your opposers! And, Reader! observe further, this very people were obliged to confess, that there was great power, and great sweetness, in the Prophet's discourses. Is it not to be concluded in the last day, that the condemnation of mere professors will arise from this very circumstance, and GOD'S own word will be their own condemnation? John 12:47, 48.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! How can I hear or read of a watchman to the house of Israel, without having my soul led out to the contemplation of thine unequalled love and mercy to the souls of thy redeemed, when thou camest to watch over thy fold and flock, lest Satan should surprise them, and carry them away. Thou hast indeed, blessed LORD, set watchmen upon the walls of thy Zion. Oh! LORD make them faithful to GOD, and to souls, that *they may never hold their peace day nor night; and give the LORD no rest nor peace, until that thou hast made Jerusalem a praise in the earth!* But blessed JESUS! in vain do men build the house, except the LORD be both the foundation, and the builder! In vain do watchmen take their stand by night, except thou, O LORD, shalt keep the city. Oh! then Almighty Watchman and Keeper of thy people! Do not I behold thee, in the glories of thy person, GOD-MAN-mediator, set up from everlasting? Do I not trace thy daily love, and nightly vigilance, in all the goings forth for the salvation of thy people? Yea, precious JESUS, are not the goings of my GOD and king to be seen in his sanctuary? Who but JESUS is set forth in all the Old Testament promises, types, and shadows?

And who but JESUS is manifested in all the New Testament fulfillment, in the everlasting realities of grace and salvation? A watchman art thou not, O LORD, in watching over thy Church, who never slumberest nor sleepest? And didst thou not take this office when thou camest up at the call of God thy FATHER, in thine incarnation? And in all that pertains to redemption-work, thou and thou only, art the great watchman, the standard, the ensign for war, against sin, death, and hell; all of whom thou hast conquered! Precious LORD! watch over me I beseech thee for good; and may I never lose sight of thy watchfulness; so that I may cry out with one of old, *the LORD is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation.*

CHAPTER 34

CONTENTS

The Prophet is here again instructing the Church by figure, in representing the unfaithfulness of the Shepherds who neglect the LORD'S fold, and the faithfulness of JESUS the first Shepherd, who layeth down his life for his sheep. The subject under this similitude, runs through the whole Chapter.

EZEKIEL 34:1-6

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? (3) Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. (4) The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven

away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. (5) And they were scattered, because *there is* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. (6) My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*.

This Chapter begins with a woe, and an awful charge follows. Who are particularly meant here by the Shepherds, is not said; perhaps both Priests and Levites; the Elders, and all that had a charge; (for at this time the government had no prince) and the people were in captivity. The HOLY GHOST indeed hath given no date to this Sermon; but as it was delivered by *Ezekiel*, it must have been while the Church was in Babylon. Perhaps the HOLY GHOST was pleased to have it handed down to the Church without a date, on purpose that it might suit shepherds of every generation. Reader! look at GOD'S charge of unfaithful shepherds, and tremble! They are said to feed themselves, but not the flock. They are charged with neglecting the diseased of the fold; and even with force and cruelty to be ruling over them. They are said to be altogether inattentive to poor strayed sheep and wanderers, and never to search nor seek after them. Reader! awfully ponder these things. But do not fail while noticing the worthlessness of men, to observe the tender mercy of the LORD. The poor, diseased, neglected, and even wandering and scattered sheep, the LORD still calls *his*. *My sheep* (saith the LORD) *wandered; yea my flock was scattered*. Precious JESUS! how blessed is it thus to eye thy grace and favor, amidst all the infirmities of thy fold, and the worthless conduct of their keepers!

EZEKIEL 34:7-10

Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; (8) *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; (9) Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; (10) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

The LORD having by his servant the Prophet, preferred the charge of the unworthiness of his servants, here pronounceth the sentence which he will execute against them: and a tremendous one it is. And it is rendered the more awful being ushered in by the solemnity of the LORD's oath. The sentence is included under two branches; either one of which, if alone, had been enough to have made the ears of every unfaithful shepherd to tingle; but taken together, becomes tremblingly awful. *Behold, I am against you, saith the LORD*, this is one; and the other is, *I will require my flock at your hands*. Oh! who can read such a solemn declaration of JEHOVAH, among even the faithful servants of the LORD; but with fear and trembling? And who that is conscious of neglect in the ministerial function, but must fall down under the most awakening apprehensions!

EZEKIEL 34:11-16

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, *even I*, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. (12) As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. (13) And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from

the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. (14) I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. (15) I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. (16) I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

What a sweet relief doth this part of the Chapter afford, after beholding what went before, in the unfaithfulness of *false* shepherds, to hear what is promised to the *true*. Reader! you will not, I am sure, need my pointing out, that it is JESUS who here takes up the subject. His Church is his flock, and for every one of the fold he is intimately concerned. Indeed, under how many characters of a shepherd doth the HOLY GHOST represent him, in various parts of his sacred word. At one place as the *chief* shepherd, 1 Peter 5:4. at another as the *Great* shepherd, Hebrews 13:20. And for the identity of the person and character, in the same Chapter, he is called the *one* shepherd; to intimate that there is no other. See verse 23. And JESUS calls himself the *good* shepherd. John 10:11. And GOD the FATHER calls him *my* shepherd. Zechariah 13:7. And Reader! you and I are not, I hope, without a personal knowledge of him, under every one of those sweet distinctions. And that JESUS hath a flock, a Church, a people, which are his, both by the FATHER'S gift, and his own purchase; this I hope is also well known both to the Writer and the Reader. And this flock, like the glorious Shepherd of it, is known by various names in the word of GOD, which the HOLY GHOST hath given to it. At one place it is called a *little*

flock: Luke 12:32. At another a *beautiful* flock: Jeremiah 13:20. And by one of the Prophets it is called a flock of *slaughter*. Zechariah 11:4. But still JESUS'S flock is costly, and precious in his eyes. No wonder that the LORD therefore so graciously undertakes those compassionate offices himself, which are here marked down. Reader! are you of CHRIST'S fold? fear not then, JESUS will feed, protect, heal, restore, comfort, bring home, and cause to lie down in his bosom, every poor, diseased, and wandering sheep of his fold!

EZEKIEL 34:17-28

And *as for* you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. (18) *Seemeth it* a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? (19) And *as for* my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. (20) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, *even* I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. (21) Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; (22) Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. (23) And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. (24) And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken *it*. (25) And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. (26) And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. (27) And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those

that served themselves of them. (28) And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make *them* afraid.

Here we have, in the midst of many gracious promises, the LORD's address to the flock itself. As in the circumstances of life, in a wilderness state, even the flock of JESUS, like the flock of the field, will have their contentions with each other, the LORD noticeth this, and declares he will judge between them. Reader! what a sad thing it is that quarrels should arise among the people of the LORD. But so it is, and so it will be, from the infirmities of fallen nature. In the world, the peaceable, and harmless, will he too often injured by the great and the mighty. JESUS knows all this; and JESUS saith he wilt take part with the oppressed.

EZEKIEL 34:29

And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

CHRIST himself is this *plant of renown*, which JEHOVAH hath raised up for a blessing to his Church and people. And oh! how truly renowned, in his person, office, character, and relations! Hail thou glorious LORD! be thou everlastingly known and loved, and adored, by all the nations of the earth: and may thy saving health be *to all thy people!*

EZEKIEL 34:30-31

Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God *am* with them, and *that* they, *even* the house of Israel, *are* my people, saith the Lord GOD. (31) And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men, *and* I *am* your God, saith the Lord GOD.

That there might be no possible mistake made by the Church, from this preaching of the Prophet, he is directed in the close of his sermon to drop the figure, both of the shepherd and the sheep, and in plain terms to say, that the Church is all along meant by the flock; and the LORD GOD is the shepherd of his people.

REFLECTIONS

OH! ye shepherds in the fold of CHRIST'S Church by whatever name or rank ye are distinguished among men; here read the solemn declarations of the LORD, and behold the awful and tremendous consequences of unfaithfulness in your several and distinct charges! Who, for the sake of a trifling, short, and transitory distinction among men, would take the solemn care of the fold of CHRIST upon them, and have the blood of souls to lie at their doors! Oh! ye hirelings! who from carnal ends, and not from love to CHRIST and his sheep, rush into the service of the LORD's pastures! Here behold the sad and miserable termination of a life so wretched, and a trust so abused! Oh! that the LORD, in compassion to his flock, would stop the mad and desperate attempt of men so lost and depraved; and give, as he hath graciously promised, to his Church, *Pastors after his own heart, who shall feed his people with knowledge and understanding.* Jeremiah 3:15.

But from a subject so truly awful, Reader, let you and I seek relief in looking to JESUS, the good shepherd, who hath given his life for the sheep! Truly, LORD, thy FATHER graciously gave thee thy flock, and made them thine when thou camest to

seek and save that which was lost. Through every part of this Chapter, in all that is promised of the faithful pastor, we trace thy footsteps, and mark the distinguishing features of thy character. Yea, blessed JESUS! it is thou, and thou alone, that hast gone over the mountains, and through every hill and vale, in quest of thy flock; and thou hast brought home, and wilt bring home all and every one on thy shoulders rejoicing. It is thine office to separate the goats from the sheep; and to distinguish between the precious and the vile. And ere long, thou, who art now the LAMB in the midst of the throne, feeding those now above, and leading them to fountains of living waters, wilt bring home the whole flock that remain out of the spiritual Egypt of this world, and not an hoof shall be left behind. Then blessed LORD, all thy sheep shall be brought into one fold, and everlastingly secured from all future wanderings, when thou, the *Chief Shepherd shall appear, they all shall appear with thee in glory.* Amen.

CHAPTER 35

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The Prophet is here commissioned by the LORD to pronounce judgment, on Mount Seir, for Edom's hatred of Israel.

EZEKIEL 35:1-9

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it, (3) And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O mount Seir, I *am* against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. (4) I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD. (5) Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast

shed *the blood of* the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time *that their iniquity had* an end: (6) Therefore, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee. (7) Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth. (8) And I will fill his mountains with his slain *men*: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword. (9) I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

We have here the LORD's awful sentence, upon Mount *Seir*, that is *Esau's* heritage; and the reason is assigned, namely, his hatred to Israel. Some have thought, and no doubt upon good grounds, that what is here denounced against the descendants of *Esau*, in the cause of it, may be supposed to refer to all the enemies of Israel. Esau being put at the head of all the seed of Israel's haters, with whom, in consequence of the covenant blessings in Jacob, the deadly indignation began. Reader! do not fail to connect with this view, the explanation which CHRIST hath given of the whose cause of the world's hatred. John 15:17-20. There can be no agreement between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. See Galatians 4:28, 29.

EZEKIEL 35:10-15

Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there: (11) Therefore, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee. (12) And thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD, *and that* I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. (13) Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me,

and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard *them*. (14) Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate. (15) As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, *even* all of it: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

We shall enter into a due apprehension of what is here said, and also the interest the whole Church of CHRIST hath in it, if we read it as it ought to be read, spiritually; and the LORD the HOLY GHOST be our teacher. It is truly blessed, in the conflicts of grace and corruption, to trace each to the original head; and while the children of GOD all feel, as that they do feel the remains of indwelling corruption in nature, which manifest their alliance to the old man; they no less feel the workings of grace in the spirit, which proves their connection with the new man, *which, after GOD, is created in righteousness and true holiness*. Ephesians 4:22-24. Reader! see a notable proof of this in Paul the Apostle's experience. Romans 7:14-25. In this memorable relation of the groanings and conflicts of so eminent a servant of the LORD, we ought to find much comfort to all our similar exercises; remembering that our grand relief, under such soul-agonizing trials, is the same as Paul's was, wholly in the LORD JESUS! Oh! it is blessed to be made sensible of our nothingness, when such humblings lead the soul to JESUS and his all sufficiency!

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful thing to be of the *Esau* race! By nature, and by practice, a race of evil-doers: children that are full of hatred and bitterness against the LORD and his CHRIST. And not only born under the condemnation of a broken law,

but their very nature indisposed to all desires after CHRIST and his righteousness. How truly solemn and affecting is the exhortation the Apostle delivers to the Church, of watching against this root of bitterness springing up in the soul. *Lest* (saith the Apostle) *there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* Despising CHRIST; he soon advanced to this point to get rid of him! LORD! blessed for ever be thy name, in keeping thy redeemed, thine Israel, from the Esau's of every generation!

Blessed LORD JESUS! how sweetly doth this scripture set forth, as in all other places, thy watchful and tender regard over thy Israel. Dost thou indeed, dear LORD, take their cause as thine own, and declare thy determinate purpose to punish all that offend thee, in offending them? Oh! then, enable all thine exercised family to keep a constant eye to thee, whilst thou art looking after them, and defending them. May every one of thine household, O LORD, feel a growing and increasing confidence in thee, and the assurance of thy favor and protection; and be continually crying out with the Prophet of old, rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall rise: when I sit in darkness the LORD shall be a light unto me.

CHAPTER 36

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The Prophet is drawing in this Chapter a striking contrast between the nations that know not GOD, and his people, to whom He hath manifested himself.

EZEKIEL 36:1-15

Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD: (2) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession: (3) Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made *you* desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and *are* an infamy of the people: (4) Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that *are* round about; (5) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all *their* heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. (6) Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: (7) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that *are* about you, they shall bear their shame. (8) But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. (9) For, behold, I *am* for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: (10) And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, *even* all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: (11) And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better *unto you* than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. (12) Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, *even* my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them *of men*. (13) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they say unto you, Thou *land* devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations; (14) Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord GOD. (15) Neither will I cause *men* to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the

people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord GOD.

This is a most solemn and striking Sermon of the Prophet. Surely it carries with it decisive testimonies under what gracious influence it was delivered. It appears, that in consequence of the LORD's chastening his people the enemy triumphed: *Aha, aha, so would we have it!* But, saith the LORD, have they by their wiles tempted you to evil, and now do they triumph over you for this shall not be. And then follows a string of the most blessed promises. Reader! do not overlook the personal interest every child of GOD hath in this scripture. All that belong to CHRIST, are part of CHRIST, and all the promises in him, *are yea and Amen*. And that is not of the smallest kind which the LORD gave concerning the reproaches of his people, by the Prophet: Isaiah 25:6-8. 2 Corinthians 1:20.

EZEKIEL 36:16-20

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (17) Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. (18) Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *wherewith* they had polluted it: (19) And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. (20) And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These *are* the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.

What a sad account is here! Is it the LORD's Israel that is thus spoken of? And do the house of Israel indeed not only thus disgrace themselves by sin, but bring an odium on the good

way, by their conduct? Reader! what a solemn thing is it for the children of GOD to be thus discovered! LORD, keep thy redeemed ones by thy grace, that they cause not the enemy to blaspheme!

EZEKIEL 36:21-23

But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. (22) Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not *this* for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. (23) And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

See, Reader, and mark the blessed cause, for it runs through the whole Bible; the LORD's motives in redemption-work. The glory of JEHOVAH is the first, and last, and ultimate design of JEHOVAH, in all his dispensations, both in providence and grace; in creation and redemption. So saith that song John heard from heaven. Revelation 4:11. JESUS had an eye to his people in redemption: but the zeal to his FATHER'S glory was the great predisposing cause of all. Psalm 69:9.

EZEKIEL 36:24-32

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. (25) Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. (26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*. (28) And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (29) I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I

will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. (30) And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. (31) Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. (32) Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

Reader! pray read over again and again those sweet promises; Are they not like the Chapter of the grapes of *Eshcol*? And oh! how truly blessed to the souls that have partaken of them in the LORD JESUS! Every word is full of grace, and rich with mercy. *First*, the LORD will gather his redeemed to himself. This begins the promise. Are they scattered far and near? Then will he gather them from all lands. And where will he bring them? Into their own land. And if the Reader would see how the LORD will do it! let him turn to one scripture to see *how*. Ephesians 1:10. And to another scripture to discover the cause *why*. Jeremiah 32:40. Well; but when they are brought, what will the LORD do *for* them; and what will he do *to* them! These sweet verses declare. Are they polluted? They shall be washed from all their filthiness, in the blood of JESUS; Have they hard hearts? The LORD will soften them. Are they ignorant? The LORD will put his spirit in them. Are they impoverished and poor? The LORD will greatly multiply them. And what shall be the blessed effects of this bounty? They shall remember themselves, and loath themselves for all the evil they have committed, Sweet consideration! Nothing short of a spirit of grace in the soul can induce a self-loathing, for sin in our nature. And on what account is it that the LORD doth all these things to Israel?

Because they are Israel his people, his redeemed, his chosen, His own sake, his glorious name's sake, is the sole cause, and his own glory. No merit, no sorrow, no repentance; nothing in them moving the LORD to it. No not even their misery: for his love, and the glory of his name, preceded even their being. Precious salvation of a precious precious Saviour!

EZEKIEL 36:33-38

Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause *you* to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. (34) And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. (35) And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities *are become* fenced, *and* are inhabited. (36) Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places*, *and* plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*. (37) Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet *for* this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do *it* for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. (38) As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

One might have concluded, that after such a string of the richest promises as we have just reviewed in the preceding verses, the next account might have been of Israel's thankfulness. But the LORD hath not done with promises. He is not only rich in mercy, but we meet with the exceeding riches of his grace, and the abundant overflowing goodness of our GOD. The LORD, so delighteth in rejoicing over his people for good, that when he hath cleansed his people and brought them home, he will cause them to dwell in their own land. And the land shall be fenced, yea, the LORD himself will be a wall of fire round about to keep it. Nothing of desolation shall

any more take place. The very heathen shall be constrained to acknowledge the LORD's hand is in the mercies of the LORD's people. It shall be a delightsome land, like that of Eden. And all shall plainly prove and testify, that it is the LORD's doing, and the LORD is blessed in his people, and his people made everlastingly blessed in the LORD. One sweet point more is insisted upon in summing up this blessed scripture, and that is, the LORD saith, that for these mercies he will be enquired of to do it for them. Reader! do not overlook this. The LORD's people are a praying people. They are the praying seed of Jacob. And as the LORD loves to hear his children speak to him, the LORD will give them holy errands to his throne. Sweet encouragement to every praying soul. JESUS makes a gracious improvement of it. Luke 18: 1, &c.

REFLECTIONS

EVER blessed and ever gracious GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! help every poor sinner that reads this Chapter, on whom these sweet promises come, and for whom they are from all eternity designed; help him to adore the riches of that free and sovereign grace, by which they are bestowed upon the Church, in and through the finished salvation that is in CHRIST JESUS! Surely, O LORD! the Gospel was never more fully preached than it is here done, by thy servant the Prophet. Let the enemies of the cross fancy they have triumphed in thy people's humiliation by reason of their sin. Thy people, O LORD, have reason indeed in the view of their transgressions, to be ashamed and confounded for all their ways, and to loath themselves in their own sight. But in the

sovereign salvation of GOD and the LAMB, they may and will rejoice. It is for thine own name's sake, O LORD, that mercy is shown to thine Israel: yea, LORD, thou hast wrought for thy name's sake, and hast had pity for thine holy name: though thy rebellious children have profaned it by reason of their transgressions in the sight of the heathen, among whom they dwell. But, praises forever to thy redeeming love and grace, thou hast, in thy dear SON'S merits, blood, and righteousness, procured more glory and honour to thy great name, than could have been done by the everlasting and unsinning obedience of men and angels to all eternity. And oh! thou gracious LORD, JEHOVAH! is not thy Church more lovely when sprinkled from all her filthiness, and from all her idols, by the blood of the LAMB, than could have been done for her had she never been polluted? Is not the Church more beautiful when beheld by our GOD in the holy garments of CHRIST'S righteousness, than ever she could have appeared in his sight in any righteousness of her own: even had she never polluted herself from the original righteousness in which she was first created! Surely, LORD, the holiness of the Church in JESUS, her glorious head, is more blessed to thy view, now washed, cleansed, and adorned, as a bride for her husband, than in any garment short of JESUS'S robe of salvation, men or angels could have found to appear in before JEHOVAH. Oh then, fulfil those sweet and precious promises in CHRIST to all thy redeemed. Yea, LORD! cause the heathen that are left round about to know, that it is the LORD that hath built the ruined places of his people, and planted that which was desolate. And do thou, LORD, by the sovereignty of thy grace in the hearts of thy people, as thou hast thus wrought by thy mercy, salvation for thy people, cause ever redeemed true Israelite of

thine to be continually enquiring of the LORD for those blessings, that the LORD may do what he hath promised for them. Yea, make known thy great name both far and near; and let all the earth know that thou art the LORD our GOD.

CHAPTER 37

CONTENTS

The Prophet is here by vision instructed of the LORD, in order that he might preach yet more pointedly to the house of Israel. Many blessed views are here opened of CHRIST'S kingdom.

EZEKIEL 37:1-2

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones, (2) And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and, lo, *they were* very dry.

In this vision the mind of *Ezekiel* seems to have been so carried out, that like the Apostle Paul, he hardly knew whether *he was in the body or not*. 2 Corinthians 12:1-3. The Prophet is here led by the SPIRIT into a *valley*, probably, thereby signifying this lower world. He is brought to see the valley *full of bones*; to show, perhaps, the universal state of all men by the fall. The lifeless state the whole was in, no doubt intimated their dead and ruined circumstances. And the Prophet is caused to take leisurely service of the whole, by being directed to pass around them, that the impression on his mind might be strong. Reader! observe when the LORD is the teacher, how *he teacheth to profit*.

EZEKIEL 37:3

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

The LORD's question is very striking. The LORD asketh, not for his information, but for ours. The Prophet's answer is truly modest and becoming. Humanly speaking, the bones could not live. But with GOD all things are possible. If, as the LORD himself afterward explained the vision: the circumstances of his people were to be well understood by the Prophet for the instruction of the Church; how gracious and condescending was it in the LORD, thus to explain by figure the leading truths the LORD meant to teach.

EZEKIEL 37:4-6

Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. (5) Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: (6) And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

When the LORD commanded the Prophet to prophesy or preach to the dry bones; had he been one of our modern preachers, who call themselves *rational* Christians, and affect to despise all doctrines their understandings cannot comprehend and explain; I fear the Prophet, instead of obeying the LORD's command, of prophesying to them would have presumed to have reasoned with his Maker of the absurdity of so doing. Reader what doth every Preacher, and in every congregation upon earth, do but the same thing, of preaching to dry bones, whenever he stands up between a living GOD and dead sinners, in holding forth the word of life?

EZEKIEL 37:7-8

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. (8) And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but *there was* no breath in them.

Here we see a true descendant of Abraham, *who against hope believed in hope*. He simply did as he was commanded. He bid the dead hear the voice of the *SON of GOD*, and the promise then was the same as it now is, *they that hear shall live*. But what astonishment must have taken possession of the Prophet's mind, when he saw the shaking of the bones, and heard the noise, and found the principle of reviving come upon them! Reader! and is not this uniformly the case, whenever at any time the LORD sends his servants, the ministers of the Gospel to call sinners that are by nature *dead in trespasses and sins*, to a new and spiritual life in CHRIST JESUS. Every faithful servant of the LORD, may on this occasion, as Peter did on the healing of the cripple, at the gate of the temple, when disclaiming all merit from such an act of power, he referred all into the glory of his adorable Master: *why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk; the GOD of our fathers had glorified his Son JESUS*. Acts 3:12, 13. Reader! do further observe, amidst the effects of the Prophet's preaching: though there was *a noise and shaking, and bone came together to bone, and sinews and flesh; yet there was no breath in them*. And what do we learn from hence, but that after all man's preaching, except GOD the HOLY GHOST, by his spiritual influence puts life in the soul; there is nothing effectually done to a work of saving grace. Sinners may shake under the word, human strength,

like the sinews and the flesh, may make a stir; but the quickening power in the new birth of the soul; this is wholly of GOD. *Ye must be born again*, at once shows, where grace alone is, and from whom alone it comes. Reader! what saith *your* experience to this statement? I do not ask you what preaching you sit under, or what sermons cause a shaking in your soul. But I would very seriously desire you to ask the question from your own heart; (and oh! that the LORD may by his teaching enable you to give an answer of peace;) are you born again? Have you known that blessedness of having part in the *first* resurrection, on whom *the second death hath no power*. Revelation 20:6.

EZEKIEL 37:9-10

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. (10) So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

How sweetly this teacheth both ministers and people, not only where to look for divine influences, but how in faith to ask them. The LORD JESUS hath commanded his people to ask the gifts of the SPIRIT; and numberless parts of scriptures testify the blessed efficacy of such prayers. Matthew 7:7-11. John 16:23, 24. Ezekiel 36:37. Song Of Solomon 4:16. And oh! what sure and gracious consequences must follow from the out-pouring of the HOLY GHOST. Isaiah 44:3-5.

EZEKIEL 37:11-14

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. (12) Therefore prophesy

and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. (13) And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, (14) And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.

See, Reader, how the LORD himself hath graciously explained this vision to the Prophet. Whether, as some read it, the subject refers to the restoration of Israel from Babylon, *temporally* considered; or, to the recovery of his people, from the graves of sin; *spiritually* interpreted; or, to the final and complete resurrection of the whole Church of GOD *eternally* and forever at the last day; in either, and in every sense the subject is most blessed. And though the people of GOD are apt to despond under their dying frames and dying circumstances; yet, the recovery being in the LORD himself, the thing is certain, and the vision sure. The LORD undertakes, and it is he which promiseth. He saith, I will open your graves, I will cause you to come up out of them. I will bring you into your own land. I will put my Spirit in you. It is I the LORD which will do all these things. And when these things are done, then shall ye know that I am the LORD, and that the LORD have both spoken and performed it. Reader! if through sovereign mercy, you and I arrive at last safely to heaven, to whom think you shall we then ascribe the wonderful works? Surely *there*, free grace will then have all that glory. All self-righteousness will be heard no more. And can you assign a single cause why the LORD should not have the glory now?

EZEKIEL 37:15-28

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, (16) Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel his companions: (17) And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. (18) And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou *meanest* by these? (19) Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. (20) And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. (21) And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: (22) And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: (23) Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. (24) And David my servant *shall be* king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. (25) And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, *even* they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David *shall be* their prince for ever. (26) Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. (27) My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (28) And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

As the Prophet was taught *by vision*, the wonderful subject of Israel's recovery through grace; so here *by figure*, he is taught also the wonderful union that is one day to take place in that family, that is now so scattered and divided. And this will be, whenever it is accomplished, as complete a miracle, and as much to be referred solely into sovereign grace as the former. We have reason to believe, that our elder brethren the Jews, are at this moment scattered over all the parts of the habitable earth. *Two* of the tribes are so lost, that no man hath even a conception where they can be. Here the LORD promiseth their being brought home. And, no doubt, when the time arrives for the accomplishment, the method of the LORD's bringing it to pass will be as wonderful as the thing itself. Perhaps (for I do not presume to say as much, but only venture to suggest my humble opinion,) some open display of the LORD's power will precede the great event; and the nations of the earth will behold the LORD's love to his ancient people, in the plan of his mighty operation. So that when the fulness of the Gentiles are come in, *the Deliverer will arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob*. And some gracious, glorious manifestation of sovereign power, will incline the heart of him that is a Jew! untaught by human means, and human instrumentality, from every part of the known world, in one and the same time to seek after *David their Prince*, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that he may be King over them. Oh! what a wonderful day of GOD will this be! See those scriptures, Zechariah 8:23. Isaiah 11:10-16, Hosea 3:4, 5. Micah 4:1-4, &c.

REFLECTIONS

READER! make a long pause over this most blessed Chapter; look up for the renewal of that HOLY SPIRIT to shed his influences upon you, who put breath into those dry bones the Prophet saw; that so the glories of the doctrine here taught may appear fully to your view, and their saving effect be fully felt upon your mind. Consider this lower world! Is it not indeed a valley, and full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness? By nature, and by practice, the whole world is *dead in trespasses and sins*. Who then but GOD the SPIRIT can put life into those bones, that they may live? Come, LORD, we pray thee, with all thy sweet and genial influence upon the souls of thy people, and while they groan under a sense of sin, and the oppressions of the enemy, do thou, LORD, put thy blessed SPIRIT in them, that they may live!

Chiefly, ye ministers of my GOD! learn from this divine subject, and of the LORD's own preaching by the Prophet; in whose strength all spiritual labours must be carried on with the least hopes of success; and on whose blessing depends the fruit of all your ministry. All the congregation of the faithful are in themselves, simply no other, than those bones of the valley. The dead in every Church-yard, long buried there, are no more dead to any *bodily* act, than the dead in trespasses and sins are to any *spiritual* exercise, And when we behold a minister of CHRIST addressing his flock, he is to all intents and purposes, as much as the Prophet in the valley, calling upon the dead to hear the word of the LORD; or as one in the Church-yard would be, in bidding the dead around him to arise at the sound of his voice. Both are alike incompetent to any energy. And the recovery of either must be a miracle. If these things were but properly impressed upon every

Preacher's mind, with what earnestness would he plead and wrestle with GOD in prayer, before he entered upon his labours, for a blessing from the LORD! Will such an one (if peradventure he should condescend to read these observations,) forgive me, if I close the Chapter with an earnest exhortation, that this solemn view of the subject may have its proper weight upon his mind. And oh! that the LORD the SPIRIT may induce every heart, so engaged in holy things, to be continually looking up to him for his blessing, both upon himself and his people. LORD, I would say! breath upon the dry bones of the valley, and bid them live; then shall we know that *the LORD hath spoken it, and the LORD hath performed it!*

CHAPTER 38

CONTENTS

We have in this Chapter the LORD's judgment upon Gog, and his folly is exposed, in his threats against Israel.

EZEKIEL 38:1-7

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (3) And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: (4) And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of *armour, even* a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: (5) Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: (6) Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: *and* many people with thee. (7) Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

The curious in searching for the discovery of what is concealed, more than for the improvement of what the LORD hath made known, have been much puzzled and perplexed to explain what is meant by *Gog* and *Magog*. Some have contended, that this is the same *Gog* and *Magog* mentioned in the Revelations. Chapter 20:8. Others insist upon it, that they were princes in the neighborhood of Israel. But while curious unenlightened men have presumed to be wise above what is written, it will be a safer path, in prosecuting our subject, to leave the prophetic part of this, and the following Chapter, until the LORD (as in all his other prophecies hath done,) shall explain the prediction by the event; and take the words here delivered in a general way. We have in them a very plain scripture before us, if we accept what is here said as the LORD's declaration against all the enemies of GOD'S CHRIST; whether Turks or Russians, Jews or Greeks. When JEHOVAH saith, *Behold, I am against thee*, as in this scripture: this is enough to prove the utter destruction of that nation, or people, who fell under this awful sentence. Reader! let you and I be more concerned to discover, whether in and through the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we are freed from this decree, than to enquire what nation or people is meant for *Mesech* or *Tubal*, *Persia* or *Gomar*. For what a dreadful thing will it be in the end, if men, professing Christianity, and even writing their opinions upon the prophecies, be found among those concerning whom the LORD saith, *Behold, I am against thee!* See Matthew 7:22-23.

EZEKIEL 38:8-9

After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land *that is* brought back from the sword, *and is* gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel,

which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. (9) Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

I do not presume to say as much, but I would with reverence humbly ask, is not this a sweet promise to the LORD's people in the midst of the LORD's sore judgments to his enemies? Genesis 49:1.

EZEKIEL 38:10-13

Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, *that* at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: (11) And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, (12) To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places *that are now* inhabited, and upon the people *that are* gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. (13) Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?

It will not militate against my humble thoughts on the foregoing verses, to suppose, that the LORD is speaking here of his people and of the enemies of Israel in the former. The transition from one to another, and that suddenly made, is not uncommon in the sacred writings. The presumptuous boast of the enemies of GOD is strongly expressed. We have a similar passage, Exodus 15:9. There is a great beauty in the expression, *unwall'd villages*, in allusion to the LORD'S Israel. For the Church of JESUS, though the perfection of beauty, and joy of the whole earth, is in the eyes of the heathen, but a

poor contemptible village. *Is this Zion* (say they) *whom no man looked after, and none regarded?* Nevertheless, Jerusalem though unwalled, and having no frontiers, no garrisons, no fortress, yet was in herself invulnerable, because the LORD himself was *her wall of fire round about, and glory in the midst.* Psalm 48:2. Isaiah 33:21, 22. What is said in this passage, concerning *Judea*, as in *the midst of the land;* (or as the margin of our old Bibles very properly hath it, *the navel of the land,*) may serve to teach us the vast propriety of the LORD JESUS making his appearance in substance of our flesh, when he came to redeem our nature in this centre of the world. For as all Geographers, both ancient and modern, have shown, the holy land is the *navel*, that is, the *middle* of the whole earth. Thus, therefore, by the LORD's appearing in the centre, it meant to show, that like the Sun at mid-day, whose rays of light extend in every direction, to illumine the whole hemisphere; so the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in his blessed influence, reached both East and West, and North, and South. The Reader of gracious views will, I am sure, forgive me if I add, that in a yet higher view we may consider the subject, and behold CHRIST as the centre or middle person of the GODHEAD, thus standing between the person of the FATHER, and of the HOLY GHOST. For here CHRIST is as the land of unwalled villages, in whom his people rest; and to whom there is no obstruction to approach. He is indeed the centre of the whole Church on earth, and the centre of all glory in heaven, for *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily,* and his people, his Church, *are complete in him,* Colossians 2:9,10.

EZEKIEL 38:14-23

Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know *it?* (15) And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: (16) And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. (17) Thus saith the Lord GOD; *Art* thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days *many* years that I would bring thee against them? (18) And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, *that* my fury shall come up in my face. (19) For in my jealousy *and* in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; (20) So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that *are* upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. (21) And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. (22) And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that *are* with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. (23) Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

We have here the LORD's sore judgments denounced upon Gog. But as they are the same in greatness, and in multitude, as the LORD through the whole word of scripture uniformly holds forth to all the enemies of GOD'S CHRIST, I do not think it necessary to enlarge upon them in a way of comment. All the LORD's judgments are to one and the same purport. *Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him. To the wicked it shall be ill with him.* This is enough for our purpose. More than

this, as the LORD hath not thought proper to explain, becomes not us to enquire. There is, it must be confessed, a strong propensity in every man's heart, to enquire *how* the LORD will accomplish his latter day dispensations, and *when* the time shall be? But there is one general answer, and given by the LORD himself to the enquiry of *Daniel*, which men of curious minds would do well to regard. Daniel 12:8, 9.

REFLECTIONS

READER! instead of being wise above what is written, and spending our time in fruitless and unbecoming researches concerning the person of *Gog*, and the kingdom of *Magog*: let us accept what probably GOD the HOLY GHOST meant to teach the Church by this scripture; that the eye of the LORD is upon his people to defend them from all their enemies; and that at a time when the waters of the sanctuary run low, and the foe seems to threaten with an high hand; that then the LORD is more particularly coming forth for their defense; for JEHOVAH hath declared himself to be against all Israel's enemies for his own sake. You and I cannot stand in the day of exercise in our own strength, or attempt anything in our own power: but hear what the LORD saith; *I will put hooks in thy jaws, O Gog, and turn thee back, and all thine army with thee.* Precious LORD JESUS! be thou to all thy people the sure hiding place from every storm, and the covert from every tempest; that *when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD may lift up a standard against him.* Then shall thy people dwell in safety in the land of unwall'd villages; because the LORD himself will be *a wall of fire round about, in a cloud and*

smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a defense. Amen.

CHAPTER 39

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The subject is continued through part of this Chapter, which formed the subject of the former. Towards the close there are sweet and gracious promises made to GOD's Israel.

EZEKIEL 39:1-7

Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: (2) And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: (3) And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. (4) Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that *is* with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured. (5) Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD. (6) And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD. (7) So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not *let them* pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

The more I read these scriptures, concerning the LORD's judgment upon his enemies, and his peculiar mercy shown to Israel, the more I feel my mind led to pass over the mere letter of the history, to attend to the spiritual sense, which all along appears to me to be intended from it. The LORD hath one and the same design in all his dispensations, namely, to

glorify CHRIST. In the accomplishment of this purpose, every order, and every dispensation shall be directed, and all shall minister. So that *Gog* and *Magog* shall go so far and no farther, than as their services shall help to bring forward the LORD's gracious designs to his people. Israel shall know this; the heathen shall know it; and GOD will thereby make manifest his holy name, as a GOD in covenant for the sure redemption of the Church.

EZEKIEL 39:8-16

Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this *is* the day whereof I have spoken. (9) And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: (10) So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down *any* out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD. (11) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the *noses* of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call *it* The valley of Hamongog. (12) And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. (13) Yea, all the people of the land shall bury *them*; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord GOD. (14) And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search. (15) And the passengers *that* pass through the land, when *any* seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamongog. (16) And also the name of the city *shall be* Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land.

Here are prophecies of a very solemn nature, intimating great destruction, and a multitude of graves for the slain to lie

down in. JESUS speaks of the last day dispensation, which is to usher in his peaceable kingdom, as being remarkable for such events. Reader! here again, as before, I presume not to speak of the time when these things shall be. But I would ask, if the present day is not in this sense, a day of rebuke and blasphemy? Oh! what multitudes of the slain have we heard of, though through mercy, not yet seen in our land!

EZEKIEL 39:17-29

And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, *even* a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. (18) Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. (19) And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. (20) Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD. (21) And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. (22) So the house of Israel shall know that I *am* the LORD their God from that day and forward. (23) And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword. (24) According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them. (25) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; (26) After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made *them* afraid. (27) When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; (28) Then shall they know that I *am* the LORD their

God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. (29) Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

What is particularly meant by this sacrifice, and the feast that is promised to be made for the fowl and the beast, is not so very clear as to speak with any certainty! But by comparing scripture with scripture, perhaps a light is thrown on the subject. See therefore Revelation 19:17, &c. Doubtless it hath reference to the last day's dispensation! But the conclusion which GOD the HOLY GHOST makes of the subject is most plain, and most blessed. The LORD will bring again the captivity of his people. The heathen shall see it, and be astonished. The people of GOD shall know it, and be blessed. GOD'S covenant relations to them shall be made known, and his Church shall rejoice in them together. So that whatever obscurity attends the apprehension of the precise time and place of fulfilling these prophecies, in the result and termination of them there is no mistake or wrong conclusion whatever. *JESUS will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;* while the enemies of our GOD, and of his CHRIST, shall be confounded, and put to silence forever. So that we may, in the faith and expectation of these great events cry out, in the language of 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.* Isaiah 44:23.

REFLECTIONS

How truly great, and how truly solemn at the same time is this scripture. Is it not like the pillar of cloud in the camp of Israel; which, while giving light and joy to the people of GOD, became darkness and terror to the Egyptians. LORD JESUS, I beseech thee give thy people grace in beholding the ruin of the foe, in the midst of their own safety to learn where to ascribe the glory, and thankfully to recognize the gracious hand that maketh all the difference! If, LORD, thou sendest a fire on the *Magogs* of the present hour, oh! how justly mightest thou destroy all the adversaries of rebellious sinners. And if Israel of old was sent into captivity for their iniquity; who is there, LORD, of thine, that in themselves can venture to suppose that they are better than they, when JEHOVAH hath included all under sin? Precious LORD JESUS! do thou bring again, as thou hast promised, the captivity of Jacob, and bind up the wounds of thine Israel. Do, LORD, as thou hast said. Cause them to dwell safely in their own land, and let none make them afraid. Be thou sanctified in them, O LORD, and be thou their sanctification also, from thy HOLY SPIRIT dwelling in them, that all the earth may know that thou art a faithful Covenant-GOD in CHRIST, and that for his sake thou never wilt hide thy face from them anymore, *when thou hast turned back their Captivity before their eyes!*

CHAPTER 40

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The Prophet is in this, and all the succeeding Chapters, to the end of his prophecy, wholly dealing in vision. He describes in these visions of GOD, the appearance of One like the Son of

Man; who delivers to the Prophet an account of a splendid and immense City.

EZEKIEL 40:1-2

In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth *day* of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither. (2) In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which *was* as the frame of a city on the south.

There is somewhat very striking in the Prophet's method of describing this vision: *the hand of the LORD* (he saith) *was upon him*. And certain it is, that whosoever reads this Chapter, and all the remainder of *Ezekiel's* vision, with an understanding suitable to its importance, must also, like the Prophet, have the hand of the LORD upon him. For no one, either ancient or modern, seemed to have entered into a clear apprehension of its meaning. Reader! we shall do well, as we enter upon the subject, to look up for divine instructions concerning it: for none but He, who gave it to the Prophet by vision, can explain it to the soul's joy. LORD! be thou our instructor!

EZEKIEL 40:3-4

And he brought me thither, and, behold, *there was* a man, whose appearance *was* like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. (4) And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew *them* unto thee *art* thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

The place to which the Prophet was brought by vision, no doubt was Jerusalem. Here is nothing said of a Temple, but of

a city: but from what follows in this Chapter, and the several succeeding ones, the whole of the city is considered as a temple. Now I pray the Reader to mark, with me, the singularity of this account. The visions which *John* the beloved Apostle had of the new Jerusalem, were, that there was no temple there: but of this, whatever city it might be, there is nothing described but of a temple. Revelation 21:22. Who is this man spoken of, unless it be the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Him whom John saw, and which we know was CHRIST, John describes in similar language, that *his feet were like unto fine brass*. Revelation 1:11 Supposing that this was the LORD JESUS CHRIST, (as it should seem very evidently to be,) by his being appointed to show the Prophet, and to measure the dimensions of this city, perhaps was intended to say, that CHRIST, as the CHRIST of GOD, was both the founder of the Temple, and the sum and substance of it. Zechariah 6:13. John 14:6. And the object, and design, it should seem, for which Ezekiel was introduced into these visions of GOD, was not for curiosity, but for use, and that of the highest nature; namely, to show to the whole house of Israel. All that ministers are, and all the gifts given them, are not for themselves, but for the people.

EZEKIEL 40:5-49

And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits *long* by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed. (6) Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, *which was* one reed broad; and the other threshold *of the gate, which was* one reed broad. (7) And *every* little chamber *was* one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers *were* five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within *was*

one reed. (8) He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed. (9) Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and the posts thereof, two cubits; and the porch of the gate *was* inward. (10) And the little chambers of the gate eastward *were* three on this side, and three on that side; they three *were* of one measure: and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side. (11) And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate, ten cubits; *and* the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. (12) The space also before the little chambers *was* one cubit *on this side*, and the space *was* one cubit on that side: and the little chambers *were* six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side. (13) He measured then the gate from the roof of *one* little chamber to the roof of another: the breadth *was* five and twenty cubits, door against door. (14) He made also posts of threescore cubits, even unto the post of the court round about the gate. (15) And from the face of the gate of the entrance unto the face of the porch of the inner gate *were* fifty cubits. (16) And *there were* narrow windows to the little chambers, and to their posts within the gate round about, and likewise to the arches: and windows *were* round about inward: and upon *each* post *were* palm trees. (17) Then brought he me into the outward court, and, lo, *there were* chambers, and a pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers *were* upon the pavement. (18) And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates *was* the lower pavement. (19) Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without, an hundred cubits eastward and northward. (20) And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof. (21) And the little chambers thereof *were* three on this side and three on that side; and the posts thereof and the arches thereof were after the measure of the first gate: the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. (22) And their windows, and their arches, and their palm trees, *were* after the measure of the gate that looketh toward the east; and they went up unto it by seven steps; and the arches thereof *were* before them. (23) And the gate of the inner court *was* over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east; and he measured from gate to gate an hundred cubits. (24) After that he brought me toward the south, and behold a gate toward the south: and he measured the posts thereof and the arches thereof according to these measures.

(25) And *there were* windows in it and in the arches thereof round about, like those windows: the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. (26) And *there were* seven steps to go up to it, and the arches thereof *were* before them: and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof. (27) And *there was* a gate in the inner court toward the south: and he measured from gate to gate toward the south an hundred cubits. (28) And he brought me to the inner court by the south gate: and he measured the south gate according to these measures; (29) And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to these measures: and *there were* windows in it and in the arches thereof round about: *it was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad. (30) And the arches round about *were* five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad. (31) And the arches thereof *were* toward the utter court; and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it *had* eight steps. (32) And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures. (33) And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, *were* according to these measures: and *there were* windows therein and in the arches thereof round about: *it was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad. (34) And the arches thereof *were* toward the outward court; and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it *had* eight steps. (35) And he brought me to the north gate, and measured *it* according to these measures; (36) The little chambers thereof, the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, and the windows to it round about: the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. (37) And the posts thereof *were* toward the utter court; and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it *had* eight steps. (38) And the chambers and the entries thereof *were* by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering. (39) And in the porch of the gate *were* two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering. (40) And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, *were* two tables; and on the other side, which *was* at the porch of the gate, *were* two tables. (41) Four tables *were* on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables,

whereupon they slew *their sacrifices*. (42) And the four tables *were* of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice. (43) And within *were* hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables *was* the flesh of the offering. (44) And without the inner gate *were* the chambers of the singers in the inner court, which *was* at the side of the north gate; and their prospect *was* toward the south: one at the side of the east gate *having* the prospect toward the north. (45) And he said unto me, This chamber, whose prospect *is* toward the south, *is* for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house. (46) And the chamber whose prospect *is* toward the north *is* for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these *are* the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him. (47) So he measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar *that was* before the house. (48) And he brought me to the porch of the house, and measured *each* post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side: and the breadth of the gate *was* three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side. (49) The length of the porch *was* twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; and *he brought me* by the steps whereby they went up to it: and *there were* pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.

The Reader will form a better calculation of the extent of this wonderful city, by considering what its dimensions were. A *cubit* for the sanctuary measurement, was one foot and nine inches; and if the Reader will mark down the whole measurement, he will be able to ascertain the out-grounds of this place. But leaving this part of the subject to his leisure, I really beg his present attention to some of the spiritual things, which we may humbly venture to suppose, were intended in what is here said. May we not imagine, that what is said of the *steps* of ascent, is intended to show how souls redeemed by grace, go up by JESUS'S leading, as he here taught and led

the Prophet to God? And are not those Palm trees in allusion to what is said of believers flourishing like *Palm trees in the house of God*? Psalm 92:1. The gates are already explained by what John was taught to inform the Church of the twelve Apostles. Revelation 21:14. And the *tables*, and *porch*, and place for *sacrifice*, and sons of *Levi*, to minister in divine things; all these are very plain representations of what the Gospel Church, in the after ages, set forth, when CHRIST became both the Table of offering, the Porch, or way to the throne; the Sacrifice; the Sacrificer; and the New Testament Altar; on whom, and in whom, and through whom alone, all offerings were to be made! The Prophet having been thus led to the measurement thus far, the Chapter is closed, and the subject is reserved, to be continued in the following Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

In following the Prophet in these visions of God, we have now much advantage from the gospel light which the after ages of the Church, through Grace, were blessed with; so that explaining Old Testament scripture, by the New Testament revelation, we are enabled to see more of the LORD's gracious designs, than our fathers in the earlier dispensations could attain. Evidently, these solemn scriptures pointed to the day of gospel grace; and we cannot sufficiently bless God for the discovery he hath been pleased to make of himself, in, and by the Person, work, and grace, and salvation, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Yes! blessed LORD JESUS! whatever City, Church, or Temple, the Prophet saw, in thee we now in open glass behold the accomplishment of the whole. Thou art indeed the goodly Mountain of Lebanon! Thou, and thou alone, the

foundation-stone JEHOVAH hath laid in Zion, on whom is built, both of Apostles and Prophets, that temple on which all rest, and in whom all are made secure, and eternally happy. LORD! hasten the glorious hour, when all thy Church, founded on thee, shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea, and all nations shall flow to it. Amen!

CHAPTER 41

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This is but a continuance of the former Chapter. The Prophet is still led by the hand to the further measurement of the city of GOD.

EZEKIEL 41:1-26

Afterward he brought me to the temple, and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, *which was* the breadth of the tabernacle. (2) And the breadth of the door *was* ten cubits; and the sides of the door *were* five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side: and he measured the length thereof, forty cubits: and the breadth, twenty cubits. (3) Then went he inward, and measured the post of the door, two cubits; and the door, six cubits; and the breadth of the door, seven cubits. (4) So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, *This is* the most holy *place*. (5) After he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of *every* side chamber, four cubits, round about the house on every side. (6) And the side chambers *were* three, one over another, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which *was* of the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the house. (7) And *there was* an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers: for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house: therefore the breadth of the

house *was still* upward, and so increased *from* the lowest *chamber* to the highest by the midst. (8) I saw also the height of the house round about: the foundations of the side chambers *were* a full reed of six great cubits. (9) The thickness of the wall, which *was* for the side chamber without, *was* five cubits: and *that* which *was* left *was* the place of the side chambers that *were* within. (10) And between the chambers *was* the wideness of twenty cubits round about the house on every side. (11) And the doors of the side chambers *were* toward *the place that was* left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south: and the breadth of the place that *was* left *was* five cubits round about. (12) Now the building that *was* before the separate place at the end toward the west *was* seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building *was* five cubits thick round about, and the length thereof ninety cubits. (13) So he measured the house, an hundred cubits long; and the separate place, and the building, with the walls thereof, an hundred cubits long; (14) Also the breadth of the face of the house, and of the separate place toward the east, an hundred cubits. (15) And he measured the length of the building over against the separate place which *was* behind it, and the galleries thereof on the one side and on the other side, an hundred cubits, with the inner temple, and the porches of the court; (16) The door posts, and the narrow windows, and the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the door, cieled with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows *were* covered; (17) To that above the door, even unto the inner house, and without, and by all the wall round about within and without, by measure. (18) And *it was* made with cherubims and palm trees, so that a palm tree *was* between a cherub and a cherub; and *every* cherub had two faces; (19) So that the face of a man *was* toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side: *it was* made through all the house round about. (20) From the ground unto above the door *were* cherubims and palm trees made, and *on* the wall of the temple. (21) The posts of the temple *were* squared, *and* the face of the sanctuary; the appearance *of the one* as the appearance *of the other*. (22) The altar of wood *was* three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, *were* of wood: and he said unto me, This *is* the table that *is* before the LORD. (23) And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors. (24) And the

doors had two leaves *apiece*, two turning leaves; two *leaves* for the one door, and two leaves for the other *door*. (25) And *there were* made on them, on the doors of the temple, cherubims and palm trees, like as *were* made upon the walls; and *there were* thick planks upon the face of the porch without. (26) And *there were* narrow windows and palm trees on the one side and on the other side, on the sides of the porch, and *upon* the side chambers of the house, and thick planks.

I include the whole under one reading, because the scriptural and spiritual illustrations are the same. Much is said of the *doors* and *gates*, in breadth, and heighth, and length; and if read spiritually, with an eye to CHRIST, the whole serves to teach that He is the only way, and truth, and life, for our entrance before GOD here in grace, and into GOD'S temple hereafter in glory. Precious LORD JESUS, thou hast said, *I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture*. John 10:9. And when we read of the chambers of this house, who but must think of JESUS the King, bringing his spouse the Church in his *Chambers*: even into the secrets of sweet and intimate communion and fellowship with him: the mysteries of his grace, the blessed enjoyments of soul refreshing ordinances; the delight of knowing his covenant relations to his people; what he is in himself; and what he is to them in grace here, and will be in glory to All eternity. Surely those chambers may, without violence, be supposed to represent the LORD JESUS making known to all his redeemed by the sweet and private teachings of his HOLY SPIRIT, the mysteries of his kingdom, and showing to them his love, and the interest they have in all his glory! Song Of Solomon 1:4. And hence also the *galleries* may be equally supposed to mean those restings of the souls of the redeemed upon the person and salvation

of JESUS, by whom the King is said to be held? Song Of Solomon 7:5. If the Reader be disposed to follow the subject through such a spiritual application of it, this Chapter, as well as the others on the subject, will afford large scope for his meditation; and may the LORD, the great Author of it, graciously open it to his view!

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD of thy Temple! how can I read this Chapter, and follow the Prophet's steps whom thou art leading by the hand through the several apartments of thine house, without immediately connecting with the subject the very endearing characters and offices in which thou hast condescended to reveal thyself. Do I not behold thee, O thou unequalled pattern of excelling humbleness, as the gate and door to thy temple, thy fold? Didst thou not at thy FATHER'S call come up before all worlds, as the whole source of thy people's salvation? And art thou not the one and only way of access, in grace here, and glory to all eternity? Can any enter, but by thee? And hast thou not promised that all that come to thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out? Oh! precious JESUS! stand, LORD, I beseech thee widely open, as those wide spreading doors the Prophet saw, that thy people may come like the troops of *Teman*, and fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows! Yea, precious LORD! as thy gracious invitations, and promises, and proclamations of mercy, are going forth to the East, and to the West, and to the North, and to the South; oh, dispose the souls of poor perishing sinners, to come to thy large, and wide spreading doors, and find access in and through thee, by one SPIRIT to the FATHER. Surely those blessed gates and

ordinances to thee, like the gates of the New Jerusalem above, are never shut day nor night; for JESUS stands ready to receive all that come to GOD by him, and all that do come, thou hast graciously said, thou wilt in no wise cast out; Oh! LORD! make thy people willing in the day of thy power. Amen.

CHAPTER 42

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The same subject is prosecuted through this Chapter, as in the former. Ezekiel is further introduced into the several apartments of this magnificent place.

EZEKIEL 42:1

Then he brought me forth into the utter court, the way toward the north: and he brought me into the chamber that *was* over against the separate place, and which *was* before the building toward the north.

I beg the Reader not to lose sight of this wonderful person, who is the Prophet's guide on this occasion. None but He, that is the Wonderful Counsellor, can be competent to instruct an inspired Prophet, *in whom are held all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Isaiah 9:6. Colossians 2:3.

EZEKIEL 42:2-12

Before the length of an hundred cubits *was* the north door, and the breadth *was* fifty cubits. (3) Over against the twenty *cubits* which *were* for the inner court, and over against the pavement which *was* for the utter court, *was* gallery against gallery in three *stories*. (4) And before the chambers *was* a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors toward the north. (5) Now the upper chambers *were* shorter: for the galleries were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost

of the building. (6) For they *were* in three *stories*, but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore *the building* was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground. (7) And the wall that *was* without over against the chambers, toward the utter court on the forepart of the chambers, the length thereof *was* fifty cubits. (8) For the length of the chambers that *were* in the utter court *was* fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple *were* an hundred cubits. (9) And from under these chambers *was* the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the utter court. (10) The chambers *were* in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, over against the separate place, and over against the building. (11) And the way before them *was* like the appearance of the chambers which *were* toward the north, as long as they, *and* as broad as they: and all their goings out *were* both according to their fashions, and according to their doors. (12) And according to the doors of the chambers that *were* toward the south *was* a door in the head of the way, *even* the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them.

When we consider how numerous those chambers were, may we not without violence, suppose they are intended to typify the many mansions in the Church above? At least they will serve to remind us of them, John 14:2.

EZEKIEL 42:13-20

Then said he unto me, The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which *are* before the separate place, they *be* holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place *is* holy. (14) When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy *place* into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they *are* holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to *those things* which *are* for the people. (15) Now when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect *is* toward the east, and measured it round about. (16) He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed

round about. (17) He measured the north side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about. (18) He measured the south side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed. (19) He turned about to the west side, *and* measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed. (20) He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred *reeds* long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.

There is somewhat particularly striking in the account here given of the holy chambers, and the uses intended for them. In the Hebrew the expression is beautiful; they are *the holinesses of holinesses*: see Leviticus 2:3. And what do we learn from hence, but that JESUS, our Great High Priest, is here set forth, our New Testament Altar, Sacrifice, and Sacrificer! I wish all true followers of the LORD JESUS would keep this in remembrance, for then we should hear no more of calling that place the Altar, which forms the communion rails at the table in churches. Alas! how senseless is it to give that title to a place which belongs only to the LORD JESUS, and to turn to it to say the Creed, as if the LORD JESUS was there, and there only! The mind of that man must be grossly ignorant who doth it. He whom John saw was in the midst of the golden candlesticks, to intimate his presence in the midst of his Churches and people, can be the only object of adoration. Revelation 1:13.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while you and I are following the Prophet, led by JESUS, through the several apartments, let us not lose sight of Him, who is himself the habitation of his Church and people, and their portion forever. Here let us contemplate the LORD indeed, under every endearing character, and we shall find

him to be our dwelling place, our Temple, our Altar, High Priest, and Sacrifice! And how do all his perfection's suit our souls, for our abiding place, and rest, and, solace, and delight forever. In his person, righteousness, and grace, are hid and live securely all his redeemed. JESUS takes them all in, brings them all home, clotheth them with his own garments of salvation, feeds them with his own body and blood, and communicates to them of his fulness, grace here, and glory forever. Exult, my soul, in this delightful view of thy glorious Saviour, and cry out in the words of the Prophet; *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my GOD: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

CHAPTER 43

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The Prophet having been in the preceding Chapters introduced into the house of GOD, is now led to behold the glorious Inhabitant, and LORD of it. A similar appearance, like that Ezekiel had seen at Chebar, is here manifested to him.

EZEKIEL 43:1-6

Afterward he brought me to the gate, *even* the gate that looketh toward the east: (2) And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice *was* like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. (3) And *it was* according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, *even* according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions *were* like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar;

and I fell upon my face. (4) And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect *is* toward the east. (5) So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. (6) And I heard *him* speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.

We have a most interesting account in these few verses. Here is the LORD appearing to the Prophet in a similar glory to what we read of *Ezekiel's* visions at the first: see chap. 1:26. Coming from the way of the east, seems to be in allusion to the first rise of all things. Hence JESUS is said to be, *the bright and morning star*. Revelation 22:16. And the wise men, who came to Jerusalem to enquire after CHRIST at his birth, was led by the light of a star from the East. Matthew 2:2. Revelation 7:2. The Prophet's falling upon his face, is as might be expected. Hiding the face, or falling to the earth, are expressions of great humbleness of soul. Daniel 10:8. Revelation 1:17.

EZEKIEL 43:7-12

And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, *neither* they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. (8) In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. (9) Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. (10) Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. (11) And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all

the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write *it* in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. (12) This *is* the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about *shall be* most holy. Behold, this *is* the law of the house.

What a vast degree of graciousness is manifested here in these words. Surely these promises related to the gospel church, as the LORD had pointed out, and as they are now fulfilled, to the souls of all true believers in JESUS. Jeremiah 31:31, &c. explained by Hebrews 8:8. &c. But Reader! what I particularly desire you to remark with me, is, what is said of this Gospel Church in the last dispensation; that this house shall be most holy, for the Prophet expressly was commissioned to tell the Church; and twice it is repeated, that this is the law of the house. And surely everything tends to confirm the great truth, that it must be so. Our God himself is the builder, and maker of it: how can it be otherwise than holy. JESUS hath purchased it with his blood. And to be sure he must have cleansed it from all uncleanness. And as the bodies of GOD'S children are the temple of the HOLY GHOST that dwelleth in them; surely he will put away the unclean thing, and the *Canaanite* out of the land. See Psalm 132:13, 14.

EZEKIEL 43:13-27

And these *are* the measures of the altar after the cubits: The cubit *is* a cubit and an hand breadth; even the bottom *shall be* a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about *shall be* a span: and this *shall be* the higher place of the altar. (14) And from the bottom *upon* the ground *even* to the lower settle *shall be* two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle *even* to the greater settle *shall be* four cubits, and the breadth *one* cubit. (15) So the altar *shall be* four cubits; and from the altar and upward *shall be* four horns. (16) And the altar *shall be* twelve *cubits* long, twelve broad,

square in the four squares thereof. (17) And the settle *shall be* fourteen *cubits* long and fourteen broad in the four squares thereof; and the border about it *shall be* half a cubit; and the bottom thereof *shall be* a cubit about; and his stairs shall look toward the east. (18) And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These *are* the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. (19) And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering. (20) And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put *it* on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it. (21) Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary. (22) And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse *it* with the bullock. (23) When thou hast made an end of cleansing *it*, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish. (24) And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up *for* a burnt offering unto the LORD. (25) Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat *for* a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish. (26) Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. (27) And when these days are expired, it shall be, *that* upon the eighth day, and *so* forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.

Here we have a further relation of the house, and the ordinances of it; and all with an eye to CHRIST; to whom all his people are priests, and ministering servants to the Church of the living GOD. And it is very blessed, when our long lost, wandering, and sinful souls, are brought into an heartfelt acquaintance with CHRIST'S fulness, and our own insufficiency. Oh! how truly blessed is it to see here, as in all the other parts of GOD'S holy word, that holiness to the LORD is in

CHRIST, and only to be obtained in and by him. Precious JESUS! thou art the holiness of thy people: *in thy light shall we see light*. In JESUS'S holiness we are found; and CHRIST is *made of GOD to us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; for then will be our glorying, as is most suitable it should be, in the LORD, and in the power of his might.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let not an eye be taken off this glorious vision the Prophet saw; but let us look stedfastly and steadily on Him, who came from the way of the east in the glory of GOD. Hear the well known voice of JESUS, as the voice of many waters. Behold, the earth shining with his glory: and then contemplate under all, the glorious person of the LORD JESUS, teaching and explaining all things, in the great events contained in this Chapter concerning himself.

Was this house a type of the Gospel Church? Do all his people whom he hath made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER, belong to this house? Ask then your own heart, yea, let every Reader ask himself, what entrance hath been admitted to him into this holy house? Have you got boldness to enter into it by the only way in which any can enter, even by the blood of JESUS. By whom did you enter, and who was the porter that opened to your view JESUS and his glory; JESUS, and all his sufficiency; and prompted you to believe in him? What are the sanctifying impressions wrought upon your soul by this allowed entrance? Here you see your own vileness, and JESUS'S glory? Are you well pleased for his righteousness sake, and do you repose in it? Are you renouncing all other holiness, and fully determined to be found in CHRIST'S only?

These enquiries, when truly answered, are sweet, and precious evidences of being entered in; and that He, whom *Ezekiel* saw in vision, you have seen also by faith, and are rejoicing now *in hope of the glory of GOD!* Precious LORD JESUS! do as thou hast said. Dwell now forever in the midst of thy people, and suffer them no longer to be defiled in their abominations, but be thou their GOD, and make them thy people; and cause them through thy grace, to separate themselves, and come out from among all the polluted around, that they may touch not the unclean things, but be truly, and in heart, made the sons and daughters of the LORD GOD Almighty! Amen.

CHAPTER 44

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The subject is still continued, and advancing in sublimity. Here is great honour shown to the Prince, whose entrance through the East gate forbid all others from so doing, to notify his glory and distinction. After this, divers ordinances are appointed in this Chapter, concerning those who minister in holy things.

EZEKIEL 44:1-3

Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it *was* shut. (2) Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. (3) *It is* for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of *that* gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

Surely there is in those verses so plain an allusion to the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that it is hardly possible for any to mistake it, or make application to any other. And not only to his person, on account of his infinite dignity, but also to his offices and character. For JESUS is not only the way, and the only way of access to JEHOVAH; but it is impossible, we are told, to approach by any but him. The gate is shut, and forever shut. How blessedly the Apostle speaks, on this grand point. Hebrews 9:11, 12.

EZEKIEL 44:4-5

Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face. (5) And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

What a beautiful view is again and again given of the *Shechinah*, or glory of the LORD filling the house. And what an holy awe do we always find induced by it, on the minds of holy men of old. Isaiah 6:1-5. Daniel 10:7, 8. Reader! what a blessed dispensation is that of the Gospel, to which we are called, who have JESUS to go to, and JESUS to trust in at all times, and who is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and hath brought us nigh by his blood?

EZEKIEL 44:6-27

And thou shalt say to the rebellious, *even* to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, (7) In that ye have brought *into my sanctuary* strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, *even* my house, when

ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. (8) And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. (9) Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that *is* among the children of Israel. (10) And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. (11) Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, *having* charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. (12) Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity. (13) And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy *place*: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. (14) But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. (15) But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: (16) They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. (17) And it shall come to pass, *that* when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within. (18) They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird *themselves* with any thing that causeth sweat. (19) And when they go forth into the utter court, *even* into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments. (20) Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads. (21) Neither shall any priest drink

wine, when they enter into the inner court. (22) Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before. (23) And they shall teach my people *the difference* between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. (24) And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; *and* they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths. (25) And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves. (26) And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days. (27) And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord GOD.

Here are very important commissions given to the Prophet to deliver to the people, all which are plain and express, and in which we find the sacred jealousy the LORD hath for his holy name and ordinances. Reader! our approaches now under the gospel dispensation, ought not to lessen our reverence, but increase it; seeing we have JESUS to give us boldness in his blood, it should make us delight ourselves to draw nigh. Hebrews 4:14-16.

EZEKIEL 44:28-31

And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I *am* their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I *am* their possession. (29) They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. (30) And the first of all the firstfruits of all *things*, and every oblation of all, of every *sort* of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house. (31) The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

I pray the Reader not to overlook the abundant grace of our adorable JESUS in what is here said, that he is the inheritance, and he is the possession of his people. Twice it is repeated in one verse; as if the LORD would have the impression of it not to pass away from their minds. If the Reader observes, as I hope he doth observe, that when this is said, it is said in peculiar reference to the LORD's priests; I cheerfully acquiesce in the same; but I beg the Reader no less to remember, that all GOD'S people are said to be a *nation of priests to the LORD*. And in JESUS Church, He hath made all his redeemed, both *Kings and Priests, to GOD and the FATHER, by his blood*. Pray turn to those sweet scriptures in confirmation. Exodus 19:3-6. 1 Peter 2:9. Revelation 1:6. Revelation 5:9, 10. Galatians 3:27-29.

REFLECTIONS

AND art thou, my soul, indeed a Priest, in this glorious House of thy GOD? Oh! then consider the great Apostle, and High Priest of thy profession, CHRIST JESUS. It is by virtue of thy union *with Him*, and redemption, *by Him*, that thou art brought into this royal Priesthood, and made an heir of GOD, and a joint heir with CHRIST. *In him*, all thine authority is found. *By Him*, all thy priestly exercises are carried on. *Through Him*, is the whole, both of thy person and offerings accepted. And *for Him*, and His sake alone, JEHOVAH hath respect to the whole Church, which is His body. Hail! thou LAMB of GOD! who art still the LAMB *in the midst of the throne*: equally attentive to thine house below, as to thine house above! All is made holy, and blessed, being chosen by JEHOVAH, in thee, before the world began! And now, and

forever, is every individual member of thy mystical body made honorable and glorious, by the sprinkling of thy blood, and by the sweet communications of thy blessed SPIRIT. LORD! add a blessing to these immense privileges, and cause me daily, hourly, minutely, to remember, and live up to that remembrance, that thou art my inheritance; that I have no inheritance in any thing here below; no possession in earth, and earthly concerns; for *the LORD is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup, thou maintaineth my lot!* And oh, for grace, to be as momentarily living to the glory and praise of my LORD; and presenting my body a *living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is my reasonable service.*

CHAPTER 45

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The subject of the preceding Chapters is still continued through this. The Prophet is informed of the different portions to be set apart, for the sanctuary and the city, and the Prince.

EZEKIEL 45:1-6

Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land: the length *shall be* the length of five and twenty thousand *reeds*, and the breadth *shall be* ten thousand. This *shall be* holy in all the borders thereof round about. (2) Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred *in length*, with five hundred *in breadth*, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof. (3) And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary *and* the most holy *place*. (4) The holy *portion* of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD: and

it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary. (5) And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth, shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers. (6) And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy *portion*: it shall be for the whole house of Israel.

If there were no other evidence but what those six verses contain, in proof, that somewhat of an higher nature, and design, than any event which ever yet took place, in the Jewish history, in the extent of their city and temple is intended, this passage would be sufficient. After the captivity in *Babylon* was ended, and the people returned to their home, never did they possess territories like what are here described. And though the *second* temple did indeed, in point of glory, possess by the LORD JESUS's presence, infinitely more than the *first*, yet, what is here said of extent and greatness, refers to a greater glory in the Church, in point of multitude, than hath yet been seen. Hence it should seem to follow, that the Prophet is here taught to look forward to the faith and expectations of that blessed period of the Church, which is to distinguish the latter day glory; when *a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation*, Isaiah 60:22.

EZEKIEL 45:7-8

And a *portion shall be* for the prince on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy *portion*, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy *portion*, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length *shall be* over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border. (8) In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and *the rest of* the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.

There is a striking difference in what is said here, between the Prince, and princes. The Prince is evidently spoken of as one particular person. *Princes* in the plural, differ totally from this identical one. Daniel 8:25. Daniel 9:25, 26.

EZEKIEL 45:9-16

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD. (10) Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. (11) The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer. (12) And the shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh. (13) This *is* the oblation that ye shall offer; the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley: (14) Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, *ye shall offer* the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, *which is* an homer of ten baths; for ten baths *are* an homer: (15) And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord GOD. (16) All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel.

Here are, precepts adapted to those that minister in the departments of justice, suited to Israel at all times, and upon all occasions. If the Reader wishes to know the proportion to our standard, in weights and measures, the table at the end of most Bibles will inform him.

EZEKIEL 45:17-25

And it shall be the prince's part *to give* burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make

reconciliation for the house of Israel. (18) Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first *month*, in the first *day* of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary: (19) And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put *it* upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. (20) And so thou shalt do the seventh *day* of the month for every one that erreth, and for *him that is* simple: so shall ye reconcile the house. (21) In the first *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. (22) And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock *for* a sin offering. (23) And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily *for* a sin offering. (24) And he shall prepare a meat offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah. (25) In the seventh *month*, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil.

Concerning the passover, and all the other offerings here appointed, we have only to consider them through the medium of the Gospel, and behold how all, and every one, pointed to CHRIST, our passover; and in Him had their accomplishment. *To Him give all the Prophets witness; and in Him we discover the whole tendency, and end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.* Acts 10:43. Romans 10:4.

REFLECTIONS

To whom shall I look, blessed JESUS, but to thee, as the glorious Prince here spoken of, and the sovereign of thy Church, thine house, and thy people. Surely, LORD, all and every oblation is of thine own free cost, and thou art the sum

and substance of all. In whatever point of view thy redeemed behold thee, under whatever period of thy Church, thou art regarded, thou art the same: the Alpha and Omega; the LORD of thy Temple; the Prophet, Priest, and King. Through every dispensation, whether Law, or Gospel; under every government, in thy suffering state, and triumphant state; the reign of grace, and the reign of glory: the Church militant, or the Church victorious; the millennial, or the everlasting kingdom; thy dominion extends through all, and thou art over all, GOD blessed forever! Oh! then cause *every man to bow before thee*, and *every tongue to confess that thou art JESUS CHRIST*, the ever blessed ever glorious Prince and Saviour, *to the glory of GOD the FATHER*. Amen.

CHAPTER 46

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The subject is still continued. Various appointments are here set forth, for the due government of the Prince's Kingdom, and the blessedness of his people.

EZEKIEL 46:1-18

Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened. (2) And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of *that* gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. (3) Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons. (4) And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the

LORD in the sabbath day *shall be* six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish. (5) And the meat offering *shall be* an ephah for a ram, and the meat offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. (6) And in the day of the new moon *it shall be* a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be without blemish. (7) And he shall prepare a meat offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah. (8) And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of *that* gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof. (9) But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it. (10) And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth. (11) And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. (12) Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, *one* shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth *one* shall shut the gate. (13) Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto the LORD *of* a lamb of the first year without blemish: thou shalt prepare it every morning. (14) And thou shalt prepare a meat offering for it every morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat offering continually by a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD. (15) Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat offering, and the oil, every morning *for* a continual burnt offering. (16) Thus saith the Lord GOD; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it *shall be* their possession by inheritance. (17) But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them. (18) Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession;

but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

Mysterious as the subject is in many points, respecting these offerings, looking as this scripture evidently doth, to a period of the Church, when the daily offering was forever to cease; yet one point is abundantly clear and satisfactory; namely, that the Prince was to be in the midst of his people, both at their going in, and going out. Such we know CHRIST to be, in all his Churches; and indeed without his presence, their assembly would be in vain. It is a precious consideration to the faithful, this promise of their GOD and Saviour: and which He hath very graciously given to them, for their comfort in all ages. Matthew 18:20. Matthew 28:20.

EZEKIEL 46:19-24

After he brought me through the entry, which *was* at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and, behold, there *was* a place on the two sides westward. (20) Then said he unto me, This *is* the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear *them* not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people. (21) Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and, behold, in every corner of the court *there was* a court. (22) In the four corners of the court *there were* courts joined of forty *cubits* long and thirty broad: these four corners *were* of one measure. (23) And *there was* a row of *building* round about in them, round about them four, and *it was* made with boiling places under the rows round about. (24) Then said he unto me, These *are* the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people.

We are at a loss to apprehend the precise meaning of this passage, from the same cause as the former. Indeed, no part of the prophecies of scripture carry with them a greater

mysteriousness, than the whole of this part of Ezekiel's prophecy, as contained in the last *nine* Chapters. Some indeed have determined their meaning in what is said here, to the ministry of the LORD's servants in the courts of his house. But certain it is, that too much obscurity is cast over it, to speak of this with precision. It will be sufficient for all our purposes of improvement, to receive those sacred things, with reverence, *as the word of GOD*, and to wait the LORD's own time for the full explanation; knowing that *no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of GOD spoke as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST*. 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we have now for several Chapters past, been following the footsteps of the Prophet through the wonderful apartments of this great city, which the LORD showed in vision to the man of GOD; and whether it relates to the Church militant, or millenary, in either sense or in both, still it becomes an interesting question; are we citizens of it, and entitled to its blessed privileges? Truly, we may take up the language of the Prophet concerning it, and say, *glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of GOD* Surely an admission here must be blessed. Surely the inhabitants of it must be peculiarly under the eye and good will of their LORD. Say then, my brother, do we speak the language of Canaan; delight in the place; the society; and above all, in the glorious king. Is JESUS precious; his Name always as ointment poured forth for fragrancy; his people, ordinances, holy days, greatly beloved

by us? It is truly gracious to have these testimonies in proof, that our conversation is in heaven, and that we are looking for the LORD's return to it, that when He, who is our life shall appear, we may appear with him in glory. Precious LORD JESUS! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, sweet and incontestible evidences, that we are thine, and growing up in thee to an holy temple in the LORD. Oh! the blessedness of belonging to the household, and family of faith; for if thou LORD hast made us free, in thee we shall be free indeed!

CHAPTER 47

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We have here the continuation of the same subject, but in a vision somewhat clearer to be understood. The Waters issuing from under the threshold of the House; the account of fishermen; and of trees growing on the banks of the river.

EZEKIEL 47:1-6

Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house *stood toward* the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar. (2) Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. (3) And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the ankles. (4) Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters *were* to the loins. (5) Afterward he measured

a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. (6) And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen *this*? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

If we compare scripture with scripture, (and, which GOD the HOLY GHOST commands, 1 Corinthians 2:13.) we shall take the most effectual method of arriving to the proper apprehension of what is here said, looking up to the Great Author of his holy word, to make it profitable. Now it was among the promises of JEHOVAH, that the last day dispensation of grace should be distinguished by the LORD's pouring out his spirit, like water, and dews, and showers, upon the mown grass. Several of the Prophets were directed to speak of the HOLY GHOST coming upon his people in this manner. Isaiah 44:3, 4. Joel 2:28. And *Zechariah*, as if in confirmation of what *Ezekiel* had before said, declared that *living* waters should go out from Jerusalem. Zechariah 14:8. And the beloved Apostle *John*, as if in clearer terms to give a comment upon this vision of Ezekiel, speaks of a river, and water of like, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and the LAMB. Revelation 22:1. I stay not to remark many beauties in allusion to the day of gospel grace, which this scripture abounds with; but certain it is, that the manner of expression which Ezekiel hath made use of, becomes truly significant. The Prophet did not see from whence these waters arose; the spring was hidden; so are our lives *hid with CHRIST in GOD*. *Colossians* 3:3. John explains the source, when he saith, *from the throne of GOD and the LAMB*: meaning from all the Persons of the GODHEAD; in, and through the LAMB. For GOD the FATHER is a fountain. Jeremiah 2:13. GOD the SON, is a fountain. Song Of Solomon 4:15. GOD the

SPIRIT, is a fountain. John 7:37-39. And all pour their rich mercies like a river, through the mediation of the GOD-MAN CHRIST JESUS. John 14:6. And is there not a great beauty also, in the thought suggested by the door of the house, and the right side? JESUS calls himself by the name of *the door* to his sheepfold. John 10:9. And we know whose side it was that was pierced, when forthwith came there out blood and water. John 19:34. And as all these things were seen by the Prophet, in his vision concerning Jerusalem, from whence the waters issued: so JESUS first sent forth his Gospel, after his redemption work was finished, from that beloved city. Luke 24:47. Concerning the swelling of those waters; they form a most beautiful type or figure, of the glorious spreading of the Gospel. JESUS'S cause must increase, must run and be glorified, and be a blessing through the earth. Such will be the latter day glory. Psalm 72:8-17. Some have thought that the Prophet's path, as marked in these waters, first reaching to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and afterwards to an ocean, to swim in; is meant to show the progress of grace, and our knowledge in the divine life.

EZEKIEL 47:7-12

Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river *were* very many trees on the one side and on the other. (8) Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: *which being* brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. (9) And it shall come to pass, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. (10) And it shall come to pass, *that* the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a *place* to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. (11) But the

miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. (12) And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Here are many similar allusions, such as were before, in reference to the LORD JESUS, and his Gospel. The trees on the bank of this river cannot be misunderstood, if we read what is here said, with what John the beloved Apostle hath said on the same subject. Revelation 22:2. Surely the LORD JESUS is the tree of life in the Paradise of GOD. And being placed on either side the river, most fully shows the presence of the LORD, in both his Churches, as well here as above. Subordinate to this view of the tree of life, we may behold *the very many trees* here spoken of, also, as those trees of righteousness, which are of the LORD's right hand planting, and represent all true believers in JESUS. Some already transplanted into the kingdom above, and some still on this side the river below. Isaiah 61:3. The current of these waters, towards the east country, the desert, and the sea; and the wonderful property of them in their healing quality, are most lovely and beautiful similitudes, to show the extensive influence of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the blessed effects of his salvation, wherever the LORD shall send it. And the difference between the marshes and miry places, compared to the ground that shall be healed, most strikingly set forth the distinguishing nature and property of grace. Such indeed ever hath been, and ever must be, the effect of the Gospel. While to some it proves *the savor of life unto life*, to others it becomes *the savor of death unto death*. 2 Corinthians 2:16.

Ministers of the Gospel, like the fishermen here spoken of, may cast their gospel net from *Engedi* (formerly called *Hazeron Tamar*, nigh to the Dead Sea) even unto *En-eglaim*, (which reacheth towards Jordan;) but unless JESUS gives the commission, like the pool of *Bethesda*, there will be no saving ordinance, for the want of that mighty Angel descending upon the waters. Oh! how blessed is it to see both Prophecy, Law, and Gospel, all uniting to the testimony of the truth, *as it is in* JESUS. The waters will heal, will give life, will restore; and the fruit of the tree shall be both meat, and the leaf for medicine, when JESUS is in both, and in all: but without Him, the one will afford no food, neither the other health, to any dying, dead, or sin-sick soul!

EZEKIEL 47:13-23

Thus saith the Lord GOD; This *shall be* the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph *shall have two* portions. (14) And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: *concerning* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance. (15) And this *shall be* the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; (16) Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which *is* between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which *is* by the coast of Hauran. (17) And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And *this is* the north side. (18) And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel *by* Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And *this is* the east side. (19) And the south side southward, from Tamar *even* to the waters of strife *in* Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And *this is* the south side southward. (20) The west side also *shall be* the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This *is* the west side. (21) So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. (22) And it shall come to pass, *that* ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the

strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. (23) And it shall come to pass, *that* in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give *him* his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.

Here seems to open a new subject, in dividing the several portions of the Holy Land to the tribes of Israel. And I would ask, is there not a most gracious and merciful provision made also for the Gentile stranger, whom the after Dispensation of Grace brings in, to make one fold with Israel under one shepherd, JESUS CHRIST the righteous? John 10:16.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let my soul take her stand, where the Prophet once stood, and as I behold by the eye of faith, as he then did by vision, the waters issuing from under the threshold of the LORD's house, I would call to mind and contemplate that pure water of life, clear as crystal, which *John* also saw, to the same purport, and from the same cause, even *from the throne of GOD and the LAMB*. Yes! truly, O LORD, all blessings flow in and from JEHOVAH in his threefold character of Person; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; through the LAMB, CHRIST JESUS. And oh! how full of healing, sovereign, quickening, cleansing, refreshing, sanctifying grace, are all the thousand streams. Oh! what rich, full, everlasting, ever flowing, and overflowing waters, these are! How they run in the ordinances of the Gospel, and through the several means of grace! In some places to the ankles, in others to the knees, in others to the loins, and in others becoming even a river for the redeemed souls to bathe in! Surely they are commissioned by Him, from

whom they issue, to give life, and *to give it more abundantly!* It is only those marshy and miry souls, who resist the life-giving stream, that are given up to perpetual barrenness! But everywhere, even to the Dead Sea of dead sinners hearts, where this water comes, it quickens to immediate life. Truly, blessed JESUS, mightest thou well call this perennial spring *living water;* and *the water of life;* for it springeth up in my soul, and in every soul whom thou causest to partake of it, *a well of water springing up to everlasting life.* Oh! for every poor sinner that hears of this life-giving stream, to come to it, freely given as it is, *without money and without price!*

Reader! contemplate the many blessed things of Gospel mercies, contained in this lovely Chapter. Behold the streams of grace; behold the trees of life on the banks of the river, and the many, yea, very many trees of the LORD's right hand planting, on either side! Behold those living waters going forth towards the East Country, and toward the desert of our poor dry nature. And then look up with me, yea, let us both look up together, to the great source, and fountain of those mercies, in JESUS, and pray the LORD to send the healing streams in every direction, to bless the Church of our LORD JESUS throughout the whole habitable earth. O Sacred River! *do thou make glad the city of our GOD.* Amen.

CHAPTER 48

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The Prophet, having been led by the hand through all the Apartments of this wonderful house, is now, in the close of

the whole, instructed concerning the portions of the people. The several tribes of Israel are enumerated, with their several proportions, and the prophecy closeth with the most blessed title given to the city, intimating the perpetual presence of JEHOVAH.

EZEKIEL 48:1-8

Now these *are* the names of the tribes. From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east *and* west; a *portion for* Dan. (2) And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side, a *portion for* Asher. (3) And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a *portion for* Naphtali. (4) And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a *portion for* Manasseh. (5) And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a *portion for* Ephraim. (6) And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side, a *portion for* Reuben. (7) And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a *portion for* Judah. (8) And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand *reeds in* breadth, and *in* length as one of the *other* parts, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.

The Reader will observe, that the Prophet is here describing the several tribes on the *north*, according to their portions. I the rather wish to consider the subject spiritually, and therefore cannot but behold what is here said, as being in reference to the glorious state of the Church, in the latter-day dispensation; when temporal possessions will not be the only happiness of the LORD's Israel, but spiritual and eternal. The portion of each will be the portion of all. And this will be *not the precious things brought forth by the sun, nor the precious things put forth by the moon; but the good will of Him that*

dwelt in the bush. And who but JESUS is this; or who can be a portion to live upon, either here or hereafter, but *the* LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS? Deuteronomy 33:13-16.

EZEKIEL 48:9-22

The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD *shall be* of five and twenty thousand in length, and of ten thousand in breadth. (10) And for them, *even* for the priests, shall be *this* holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand *in length*, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof. (11) *It shall be* for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. (12) And *this* oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites. (13) And over against the border of the priests the Levites *shall have* five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length *shall be* five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand. (14) And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land: for *it is* holy unto the LORD. (15) And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane *place* for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof. (16) And these *shall be* the measures thereof; the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred. (17) And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty. (18) And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy *portion shall be* ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward: and it shall be over against the oblation of the holy *portion*; and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve the city. (19) And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel. (20) All the oblation *shall be* five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the

possession of the city. (21) And the residue *shall be* for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince: and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house *shall be* in the midst thereof. (22) Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, *being* in the midst of *that* which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.

Here are directions, very largely given, for the different services of the several tribes, and their importance; of which we cannot now speak particularly. It is on these points, this striking prophecy more immediately abounds with difficulties. Probably the *millennium* will explain the whole.

EZEKIEL 48:23-29

As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin *shall have a portion*. (24) And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side, Simeon *shall have a portion*. (25) And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar a *portion*. (26) And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun a *portion*. (27) And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a *portion*. (28) And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar *unto* the waters of strife *in* Kadesh, *and* to the river toward the great sea. (29) This *is* the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these *are* their portions, saith the Lord GOD.

Here the same observation meets us concerning the *southern* situation of the tribes, as in the former of the *northern*. Blessed is it to behold the LORD JESUS CHRIST the one portion of all!

EZEKIEL 48:30-35

And these *are* the goings out of the city on the north side, four thousand and five hundred measures. (31) And the gates of the city *shall be* after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi. (32) And at the east side four thousand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan. (33) And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun. (34) At the west side four thousand and five hundred, *with* their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali. (35) *It was* round about eighteen thousand *measures*: and the name of the city from *that day shall be*, The LORD *is* there.

It is hardly possible to read this account of the gates, and of the tribes, in each direction of the gates, without having our minds instinctively led to the contemplation of the beloved Apostle's account of the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:10, &c. But what crowns all, and gives the highest finishing to all, is that glorious name with which the prophecy closeth, and which ensures the everlasting happiness of the people: JEHOVAH SHAMMAH! *The LORD is there*, And wherever the LORD is, that makes heaven, and constitutes everlasting felicity. In the Jewish Church, this glorious *Shechinah* formed the whole of blessedness. In the Christian Church, JESUS is still the *Shechinah* of his people. The *millennium* happiness will arise froth the same. And in the eternal state, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH is the whole glory. Reader! pause over the wonderful account. Is JEHOVAH SHAMMAH thy happiness now? So then will He be to all eternity. The joys of heaven, and the joys of the Church on earth, is made up of one and the same. *Here*, the LORD's presence with his people, is the sum and substance of all their happiness. *There*, their felicity is, that they shall be *forever with the LORD*. Even so. Amen.

REFLECTIONS

AND now, Reader! before closing the book of this prophecy, say, what hath the LORD taught thee of its blissful contents? Taken in one great whole, it seems evident, amidst all the obscurity upon those writings of Ezekiel, that it is the Gospel Church, and not the Temple of the Jews, after their return from Babylon, the Prophet was taught to contemplate by this vision. The immense city here described in the last nine Chapters of Ezekiel's vision, not the whole territories of Israel; no, nor the whole world could contain! According to the smallest calculation, one hundred thousand miles is the dimensions! Hence we must behold therefore, somewhat beyond anything material in the building. It is, it must be, spiritual. And as the LORD JESUS CHRIST, by his entrance into the second temple, gave a greater glory to it than all the splendour of the first; and as both these are done away, why may we not, as the Apostle saith we do, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Reader! what saith your heart's expectation to those things? Oh! for both Writer and Reader, to be as the Apostle describes the Church, looking for, and hasting to, the coming of this great day of GOD! JESUS will come, to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. His feet (the Prophet saith) shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. He, whom the wondering disciples saw ascending, shall so come in like manner, as they saw him go into heaven! Reader! here let you and I rest, in full assurance of faith. The Church, both militant and triumphant; in grace and glory; shall know his name, for from that day the name of the City shall be called, the LORD is there.

And now adieu, Ezekiel, faithful servant of thy GOD! Thou hast indeed shown, that thou wert rightly named *Ezekiel*, which is, *the strength of GOD*. For thou hast shown the strength of the LORD to have been in thee. Highly favoured Messenger! What though the river *Chebar* witnessed thy captivity; yet made free in JESUS, *thou wert free indeed*. And blest with such visions of thy GOD, how peculiarly set apart wert thou for thy LORD's service. Through every generation thy inspired records have been commissioned to thy LORD's glory. I thank thee, as my LORD's servant, for what He hath taught me by thee. I thank my GOD for raising up such a servant in his Church. And now, thou hast long seen all the grand events here taught thee in vision, assuredly to be realized in their due season; thou hast sat down among the goodly fellowship of Prophets in heaven, waiting under the golden altar their final accomplishment! Farewell for a little space, *Ezekiel*, until the whole Church meet in this blessed city thou has so divinely described, and every tribe have each their separate and distinct mansion in JESUS, and JESUS the one portion of each and of all. In that blessed hour, may it be the felicity, both of him that writes and him that reads, (if consistent with the LORD's will,) to join *Ezekiel* with all the ransomed which are there returned to Zion, *with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads*. There in one vast assembly, all to shout aloud, and all to enter into the full and everlasting enjoyment of their LORD. Each for himself, and altogether equally blessed, in the unspeakable and never ending happiness of His presence. JEHOVAH SHAMMAH! Then will it be indeed known and indeed felt; the LORD IS THERE. Amen, and Amen.

THE BOOK OF *DANIEL*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

Of the certainty of Daniel's prophecy being authentic, the testimonies are undoubted. The LORD seems to have overruled things in such a manner, as to put it out of all question. The Jews, indeed, in order to invalidate Daniel's prophecies concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, cause his writings not to be put among the other writings of the Prophets. And the reason is very obvious. For so pointed and express is this man's

whole tendency in his prophecies, to the person and glory of CHRIST, that had they acknowledged his writings to have been prophetic, they must have acknowledged CHRIST also. Therefore, by separating *Daniel's* book of prophecy from the general prophecies of scripture, they aimed to do away the Prophet's testimony concerning CHRIST. But added to the whole authority of the Word of GOD to prove that *Daniel* was a Prophet, the church of GOD hath one that is most blessed, conclusive, and satisfactory. I mean the testimony of the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself. For in that memorable discourse which the LORD JESUS delivered, and which may be called CHRIST'S own prophecy concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem; the LORD expressly refers to the prophecy of *Daniel* in confirmation of it: and as expressly calls *Daniel* a Prophet. So that nothing can be more in point. See Daniel 12:11. and compare what he there delivers with the words of JESUS, Matthew 24:15.

The name of *Daniel* is not without much signification considered with an eye to his ministry. It is a compound in itself, and means, *the judgment of GOD*. And if we consider, that both his ministry in the court of Babylon, and the scope of his prophecy concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whose office is, to set *judgment in the earth when the isles should wait for his law*, Isaiah 42:4. There is a great beauty in the servant's name who ministered to such a Master. *Daniel* was of the tribe of *Judah*; and as we find carried away among the captives to *Babylon* when very young. His ministry was lengthened, it is more than probable, through the whole of the captivity. But what I would more particularly beg to remark concerning the ministry of Daniel is, that he not only

prophesied of the events to be accomplished in the Church from the *Chaldean* to the *Roman* monarchy, but his prophecies looked much further. I do not presume to speak decidedly upon this, or any other subject, that is unexplained by GOD the HOLY GHOST; but with an eye to his divine teaching, I venture to enquire, whether the prophecies of *Daniel*, are not in some parts of them accomplishing in this very hour? For, as the Roman empire, to which, as by the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies in part hath been already proved, this holy man of GOD plainly referred, we behold the reference of his prophecy: so as *Rome* was mystically the Babylon spoken of in the Revelations, it should seem, that the Prophet was directed by the HOLY GHOST, to look as far forward as the present, and perhaps a future day of the Church.

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

I beg the Reader, both at his entrance upon the threshold of this sacred Scripture, and through all the departments of it, to keep a stedfast eye to GOD the HOLY GHOST for his divine teaching; remembering our LORD's own words concerning it; *Let him that readeth understand*, Mark 13:14. Almighty

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

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 1:1-2

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. (2) And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

These verses are introductory to the main subject of the Prophet's writings. He relates the circumstance of the captivity. We find a confirmation of the same, Isaiah 39. Jeremiah 52. I only detain the Reader at these verses to remark the awful event of the carrying away the sacred

vessels of the temple, and putting them in the house of an idol. Alas! is it not so in every instance, when from the fall of man, what was designed for the LORD's glory is abused to the service of sin?

DANIEL 1:3-5

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; (4) Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. (5) And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

What the immediate design of this heathenish monarch was is not said; but it is blessed to watch how the LORD over-rules it for his glory and his people's happiness. JESUS is always ordering all things to this end, whatever the designs of the Church's enemies may be. Oh! that the people of GOD could always keep this in view!

DANIEL 1:6-7

Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah: (7) Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishaël, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

The change of names could, have no good design. No doubt it was to make them forget both the LORD, and their interest in Him as a covenant GOD. The custom in Israel, of giving names to their children, which, either by direct words, or indirect meaning; had reference to the GOD of their fathers, was very

ancient, and, no doubt, arose from the LORD. For we find that the LORD himself gave names to his people, and sometimes changed their names upon any remarkable occasion. See Genesis 17:5-15. and 32:28. And holy men of old were very fond of calling their children by somewhat remarkable, in order to keep in remembrance the LORD'S grace or his providence. Thus in the instance before us, *Daniel's* name signified, *a GOD of judgment*, or GOD is my judge. *Hananiah* had two of the letters which belong to the incommunicable name of JEHOVAH in it: and signified *the LORD of grace*, or *the LORD is gracious to me*. *Michael*, conveyed in the sense of it, *the strength of GOD*; and *Azariah*, a compound of *Azar* and *JAH*, implied *the LORD is my help*. So that the very names always carried with them a blessed allusion to the LORD GOD of their fathers. But, *Belteshazzar*, *Shadrach*, *Meshech*, and *Abednego*, were all in allusion to the dunghill idols of Babylon. Thus *Belteshazzar* referred to their idol *Bel*; and *Rack* and *Shack* are supposed to have been idols also; and *Abed* or *Obed*, a servant of *Nego*, another contemptible idol of the Babylonians. For it appears that they had many which they worshipped. And indeed, when by sin man revolted from the LORD, in the unity of the divine nature, existing in a threefold character of person, as the Patriarchs adored the GOD of Israel; and turned from one only and true GOD, the transition was easily then made to many. How blessedly the Apostle speaks to this subject, 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6. I cannot forbear remarking, that the names given to the planets by philosophers, as they are called, of modern times, is but too near a kin to the conduct of Eastern manners among idolaters. And it is in my view, a sad reproach to a nation like ours, professing godliness.

DANIEL 1:8-16

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. (9) Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. (10) And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king. (11) Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, (12) Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. (13) Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. (14) So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. (15) And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. (16) Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

Mark the grace and watchful eye of the LORD in this instance over his people, or we shall lose the chief beauty of the history. Surely, nothing but grace could have prompted young men, like Daniel and his companions, to use such an abstinence in the King's court, with all their passions about them. And nothing but the overruling of the LORD, could for a moment have prompted the mind the Prince that had the charge of the captives to listen to the voice of Daniel, at the evident hazard of incurring the displeasure of the King, who, in these countries were despotic. And nothing but the grace and blessing of the LORD upon the poor fare, could have led to the hope of such effects. For certain it is, it is contrary to the common operations of nature; a poverty of living, always must induce from mere natural causes, a poverty of

countenance. But under GOD'S blessing, what may not be expected? Let us not overlook the sweet spiritual instruction which this feeding holds forth to the Churches of JESUS. Let the *Melzars* of the present day suspend or take away the carnal portions of our meat and wine; JESUS will give the bread in secret; and his people, like their LORD, will have meat the world knoweth not of. This is the King's meat indeed, and sent from the King's table. And oh! what a fairness of countenance will it induce at the end of the days, making the soul glad with the light of the LORD'S countenance.

DANIEL 1:17-20

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. (18) Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. (19) And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. (20) And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

Reader! when the Church of GOD; (which Daniel and his companions represented,) is called in to stand before the King; and JESUS himself communes with his redeemed! how fully will it be found, that there can be none like the Church in point of knowledge, skill, and wisdom: because CHRIST himself is made of GOD unto all his people: wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Such honour have all his saints!

DANIEL 1:21

And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus.

If we consider Daniel to have been but a youth of about *fifteen* when brought to Babylon, and from all his history, he could not have been younger at that time, he must have lived to a good old age; for the first year of Cyrus did not commence until the whole seventy years of the captivity had run out. Think what grace the LORD manifested to his servant. And what an honor to Daniel to be so long engaged in the LORD's service!

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 2:1-2

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. (2) Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

It is well worth the Reader's remark, how often in Scripture we find the LORD taking occasion to bring about great things by the ministry of dreams. The dream of Joseph, of Pharaoh, of the chief butler and baker, of Ahasuerus, and the like. And

what proofs do they all bring of the LORD'S watchful care over his people.

DANIEL 2:3-13

And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. (4) Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. (5) The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. (6) But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. (7) They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. (8) The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. (9) But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but* one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. (10) The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore *there is* no king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. (11) And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. (12) For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. (13) And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

No doubt, but that the LORD in his over-ruling providence, while impressing the mind of the King with the importance of the dream itself; yet made him so totally to forget the particulars of it by way of introducing Daniel. What a beautiful subject doth the conviction of this open to the LORD'S people

in all the circumstances of their lives? How sure, how very sure is it, that the very hairs of their head are all numbered, when not a single event in their history can take place, but by the LORD'S appointment. Reader! if a gracious reader, do not forget to make this personal!

DANIEL 2:14-16

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon: (15) He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, *Why is the decree so hasty from the king?* Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. (16) Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

I hope that the Reader will find cause in these verses, as in the former, to watch the LORD'S over-ruling providence in the things here related. For what but that Almighty power, which worketh for his own glory and his people's welfare, could have stayed the mind of the King to suspend his wrath, and stop the execution of his decree. For so absolute were those monarchs, that none dared oppose them. And yet here is a poor youth, a foreigner, yea, a captive, hath influence, when the wise men could not be heard. And who but the LORD GOD of Israel could have wrought this? Oh! how sure and how blessed is that certain truth. Proverbs 31:1.

DANIEL 2:17-18

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: (18) That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon.

What a lovely view is here given of the modesty, humbleness, and grace of Daniel and his companions? He hath no recourse to human policy, or human wisdom, but he seeketh to the LORD his GOD. Like Hezekiah, he spread the concerns before the LORD. Isaiah 37:14, &c. Reader! let you and I seek grace in all our exercises to do the same. Surely, it is blessed to have a throne of grace to fly unto. And oh! how blessed to know that we have another whom the FATHER heareth always. Precious JESUS! do I not know that all my concerns, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are all safe in thine hands.

DANIEL 2:19-23

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. (20) Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: (21) And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: (22) He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. (23) I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter.

Behold, Reader! the prevalency of prayer. Oh! what hath not prayer with faith in CHRIST wrought? When GOD the HOLY GHOST gives a spirit of prayer, and leads the soul in JESUS into the very retirings of the LORD, so that we wrestle, as Jacob did; and act faith, as Elijah did; what mercies may not be expected to follow. See also those Scriptures, Genesis 32:24-30 Kings 18:24, 36-38. John 14:13. John 16:23, 24. I must not dismiss these verses before that I have called upon the Reader to remark with me the behavior of Daniel upon this occasion. As soon as the LORD revealed unto him the secret,

he first poured out his whole soul in praise to the great Author of the mercy. He did not hasten to the King of Babylon before that he had first blessed the King of kings for his grace. There were numberless mercies Daniel found grace to be thankful for; and no doubt under the sense he had of the LORD'S favor, his heart was melted before the LORD. See another beautiful instance of the like kind, 2 Samuel 7 throughout. Reader! is there nothing in all these instances, and which we read in the history of GOD'S people, which is suited to you and to me, as they refer to our state and circumstances? Surely, Daniel's success in prayer, and the LORD'S blessing in hearing, and answering prayer, will leave us without excuse, if we neglect to visit the throne, upon any and every occasion; especially with so many increased arguments, as we have in JESUS, our Great High Priest and Intercessor. Oh! thou Almighty LORD, that art in the midst of the throne! do thou cause this bright example of Daniel, to stir up thy redeemed to this most blessed and sure rewarding service, that we may be delighted in bringing all our concerns before thee, and by *prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make all our requests known unto GOD*. Philipians 4:6, 7.

DANIEL 2:24-28

Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. (25) Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. (26) The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? (27) Daniel answered in the

presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; (28) But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

There is a great beauty in this introduction of Daniel before the King. And we cannot sufficiently admire Daniel's preface to what he had to say to the King on the subject of his dream. It required no small faith in the LORD, at his first address, to tell the King honestly and plainly, that none but the GOD of heaven, and a GOD that the King neither knew nor owned, could be equal to what the King had demanded of his wise men: thereby indirectly requesting the King never more to put any confidence in them. Reader! do not overlook the sweet lesson it teacheth believers of the present hour. Let not you and I ever more seek that from creatures, which belongeth only to the infinite Creator: neither in self-righteousness find confidence, which the righteousness of the LORD JESUS only can give.

DANIEL 2:29-36

As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. (30) But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. (31) Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible. (32) This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, (33) His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. (34) Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. (35) Then was the

iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. (36) This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

There are several interesting things in this relation of Daniel, which ought not to be passed by. Observe the modesty of the Prophet, in totally disclaiming all pretensions to merit in himself, and referring all glory to the LORD. Observe also, how boldly Daniel points out to the King the causes wherefore the King was led into this dream, and had his thoughts so deeply exercised about the meaning of it. Daniel plainly tells the monarch, that the whole event was for the Church's good. Oh! precious JESUS! how hast thou watched over thy Church in all ages, and art watching over it still! The wakefulness of a Persian King laid the foundation for the safety of the whole empire where the Church then was. See Esther 6:1-13. And the dream of this King of Babylon, became the cause of promoting Daniel in a foreign Court, whereby the Church was protected, and the council of the LORD made known to it when in captivity. Blessed LORD! cause thy people always to keep such views of thy constant watching over them in remembrance. As to the dream of an image, of such brightness, and so compounded of gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and clay; the figure was so unequal, as might well excite the astonishment of the monarch's mind. And no less, when he beheld this great image destroyed, by a cause so apparently slender, and so apparently disproportioned, and also by means undiscovered, as a *stone cut out without hands*: yea, moreover, that this little stone should become a

great mountain, and fill the earth! Here were wonders upon wonders!

DANIEL 2:37-45

Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. (38) And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold. (39) And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. (40) And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. (41) And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. (42) And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. (43) And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. (44) And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (45) Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Think, Reader! what astonishment must have overwhelmed the mind of Babylon's monarch, when beholding a poor captive youth of Israel's race, not only bringing to his recollection all the circumstances which had passed before him in the visions of the night, and which no human being could have had any knowledge of but himself; but, also,

undauntedly, and without fear, explaining the dream, though it foreboded the certain destruction of this monarch's own kingdom. Oh! blessed, blessed LORD, what invincible boldness doth grace induce towards man, while humbleness towards GOD is in the hearts of thy people! Now, Reader, attend to Daniel's interpretation of this dream, and then ponder over the important subject, as we know it hath literally and truly come to pass. The *four* kingdoms would not have merited notice, but as they ministered to the LORD's Church. These were to succeed each other, and exactly did so, as Daniel prophesied. The *head of gold*, in this image, represented the *Chaldean* monarchy. The *silver breast and arms*, pointed to the *Persian* kingdom, which sprung out of the Chaldean, when the former was destroyed by *Cyrus*. See Chap. 5. To this succeeded the *Grecian* monarchy, marked in the King's dream by *the belly and thighs of brass*. And the *fourth*, which was denoted by *the legs and feet of iron*, represented the *Roman*, and which remained until that *stone cut out without hands*, meaning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the humblest, and lowliest of the sons of men, came to establish his glorious kingdom, and fill the earth. Thus, Reader, behold both the prediction and the event; and in the spiritual kingdom of our LORD, observe how the GOD of heaven hath set up an empire never to be destroyed. Oh! precious, precious LORD JESUS, *thy kingdom is indeed an everlasting kingdom; and thy dominion that which must remain forever*.

DANIEL 2:46-49

Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. (47) The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this

secret. (48) Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon. (49) Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

Reader! behold, the wonderful effects wrought upon the mind of *Nebuchadnezzar!* To see a prince thus forgetting all distinction and dignity, and falling prostrate before a poor captive; nothing can more fully demonstrate the powerful operations which must have been induced by the LORD in his mind. But, I beg the Reader at the same time, not to overlook the important lesson it teacheth. Though the King was thus convinced, none but GOD could have revealed those things to Daniel; and though the LORD worked upon the King's mind to such a degree, as to make him fall to the ground before Daniel under this conviction; yet all this was no work of saving grace upon Nebuchadnezzar's heart. Men may tremble under the word, may confess, like the magician's in the court of Pharaoh, at the sight of the miracles wrought by Moses in the name of the LORD, that *the finger of GOD* was in them (Exodus 8:19.) yet all the while, nature remains unchanged, unregenerated. Nebuchadnezzar asked no further after the GOD of Daniel; neither did the magicians, or Pharaoh, desire to worship the GOD of Daniel. Reader! I pray you to mark the striking difference. It is to be exceedingly feared, that in this our day, many a stony ground hearer may melt, or rejoice under the word, and for a while, fully acknowledge the truths they hear, whose hearts remain unchanged, and are still unregenerated by grace. Matthew 13:20, 21. What an awful consideration!

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I contemplate the GOD of Daniel in his providences, as well as in his grace. Oh! what an arrangement of events and things were here, in order to raise the LORD's poor captives from their low estate, to an high. Surely, that scripture was eminently fulfilled; *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.* But let us not rest here, but remember also, that the events recorded in this Chapter were for the comfort of the Church then in captivity: or as Daniel told the King, *it was for their sakes* that the secret was disclosed to Daniel, that is, the sake of his Church, his chosen. Not to inform an idolatrous King and his court, unless to damp and mortify their pride, that Babylon must fall, and all monarchies unto CHRIST, be as the potsherds of the earth; but that the Church of the living GOD might know that JEHOVAH was still as ever, watching over their interests, and would in due time, hasten on and establish forever the kingdom of his dear SON. Here, Reader! let you and I make our improvements of this blessed Chapter, and at the same time recollect, that this, and this only, is at the bottom, of all JEHOVAH'S dispensations, to bring forward JESUS and his great salvation; that, as the scripture gloriously explains it, JEHOVAH might, *in the dispensation of the fulness of time, gather together in one all, things in CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in Him.* Hallelujah, Amen.

But chiefly, Reader! let our improvement of this Chapter be to contemplate Him, whom under the similitude of a *little stone*

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

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 3:1

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

It is not said when this event took place. One should think it could hardly have been soon after, the King fell prostrate before Daniel, and thought him more than man, as the preceding Chapter relates. But, when we consider the desperately wicked state of the unrenewed heart, full of enmity against GOD; I am inclined to think it was. But, be that as it may, we see the awful impiety of this wretched man! As he proudly thought the Chaldean empire was the golden part of the image he saw in his dream; he now determined to bid defiance to Daniel's GOD, and see which should come to pass. Reader! is it not enough in such views of human nature to make every heart tremble? LORD! what is man void of grace!

DANIEL 3:2-7

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. (3) Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. (4) Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, (5) *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: (6) And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. (7) Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and*

worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

We have here the prosecution of this impious design. Reader! would it be believed, if fact had not proved it so, that men possessing reason, should fall down to so ridiculous a figure, as a lifeless, helpless, unconscious mass of metal? To be sure, it must have been an enormous figure, *threescore* cubits! whereas a man six feet, is but four cubits, and this image therefore must have been ninety feet. But what of that: its enormity only served to make it more contemptible.

DANIEL 3:8-12

Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. (9) They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. (10) Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: (11) And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. (12) There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

It is very evident, that the whole design of this new dunghill GOD set up, was, with a view to criminate the faithful Jews. And as upon the late occasion, at the instance of Daniel; those three men were advanced to high honors in Babylon, against those the deadly bow was leveled. I pray the Reader to remark with me *two* things, which, though the HOLY GHOST hath not explained, the LORD the SPIRIT certainly intended the faithful should not overlook. The *one* is, that Daniel, though by the Chaldeans called *Belteshazzar*, in relation to their idol

god *Bel*; yet, carefully avoids it in the history, as if despising it, and keeps close to his own real name, in honour of the GOD of Israel. And the *other* is, that in this accusation of Daniel's companions, Daniel himself is not mentioned. There is no way of accounting for this, but by supposing what is likely to be the case; that Daniel at this time might be absent from the Babylonish court.

DANIEL 3:13-18

Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. (14) Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, *Is it* true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? (15) Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? (16) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter. (17) If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king. (18) But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

There needs no comment on these verses, only to observe, that the dreadful fury of the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST, have been always the same, as in the instance of this man. Reader! have you never seen, (I have, and remarked it also,) the bitterness of the most hellish malice belching out of the mouths of the haters of the saints in their accusations against them. And have you not seen, on the other hand, that spirit of meekness, such as those saints of GOD manifested under the crimination of their foes? Oh! what cannot grace

accomplish? How tranquil were their minds, opposed to the rage of the King, and what an answer did they give: *if it be so*, that is, if our GOD doth not interpose to save us from thy wrath, it is not because he *cannot*, but because it is for His greater glory, and our advantage, that he *should not*. Oh! how perfect that peace the soul is kept in, when in such trying seasons, the soul leans wholly on GOD'S sure mercy in CHRIST! Isaiah 26:3.

DANIEL 3:19-23

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. (20) And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. (21) Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. (22) Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (23) And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Ah! wretched *Nebuchadnezzar!* how wilt thou endure the heated furnace of everlasting wrath! What! even if it had killed the faithful servants of the LORD, what would have been *their* sufferings for a few moments, which, in consuming, would soon have put them out of all pain, compared to *thy* torments in that lake *whose smoke ascends for ever and ever? A worm that never dies, and a fire that cannot be quenched!* Here are torments that do not destroy. A *second death* which is endless, and of never dying misery! Oh! wretched, wretched man! Reader! awfully ponder over those

scriptures: Revelation 20:10. to the end. Mark 9:43, 44. Isaiah 33:14.

DANIEL 3:24-25

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. (25) He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Probably the impious wretch was struck with astonishment at the distinguishing providence of GOD, that while GOD's servants received no hurt, the very heat of the furnace struck dead those who had laid their hands upon them. But what, did the fire loosen the cords, With which *Shadrach* and his companions were bound, and yet not touch their persons? Yes! so distinguishing was the mercy, that not a hair of their heads was singed. Oh! what tokens are these of JESUS looking on, guiding all, and controlling all! But all is explained to us in what follows. JESUS was with them. Yea, the monster of iniquity shall see Him, like another Balaam, *but not nigh*. Numbers 24:17. Revelation 1:7. Reader! pause, and ponder well the wonderful subject, for the same is every day going on in the Church, thought not in such open manifestations. Men may shackle and bind the bodies of the saints: but JESUS loosens the cords of the heart, and gives them an enlargedness of soul in him. Prisons have often shut the saints in; but no prison can ever shut CHRIST out. Read, I beseech you, some of those many promises to this amount, with which the word of GOD abounds. Isaiah 43:1, 2. Revelation 2:10. John 16:33. And then turn to the account the HOLY GHOST gives of those illustrious servants of the LAMB,

who *through faith quenched the violence of fire*, Hebrews 11 from beginning to the end.

DANIEL 3:26-30

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. (27) And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. (28) *Then* Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. (29) Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. (30) Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

Reader! pray observe what is here said. Nebuchadnezzar is astonished, and so are his courtiers. But is this all? Yes! for had there been more than astonishment and any grace wrought in the heart, the accusers of these holy men would have been punished; the King himself would have confessed his guilt, and the LORD GOD of his faithful servants been acknowledged and adored. And, Reader! is it not so now in what is going on through life? Do the most awful judgments, visitations, deliverances, blessings, or chastisements, produce a change in the minds of men by their operations! Ah! no. If the unhappy apostate spirits now in hell were unchained and freed, devils they would still remain. Nothing but the arm of

sovereign grace can subdue the stubborn heart of sinners, whether men or devils. Oh! that this was but thoroughly considered, that so the glory of JEHOVAH might be known and confessed in the Church of GOD, that his arm alone bringeth salvation. Reader! do you know this most certain truth of GOD? Are you a living testimony of his grace, in being the happy object on which that grace hath been shown? Ephesians 2:1.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 4:1-3

Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. (2) I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. (3) How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation.

The proud and insolent monarch is here brought to account for his daring impiety towards GOD, and his cruelty to the LORD's servants. And he is not only compelled to bow down before the LORD's sovereignty, but compelled, to publish his disgrace to all the world, and confess, that the LORD's hand in his just judgment had been upon him. Reader! behold in this man, how sure the scriptures are in truth, that there is, there must be, a day coming to every sinner, in which the LORD will judge the world in righteousness. Psalm 58:11.

DANIEL 4:4-18

I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: (5) I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. (6) Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. (7) Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. (8) But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, *saying*, (9) O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. (10) Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great. (11) The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: (12) The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. (13) I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; (14) He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: (15) Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth: (16) Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. (17) This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. (18) This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto

me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee.

Observe several striking particulars in this man's account. *First*, he tells us, that he was at rest in his house, and flourishing. Yes! the word of GOD teacheth the people of GOD to be on the lookout for the sudden downfall of sinners. When such say *peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as upon a woman in travail, so that they cannot escape*. I venture on this occasion to observe, that GOD'S people are not as attentive as they ought to be, and as the word of the LORD recommends them to be, to those sudden judgments of GOD upon the enemies of his CHRIST. For though the great day of their ruin is deferred to that day, when the LORD will arise to punish the ungodly, and to minister true judgment to the people; yet, very frequently now, the LORD speaks in a loud voice, *for* his people, and *to* his people, in the striking chastisement shown to the CHRIST-despising generation of the present day. Reader! I pray you henceforth, look more to this in what is going on in the world, and depend upon it, you will find continual instances in proof, that, *for the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, the LORD doth arise*. Psalm 12:5. *Secondly*, in this account of Nebuchadnezzar, he is compelled to see and to confess, that his misery was of the LORD. Here was a bitter aggravation of his ruin. It was *that* GOD whom he had defied, which now smote him, and which made every scourge a scorpion. *Thirdly*, the wretch trembled, he tells us, in the very recollection of his vision. His own mind, his own conscience, his own guilty fears, sounded the alarm, and left him no retreat. What an awful representation of this kind the man of GOD hath given of this state of hell upon earth, Deuteronomy

28:65-67. *Fourthly*, the magicians and wise men he consulted could afford him no help: no, not so much as to be able to explain to him what he wanted to know. Reader! think what a dreadful state that is, when a soul is out of CHRIST, and under the alarms of a guilty conscience, which no brother, no kind neighbor, no tender-hearted friend, can in the least minister unto. Precious JESUS! how sweet is it to have thee for a brother upon all occasions of sorrow! thou art indeed one *born for adversity*. Proverbs 17:17. *Fifthly*, behold the necessity imposed upon him to send for Daniel, whose advice he had so set at nought, and whose GOD he had so boldly despised. Such is the case not unfrequently in ordinary life. Who so laughed at as GOD'S faithful servants, by the sinner in the days of his jollity and mirth? Who so earnestly sought after in the day of sickness and death? When the Reader hath paused sufficiently over these solemn considerations, as they arise out of the view of the state of Nebuchadnezzar's mind; let him attend to the several features of the alarming vision of the night, with which the LORD visited the King, according to the interpretation of Daniel.

DANIEL 4:19-26

Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. (20) The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; (21) Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: (22) It *is* thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. (23) And

whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; (24) This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: (25) That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. (26) And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

How beautiful the subject of Daniel's interpretation is introduced! Who, but must be struck to behold the youthful Prophet on the one hand, standing like one amazed, in hearing the King's dream; and on the other, to behold Nebuchadnezzar hardened and insensible. See how every part is applied, how every feature corresponds, and how the whole comes up to the conviction, that the punishment is of the LORD. What effect it had for the moment upon Nebuchadnezzar is not said, but we cannot enough admire the faithfulness of Daniel, in concealing nothing from him, nor the grace of GOD, in enabling him to be faithful. Reader! remember JESUS'S promise to this effect to his disciples. Matthew 10:18-20.

DANIEL 4:27

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

I have reserved this verse to be read by itself, on purpose to call the Reader's more particular attention to it. Though Daniel knew that he was an enemy to GOD and his CHRIST; and though Daniel's zeal for GOD'S cause threw aside all other considerations yet, there was, and always is a *may be* in every case, that as Daniel here said, the lengthening of a day of tranquility, and the putting off the evil day, might be allowed. Reader! such will be the day of vengeance, in terror, that like Moses at the Mount, the most faithful, when rejoicing in their own salvation, *will rejoice with trembling* in beholding the overwhelming horrors of the ungodly. Hebrews 12:21. Psalm 119:120. Habakkuk 3:16.

DANIEL 4:28-33

All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. (29) At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. (30) The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? (31) While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. (32) And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. (33) The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*.

Reader! how truly affecting is this history! What an awful testimony in confirmation, that the judgment of the enemies of GOD'S CHRIST, *lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not*. Some curious characters among men, more intent on enquiring into the mode and manner of GOD'S punishments,

than anxious for a knowledge of the causes of them, have demanded, whether this judgment was literally so as described, or whether it was a deprivation of the King's reason? But it is worthy *my* Reader's observation, that GOD the HOLY GHOST is never disposed to gratify men's curiosity. Too many, it is to be feared, read GOD'S word with this disposition, and therefore wrest it to their own destruction. JESUS, the chief corner stone in Zion, *is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence* to the scoffer. That Nebuchadnezzar was humbled to the lowest possible degree of humbling, is plain. And that GOD whom he had defied manifested his hand in it: these are the great points plainly taught in this scripture. Here then is enough for the faithful to know; and that promise is fulfilled in it, *when the wicked are cut off thou shalt see it.* Psalm 37:34.

DANIEL 4:34-37

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: (35) And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (36) At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. (37) Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

What a wonderful train of providences passed upon this man! What language is here for such a man as Nebuchadnezzar to

utter! One might be almost led to hope, that grace was given to him, seeing he expressed himself in such words. But, as GOD the HOLY GHOST is silent on this point, so must we. Here his history ends. And here therefore we must leave him. I only beg the Reader not to be carried away with appearances, in favor of any man, merely from what

is said by him. Men may go great lengths in *talking* of GOD, who never *walked* with GOD. Witness *Balaam*, Numbers 23:9, 10. Witness *Caiaphas*, John 11:49-52. Nothing short of the regeneration of the heart, can be an evidence of the divine life: and this, we have no reason nor authority to infer was in his character.

REFLECTIONS

I pray the Reader to ponder well, from the history here given, in the character of one of the greatest monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre of the world, the wretched state of man void of the grace of GOD. Respecting outward circumstances, there was nothing Nebuchadnezzar wanted to constitute happiness. But what were all outward circumstances, when thus left a prey to the desolate state of a guilty mind, under the hand of GOD! Reader! mark well the solemn lesson, and turn it every way, the instruction is the same. In the present fallen state of mankind, there is nothing that can bring comfort but JESUS. Everything beside is tinged with vanity. As many as are under the laws of Moses are condemned; and they without the law, are, as the Apostle saith, *a law unto themselves*; their conscience accusing, or else excusing; and they are, and must be always miserable. Let their condition be what it may, there is nothing that can give peace. But, my

brother, if CHRIST be your portion, He sweetens all; He sanctifies all. Beautifully to this purport, speaks the LORD by the Prophet. *In that day (saith the LORD) will I make a covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.* The sense is; All things, and all creatures, shall promote the peace of him that is at peace with GOD. *He that overcometh (saith another scripture) shall inherit all things. I will be his GOD and he shall be my son.* LORD JESUS! make such views blessed, both to Writer and Reader, that in thee, and in thee alone, we may seek for a portion to live upon, in time, and to all eternity!

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 5:1-4

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. (2) Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. (3) Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. (4) They

drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

The Prophet simply gives the relation of the history, but doth not enlarge upon it. Indeed it needs no comment. Drunkenness leads to impiety and prophaneness: and every evil follows. Was it not enough to deny GOD, but he must insult him also? Would nothing do for an unholy feast, and strumpets; but the holy vessels of the temple? LORD! to what a state of ruin is our whole nature reduced by the fall!

DANIEL 5:5-9

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. (6) Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. (7) The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. *And* the king spake, and said to the wise *men* of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. (8) Then came in all the king's wise *men*: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. (9) Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonied.

Behold, Reader! on what a slender thread the happiness of man hangs, when in a moment the appearance on a wall can snap it asunder! What was it so alarmed the reveling prince, and his drunken lords? Simply the view of a man's hand, writing on the wall! But what did he write! In truth, none of the company could tell, for none of them could read it. But what none of them could do, conscience did for them. Belshazzar felt the whole of the evil before it was explained;

and more than anticipated all. I beg the Reader to remark with me, the beautiful correspondence between the prediction of this event, and the accomplishment. *Isaiah* had been commissioned to tell of this two hundred years at least before. *Cyrus* was named by the LORD as his servant, to the ruin of Babylon, to *open the two-leaved gates*, and that the LORD would loose, it was said, *the loins of kings*. And here we learn, that *Belshazzar*, (and no doubt his princes also,) literally had this prophecy accomplished in his own person. See *Isaiah* 45:1-4. Historians relate, that *Cyrus* found out a passage to enter Babylon through the river *Euphrates*, where there was two-leaved gates. What a wonderful coincidence of providences there must have been, to bring about such events! Reader! never forget that the LORD cannot need instruments for the accomplishment of his will, whenever that will is about to be manifested to his creatures!

DANIEL 5:10-16

Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: *and* the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: (11) There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, *I say*, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers; (12) Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. (13) Then was Daniel brought in before the king. *And* the king spake and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? (14) I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light and understanding and

excellent wisdom is found in thee. (15) And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: (16) And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

What a consternation the whole court was thrown into by this event, we may well conceive, by what is here said. *Daniel* is again had recourse to, in order to help the king, and his party out of their alarm. Let the Reader once more remark, how truly honorable the LORD's servants are, even in the very view of them who seem to despise them. And I would beg the Reader to believe, for the fact is certainly so, this is much more common in private life even than is generally conceived.

DANIEL 5:17-23

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. (18) O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: (19) And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. (20) But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: (21) And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and *that* he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. (22) And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; (23) But hast lifted up thyself

against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath *is*, and whose *are* all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Who but must admire the faithfulness and honesty of Daniel. And who but must bless the LORD for making him so! It was now many a year since *Daniel* was first brought before the king on such an occasion; but with growing he had not lost his confidence. The fear of the LORD will drive away the fear of man; as the fire of the sun will put out the fire of the chimney!

DANIEL 5:24-29

Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. (25) And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. (26) This *is* the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. (27) TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. (28) PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. (29) Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and *put* a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

There is some little difficulty to an ordinary Reader in observing, that the words of the hand writing on the wall, and the manner of Daniel's interpreting them are not the same. The word MENE is twice! which everyone who knows anything of the Hebrew language, knows, is a common way of expressing a thing as certain. TEKEL, *thou art weighed and found light*: these words, are as the hand writing of the wall represented them. But the other word, UPHARSIN, differs from what Daniel made it, PERES. But when the Reader be

told, that PERES is the singular number of UPHARSIN, this explains it, and removes the difficulty. PERES, *He* divideth it, that is, GOD hath done it. UPHARSIN, *They* divided it, that is, the *Medes* and *Persians*, as GOD's ministry. As the Chaldean and the Hebrew languages had no doubt upon many occasions been thrown together, there seems to have been here a compound of both: so that it is probable Daniel had both in view; the one to the dividing the kingdom, and the other of the nation to whom it was given, that is, both the Medes and Persians. *Cyrus* the Persian conquered it; and *Darius* the Mede, a confederate prince in colleague with *Cyrus*, by agreement was made king over it. It doth not appear that the poor Prophet ever made a public appearance in his scarlet and gold; and indeed, from the death of the king the same night, it should seem improbable that he ever did. But what were such things then, or what are they now, but as the toys of children to the LORD's servants!

DANIEL 5:30-31

In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. (31)
And Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being* about threescore and two years old.

Short, but awful, the account of the king's death! *In that night*. A night indeed of terrors. Certainly it was a night of the most daring impiety. Probably also, a night of drunkenness. So died this wretched man. The gospel, in the same short, but expressive manner, relates the death of the voluptuous sinner. *The rich man died, and was buried*. And the next account of him was in hell. Luke 16:22, 23. Revelation 6:8.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! dismiss not this solemn chapter, until thou hast gathered some of the many instructions, which, under grace, it holds forth to the Church of GOD, and to all the members of CHRIST'S mystical body. It is blessed to behold, in the swift judgment of sinners, how sure the LORD's appointments are; and how JESUS is unceasingly watching over the special and personal interests of his people. And while *the hand writing on the wall*, or what is the same thing, the voice within, in the sinners conscience, loosens the loins of the enemies of CHRIST; the HOLY GHOST is witnessing to the spirits of the LORD's people, peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Oh! ye *Daniels* of the present hour! *be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might*. Witness for your LORD, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, Shortly the midnight hour of the ungodly will come, when all the enemies of the cross shall perish. Shortly that day will arrive, when the LORD wilt call his faithful home to glory! And oh! what a vast, what an eternal distinction will then take place, between the *Daniels* and the *Belshazzars* of every generation! Precious JESUS! in that day, be thou my hope, my joy, my confidence; that when the whole world of unbelievers are *weighed in the balance and found wanting*, my soul, among the redeemed of Zion, may be able to shout aloud for joy, crying out in the language of GOD'S own word, *In the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall I then come, with all that believe in Him, and never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end!*

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 6:1-3

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; (2) And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel *was* first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. (3) Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Though there is no date as to the time when this event took place, yet from common calculation, Daniel must have become an old man; for the seventy years were nearly run out of Israel's captivity. And therefore if Daniel had been but a mere youth at the commencement of it, he could not now have been much less, if not more, than fourscore at this time. Reader! recollect that sweet passage, Isaiah 46:3, 4. How often is it found in the LORD's people!

DANIEL 6:4-5

Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. (5) Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.

Was there ever a more lovely portrait drawn of any man than what is done here of Daniel; and that by his professed enemies. Reader! think what a blessed badge it is, to be charged of bad men for faithfulness to the LORD. Here we see

very eminently, that blessedness spoken of by our LORD, Matthew 5:11, 12.

DANIEL 6:6-9

Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. (7) All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. (8) Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. (9) Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

I think it would be wrong to swell the Commentary by unnecessary observations here. The plan was evil; and the intention evil; though as we shall find by the sequel, the LORD overruled it for good. Think, Reader! what must his wisdom be that makes good to spring out of evil; and so arrangeth orders and events, as to make men the unconscious ministers of bringing about the very reverse of what they intended. Such was the history of Joseph's brethren, when from the pit, and the prison, all the illustrious events which followed in the Patriarch's life, were produced. Genesis 45:5-8. Such was the case of Mordecai. Esther 7:9, 10. And yet more blessed than all such in the cross of CHRIST. For the Jews thought by crucifying the LORD of life and glory, that they should put out his name forever; whereas that very cross is the believer's triumph. Galatians 6:14.

DANIEL 6:10

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward

Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

What a lovely and engaging representation is here again made of Daniel! That which would have daunted the confidence of any man, became the very means of giving Daniel boldness: and what would have kept back the boldest heart from a throne of grace, was made the occasion to drive Daniel thither. Reader! I pray you observe the conduct of this servant of the LORD. He did not go to the king, to beg of him to reverse the sentence, or to pray that he might be excused in the disobedience; but he carried his request to the court of heaven, and there he lodged all his petitions. Here is no concealment, no evasion, no smothering things, and hiding his religion, to comply with the times: but with his windows thrown open towards Jerusalem the holy city, with an *eye* to the temple, the well known type of CHRIST, as if looking for his coming; three times a day, according to his usual custom, he presented his supplications before the throne. Reader! pause, and ask your own heart, whether there he any correspondence in your devotion to that of Daniel's? Can the closet witness for you that you are frequently there; and is your person well known, and familiar to the king, and the glorified inhabitants of Jerusalem? Precious JESUS! what would have become of me in a thousand instances past, and what should I do now, were I prohibited from calling on thee, and presenting all my wants before thee? Oh! for three times three; yea, seventy times seven, to enjoy the fellowship of GOD and the LAMB in holy communion!

DANIEL 6:11-13

Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. (12) Then they came near, and spake

before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask *a petition* of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. (13) Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

The event is here stated, just as might have been expected. But oh! how little did those wretched characters consider the awful consequences they were laying the train for; and what a pit they were digging for their own destruction!

DANIEL 6:14-18

Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. (15) Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is*, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. (16) Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. *Now* the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. (17) And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. (18) Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

What a train of evils the king by his inconsiderateness had brought himself into? But is there not somewhat like the language of faith, and that in lively exercise, in what the king said to Daniel? Well might Darius spend the night fasting, when for aught he knew, a faithful servant of his, and by his appointment also, was in the same night devoured by lions.

DANIEL 6:19-24

Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. (20) And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: *and* the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? (21) Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. (22) My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. (23) Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. (24) And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, *them*, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Behold, Reader! what a mighty change! Who so apparently forlorn and wretched as faithful Daniel, when cast into the lion's den: who so blessed when taken out? Reader! do not lose sight of these things; for they are the *michtams* of the LORD; and ought to be had in everlasting remembrance of all CHRIST'S redeemed and exercised ones.

DANIEL 6:25-28

Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. (26) I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he *is* the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end. (27) He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. (28) So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

The subject ends as it might be expected to end. GOD'S faithful servant is delivered: the enemy brought down; and the LORD JESUS himself adored in the salvation of his chosen. So, LORD, let all thy people praise thee, and in the less exercises of the saints of GOD, give them strength to their day, and send thy salvation out of Zion, to bless thy people in Jerusalem. Amen.

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READER! remark here how unremitting the malice of hell hath been of old, and continued from age to age, against CHRIST and his Church! When nothing could be found to ruin *Daniel* in his trust with men, such is the venom of hatred, that the attempt is made to poison his reputation in his dealings with GOD. Such hath been, and ever must be, the bitterness of the *Esau's* against the children of promise. But how blessed is it to behold the grace of GOD in its actions, and on the hearts of GOD'S people! Oh! for the same spirit as actuated the soul of Daniel! The prohibition of men is nothing, when the fear of GOD possesseth the heart. *Among the gods*, said one of old, *will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD!* And so will every faithful follower of the LORD, though lions be in the way, and hell and destruction oppose. It will be a blessed improvement of this Chapter, if the heart both of Writer and Reader be led therefrom, to seek to the LORD for a portion of the same spirit as actuated the mind of Daniel. Precious JESUS! in thy bright example we behold how blessed it is, when bulls of *Bastian* set themselves against thy people all around, to lay hold by faith of thy strength and grace, and to be more than conquerors through thy power helping us. Oh! LORD! be thou

my confidence all the day, so shall I be saved from the lions dens, and from the mountains of leopards: and my GOD will be mine everlasting strength and my glory.

CHAPTER 7

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

DANIEL 7:1

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, *and* told the sum of the matters.

In the early ages of the Church, and before the open display and manifestation of GOD in our nature, in the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; this method of revealing the mind and will of GOD by dream and vision, concerning the Church, was very common among holy men of old. And even now, it is not wholly done away, for the private comfort of GOD'S people. The LORD doth not unfrequently give songs in the night. Job 35:10. The former part of the Book of Daniel was chiefly historical. In this Chapter, and to the end of his prophecy, it is wholly prophetical.

DANIEL 7:2-8

Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. (3) And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. (4) The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up

from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. (5) And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and *it had* three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. (6) After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. (7) After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns. (8) I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

There can be no doubt, but that what is here described under the figure and similitude of beasts, relates to kingdoms of the earth. And explaining these prophecies by the events which have followed, it should seem, that there can be no difficulty in supposing, that the *first* beast, like a lion, represented the *Chaldean* monarchy. The *second*, like a bear, set forth the *Persian*, which succeeded it. The *third*, like a leopard, the *Grecian* kingdom. And the *fourth*, the *Roman*. But, Reader! what a solemn thought is it: where are now the whole or either of these monarchies? Alas! the flood of time hath gone over them, and swept them all away. But JESUS and his kingdom is and shall be forever. Precious consideration to the believer!

DANIEL 7:9-14

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire. (10) A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him,

and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (11) I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. (12) As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. (13) I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. (14) And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

But whatever uncertainty we might be under respecting the precise meaning of the vision before related, there can be none in respect of what is said here. To whom can we make application concerning the *Antient of Days*, but to JEHOVAH, who from one eternity to another, while all the empires of the earth moulder to dust, remains the same in the unchangeable nature of his existence and perfections; *GOD over all blessed for ever*. And to whom shall we look for an explanation of what is said, concerning *One like the Son of man*, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who in his mediatorial character, could only be found worthy to take the book out of the hand of him that sat on the throne, and unloose the seals thereof. I pray the Reader to compare this scripture with Revelation Chap. 4 and 5 throughout.

DANIEL 7:15-28

I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. (16) I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. (17) These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall arise out of the earth. (18) But the saints of the most High shall

take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. (19) Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth *were of iron*, and his nails *of brass*; *which* devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; (20) And of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows. (21) I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; (22) Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. (23) Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. (24) And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. (25) And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (26) But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy *it* unto the end. (27) And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (28) Hitherto *is* the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

To the mind of Daniel, in a period so remote as he lived from the advent of CHRIST, and especially in a character like Daniel, evidently inspired and appointed to be a Prophet in the Church, in the awful times in which he lived; all that is here said of his grief, and the earnestness of his inquiry to be informed concerning the vision, was very highly proper and praise-worthy. But, I beg the Reader, rather to wait and watch the LORD's explanation of this and all other the

prophetical parts of scripture, yet remaining to be fully made known, than presume to be wise above what is written. It is enough to make a truly awakened child of GOD to tremble, in beholding what unhallowed hands have written, and unregenerated hearts have suggested, concerning the Prophecies of GOD in the several ages of the Church. Reader! let you and I rest in what is here said concerning our Redeemer's kingdom, fully satisfied, for it is enough, and more we cannot need. CHRIST is here said to possess a kingdom, which shall be forever and ever. This is one precious truth. And there is another like it, with which indeed it is connected, and the one included in the other: namely, the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, which shall be forever. Here then is enough for every child of GOD to know, and to rest in. To presume to go further, and to point to persons and things in the present day, to the compliment of one, and to the reproach of another, is to limit, in my humble opinion, the Holy One of Israel, and to hazard the divine displeasure. The LORD grant that his faithful ones may be kept faithful among that little handful of the saints of the Most High, as they are here called, which are now in the earth. It is to be exceedingly feared by what we behold in the present day, that it is indeed but a *little handful*, and much less than too many suppose. Every one that loves our LORD JESUS in sincerity and truth, may well be alarmed for the present awful times, and seriously ponder that alarming question of JESUS: *when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Luke 18:8.

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PAUSE, Reader! over this most sublime and blessed Chapter; and passing by every lesser consideration, contemplate this, as the highest and the best on what is said of Him, whom Daniel *saw, the Ancient of Days*, in the glories of his person, and Almightyness of his character! Perhaps the whiteness of his garment might be meant to intimate the purity and holiness of his nature and essence. And it is possible, by the hairs of his head, like the pure wool, might be intended to represent the sovereignty of his glory and majesty. But, alas! what figures or similitudes can afford the least resemblance of Him, *who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see!* Almighty JEHOVAH! before thy footstool help both Writer and Reader to fall down with the lowest possible prostration of soul and body; everlastingly keeping in remembrance, that both now to a throne of grace, and hereafter to glory, there is no possibility of access, but in and through a gracious Mediator, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

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

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

CHAPTER 8

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

DANIEL 8:1-4

In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, *even unto me Daniel*, after that which appeared unto me at the first. (2) And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I *was* at Shushan *in* the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. (3) Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns: and the *two* horns *were* high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher came up last. (4) I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

The *third* year of the reign of Belshazzar must have been before what is related of his death in the fifth Chapter; only this vision of Daniel is not placed in that order. The Prophet had his mind so impressed with this vision, that he puts down

the place in which he supposed himself to have been in vision, and twice repeats, that it was to him, even to him, the vision was shown. Under the figure of a ram with two horns, might not unaptly represent the divided kingdom or government of *Media* and *Persia*; as the after explanation of Gabriel makes it to be. But what I am chiefly earnest the Reader should keep in view, is, the reference the whole hath to the Church of CHRIST. Were it not for this one grand object, the very name of Babylon, and of the Medes and Persians, would hardly have been remembered at the present hour.

DANIEL 8:5-12

And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes. (6) And he came to the ram that had *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. (7) And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. (8) Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. (9) And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant *land*. (10) And it waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. (11) Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. (12) And an host was given *him* against the daily *sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

The principal feature of this history, in the battle of rams and he-goats, (meaning the kings of the earth,) is what is said of

this creature magnifying himself against the Prince of the host, even JESUS and his people. And the host given unto him, against *the daily sacrifice*, can mean no other than the obstruction given by the king to the ordinances of GOD'S house. The history of the Church confirms this. An Eastern monarch of the name of *Antiochus*, literally prohibited the Jews from this daily sacrifice, as we are informed in history.

DANIEL 8:13-14

Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain *saint* which spake, How long *shall be* the vision *concerning* the daily *sacrifice*, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? (14) And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

There is somewhat interesting in this short account; short as it is, of what the Prophet over-heard of this conversation. It shows how attentive ministering spirits are in their office, *who are sent forth to minister unto them who are heirs of salvation*. Depend upon it, Reader! we are never less alone than when alone! Various have been the calculations of curious persons, concerning this period of two thousand and three hundred days. But the subject is left just where men find it. No one hath been taught of GOD the SPIRIT the method of ascertaining it with exactness. And to me, I confess, it borders on presumption to attempt being wise above what is written. When the thing predicted is accomplished, the end is then seen. But how should unenlightened, unawakened men, who were never taught of GOD, be competent to discover *secret things which belong to the LORD*.

DANIEL 8:15-19

And it came to pass, when I, *even* I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. (16) And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision. (17) So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision. (18) Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. (19) And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end *shall be*.

I feel more disposed to enquire who this man was whose voice Daniel heard, than to attend to what the laboured efforts of unawakened, unregenerated men have written, in determining according to their presumptuous reasonings concerning the period of the two thousand three hundred days. The *former* is instructive, interesting, and profitable. The *latter* can be no more than conjecture after all, and too much obscured with mystery to speak of with any certainty. But I would humbly propose to the gracious mind, as a subject of meditation, whether this man, whose voice Daniel heard, was not the Glory-man CHRIST JESUS! Who, indeed, but JESUS could it be to command Gabriel to instruct Daniel? Reader! it is very blessed to observe in the goings forth of him, who hath been as the head and husband of his Church from everlasting, how the LORD watched over the interests of his people in all ages: and how by the very frequent manifestation of himself to Old Testament saints, he intimated his earnestness for the time to arrive, when he should openly tabernacle among his people.

DANIEL 8:20-27

The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia. (21) And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia: and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king. (22) Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. (23) And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. (24) And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. (25) And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. (26) And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is* true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it *shall be* for many days. (27) And I Daniel fainted, and was sick *certain* days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood *it*.

Who this fierce king points at, or what awful indignation is to take place at the time, when the latter kingdom shall come, and the transgressions are come to the full; I presume not to say. But one spiritual improvement ariseth out of it, which both Writer and Reader will do well to regard: namely, how awful are all the LORD's visitations, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. We behold Daniel's mind so affected in the very contemplation of it, that though he knew it would not happen in his days, yet, it induced sickness and fear. There is a sickness of soul as well as sickness of body, and both may be supposed to have their operations on the LORD's faithful ones in times of sorrow for Zion's welfare. But in the midst of these, while the soul lives on the Person, Work, and glory of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; the purposes of an unchangeable GOD in Covenant, will bring comfort *within*, when matters are ever

so unpromising *without*. Oh! how truly blessed is it to have this Covenant GOD in CHRIST to fly to, and to trust in, when the world is convulsed with storms and tempests; and all things in disorder!

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READER! let us both beg of GOD for grace to gather suitable improvements from this Chapter, and such as GOD the HOLY GHOST evidently intended the Church should derive from the perusal of it in all ages. The image of the ram with two horns, and the goat with a notable horn between his eyes, these similitudes are explained to us in the Chapter, and had their accomplishment in the kingdoms of *Media* and *Persia*, and of *Grecia* that succeeded both, and have long since been done away. But the vision of the *evening*, and the *morning*, and the *daily sacrifice*; these are subjects of everlasting meditation, and lead to unceasing improvement under divine teaching, as long as the Church shall continue on the earth. And who doth not see, blessed and eternal SPIRIT, when taught by thee, the sweet allusions in those things in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, and daily sacrifice, to the person, blood, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Is not JESUS *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*? And if the exhibition by type of this sacrifice was needful, so the LORD thought fit that it should be set forth both morning and evening, to manifest, that from the morning of life to the evening of it in death, a propitiation is needful for sin, and becomes continually necessary! And Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of the subject, as often as the HOLY GHOST graciously brings it before thee, that this contemplation

of the LAMB of GOD taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is of all subjects the most momentous and interesting. Think, Reader! how infinitely meritorious in itself. Think how blessed must it have been in the sight of GOD the FATHER, when for four thousand years together, before the thing to be accomplished was brought to pass, the LORD appointed a daily memorial of it, in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, to be sacrificed! Precious JESUS! let it be our daily delight, both in the morning and evening of every day, to contemplate thy body bruised, and thy soul made an offering for sin! Frequently, LORD, at thy table, and in thine house of prayer, be it our happiness to commemorate thy death in holy communion. And while we behold the LAMB of GOD taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself; give to us such rich views of GOD the FATHER's complacency, in the blessed act of CHRIST dying for us, that we may enter into the most lively conviction and certainty, that when he died on the cross, for the sin of his people, he *died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD*. JESUS was then made sin, and a curse for his redeemed, that *they might be made the righteousness of GOD in him*. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

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We have here as interesting a Chapter as in the whole book of prophecy, and which wholly treats of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Daniel is taught of GOD, by books, to count the number of the years determined to the Babylonish captivity. He is deeply engaged in fasting and prayer, when he is favoured with a

vision. The exact period to Jerusalem's bondage is marked out to him.

DANIEL 9:1-2

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; (2) In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

The Prophet is particular to set down the precise time of this wonderful and blessed vision. I call it *wonderful*, because of the grace manifested to the Church at such a season, when suffering captivity for their rebellion. And it is most blessed surely, for the HOLY GHOST hath commissioned it with blessedness to thousands of the LORD's people in all ages. The first year of *Darius* corresponds to the first year of *Cyrus*; for *Cyrus* and *Darius*, jointly reigned after the death of *Belshazzar*. And it was that memorable year, in which Cyrus made proclamation for the Jews to return if they wished it, to their own country, about five hundred and thirty-six years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. See Ezra 1:1, &c. Daniel was at this time taught concerning the memorable prophecy of Jeremiah. See Jeremiah, Chap. 25:8-13. and 29:10. Daniel found, by comparing what the Prophet Jeremiah in those scriptures had said, with what was passed, and then come, that the seventy years were now expired.

DANIEL 9:3-19

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: (4) And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his

commandments; (5) We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: (6) Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. (7) O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. (8) O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. (9) To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; (10) Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. (11) Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. (12) And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. (13) As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. (14) Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. (15) And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. (16) O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us. (17) Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. (18) O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the

city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. (19) O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

The LORD had said by his servant *Ezekiel*, that for all his promised blessings, *he would be enquired of by the house of Israel*. Ezekiel 36:37. Here, therefore, *Daniel* set himself to pray, and that earnestly. And what a beautiful earnest supplication it is. The very soul of the Prophet seems to be going forth with every petition. I do not think it needful to point to the Reader the many blessed things contained in it. The prayer would lose its own lovely simplicity, and force, by any comment. I only beg the Reader to remark with me, the devout breathings which appear in it, of a soul truly in earnest, in wrestling with God. His solemn address, his free, and full acknowledgment, of his own and the people's guilt, and GOD'S just punishment. His view of the accomplishment of scripture, in having disregarded GOD'S threatenings; the obduracy and indifferency shown by the people to the LORD'S chastisements; the tender mercies of the LORD through all, that they had not been given up, as they justly deserved, to total ruin; these are all so many strong points, the Man of GOD dwells upon in prayer, most particularly and strikingly. But, what I beg the Reader yet more especially to remark, is, the argument the Prophet lays all his stress upon, when pleading for divine mercy: I mean, in the person, work, and glory of CHRIST, as JEHOVAH'S covenant. *For thine own sake*, he saith, *defer not, O my GOD*. He had urged before very strong causes, why the LORD should be gracious. Jerusalem was the holy city; the LORD'S name was there; and mercy was asked

for it, not for the deservings of the people, but for the LORD's own righteousness. But Daniel makes this the finishing and unanswerable argument, *his own sake*, as GOD in covenant in CHRIST. Reader! do not fail to remember, that this, and this alone, is the one all-prevailing motive with JEHOVAH. This is the bow JEHOVAH hath set in the cloud, and to which he looks. And this the only foundation of hope to the Church in all ages. Genesis 9:1-16. Isaiah 54:9, Revelation 4:3.

DANIEL 9:20-21

And whiles I *was* speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; (21) Yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

Who this Gabriel was, is not so very plain, as for us positively to decide. Daniel calls him *the man*. Hence some have thought it was CHRIST. It should seem to be the same as appeared in after ages to Zacharias. Luke 1:19. But whether CHRIST, or not, remains to be determined. One thing we certainly know, that our adorable Redeemer made frequent secret manifestations of himself, before his open display in substance of our flesh; as if to tell the Church, how much he longed for the time appointed, when he should come *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. I beg the Reader to make one observation more, upon what is said in those verses. It was about the time of the evening oblation, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon: the memorable hour in which CHRIST gave up the ghost. And it is well worthy the Reader's as well as the Writer's most diligent observation, that with an eye to this one great event, to which every type, and every sacrifice

under the law had reference, and in which the whole had their fulfillment: all the evening sacrifices were at that very hour. Hence we read, that Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the *ninth* hour, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon, Acts 3:1. Pause, Reader! and consider how important must this one glorious offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST, once for all, have been in the eye of GOD the FATHER; when in his appointments of the Jewish sacrifices, the evening oblation, from the beginning, had the very hour of CHRIST'S death, as well as CHRIST'S sacrifice, set forth. Reader! shall not this hour, henceforth be peculiarly sacred to our meditations? Methinks, I would, if possible, never let it pass without arresting its fleeting moments to thoughts of JESUS! This I would say, as the clock strikes *three*, this was the solemn hour, in which, after darkness had covered the face of the earth, from the *sixth* to the *ninth* hour, JESUS, my adorable LORD, cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. Luke 23:44-46. See Exodus 29:41. 1 Kings 18:36.

DANIEL 9:22-23

And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. (23) At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Observe the gracious condescension of *the man Gabriel*. (I say the man Gabriel, because I wish to use the very same name as the Scripture.) Supposing him to have been a *created angel*, his kindness in his message deserves our thanks. We know that angels are ministering spirits, and commissioned by our LORD GOD to our good. Hebrews 1:14.

Psalm 34:7. But supposing, (what I confess I am rather inclined to believe,) that this man Gabriel was the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Oh! Reader! contemplate his love! Well might Paul desire, as the chiefest of all blessings, to be able to comprehend with all *saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge*. Ephesians 3:18, 19. When Daniel is said to be greatly beloved, or as the Hebrew hath it, *greatly desired*, or a *man of desires*; how blessed is it to consider the loveliness of the LORD's people in JESUS. Ezekiel 16:14. Song Of Solomon 4:7. I must detain the Reader with one observation more on this passage. The man Gabriel tells Daniel, that it was at *the beginning of his supplication* he came forth, to show him the matter of this vision. Consequently, it was not for any arguments Daniel had used in prayer: neither was it for the merit of his prayer that the message came. Sweet consideration this to encourage the LORD's people in prayer! For when the LORD sets his people to pray, he is coming forth in mercy to bless; and their prayers become not the motive for divine favor, but the preparation of the LORD's grace in their hearts to qualify them for the mercy. The LORD teacheth them to ask for what he hath already prepared for them, and is about to give, so that the promise is fulfilled; *before my people call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear*. Isaiah 65:24.

DANIEL 9:24-27

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (25) Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build

Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. (26) And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

We have within the compass of these few verses one of the most illustrious prophecies of scripture: and blessed be our GOD, he who gave the prophecy, hath given to his Church to see the fulfillment of it. The prophecy itself is introduced by the man Gabriel with great solemnity, and equal affection. Daniel had simply prayed for the restoration of his people from the Babylonish captivity. But the LORD not only answers this to the full, and tells him that that captivity is now over; but the LORD opens to the Prophet's mind a subject of infinitely higher moment, in the deliverance from a more grievous captivity: of sin, death, and hell, by the wonderful coming, and more wonderful labours, sufferings, and bloodshed of the *SON of God*. Seventy years had been determined, and was now past, of Israel's captivity in Babylon. Now Daniel is called upon to number seventy weeks more to be accomplished, and the Shiloh shall come, *to whom the gathering of the people should be*, Genesis 49:10. What a blessed promise was here! What a glorious answer to prayer! Various have been the opinions of men, concerning the commencement and termination of those *seventy weeks*. Volumes have been written on the subject: and the matter is

left just where the whole body of writers found it. Reader! let it be your wisdom and mine to rest satisfied in those grand points, concerning this blessed prophecy; that it hath been fulfilled; that CHRIST to whom it pointed is come; that he was, and is, and ever will be, the anointed, and the most holy; that he hath finished transgression: mark the expression, *finished it*; not sin in this or that man, but sin itself, made an *end* of sin; sealed up sin, as the margin of our old Bibles hath it; so that when sin is sought for it is not found; *made reconciliation also for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness*; that he hath been cut off, but not for himself, hath confirmed the covenant with many, and caused the sacrifice to cease. These are truths, facts, and doctrines, perfectly plain, clear, and undeniable. And whether the *seventy weeks*, (which, no doubt, agreeable to scripture language, meant *weeks of years*) making four hundred and ninety years, were to commence the *first* year of the people's deliverance from Babylon, when Cyrus commanded them to return; or as some think, at the command of *Artaxerxes*, another prince of Persia, about one hundred years after, see Ezra 6:11, &c. in either case the events are the same. Certain it is, that near two thousand years are run out since CHRIST came, and *finished transgression, and made an end of sin by the sacrifice of himself*. So that the Jews who reject CHRIST, can now expect no other CHRIST from all their own prophecies. And while believers rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, in him that is come; they are now, and for many centuries have been, as one of their Prophets described them, abiding *without a king, without a prince, without sacrifice, without an image, and ephod, and teraphim*. The LORD grant

the prophecy that follows may be hastening to be fulfilled. Hosea 3:4, 5. Romans 11:25 to the end.

REFLECTIONS

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

seal up the vision and prophecy, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness. Heavenly Redeemer! let this righteousness be unto all, and upon all thy people, for there is no difference. And, oh! LORD! grant to thy servants now, as to thy *Daniels* of old, such revelations of thine holy will as may suit the wants of thy Church now, as the ministration of thy Prophets were needed then. And may every enlightened eye, like that of Daniel, be always on the lookout in the expectation of thy second coming; that when the weeks appointed for the desolations of thy people be run out, JESUS may come to take his people home to himself, that *where he is, there they may be also*. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 10:1-3

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. (2) In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. (3) I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

It appears from the date of this vision, that it was about two years after the former. The LORD was about to do great things for his Church, and therefore, was thus preparing the minds both of Prophet and people for his mercies. We have an account of Daniel's long fasting. Oh! for grace to mortify the body by the Spirit, that we may live! Romans 8:11.

DANIEL 10:4-6

And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which *is* Hiddekel; (5) Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins *were* girded with fine gold of Uphaz: (6) His body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

I do not presume to say who this glorious person was. But I think, if the Reader will turn to the first Chapter of the Revelations, verses 10-16. he will be led to conclude, that it could be no other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Precious JESUS! how endeared do such visits render thee to thy people. Here a priest also, as there: and all to show, that thou hast an unchangeable and never ceasing priesthood!

DANIEL 10:7-9

And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. (8) Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. (9) Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

Reader! observe what solemn effects are both upon Prophet and Apostle, when CHRIST is seen in his glory! what we might esteem comeliness before, is then, in the view of JESUS turned into corruption. Reader! think what would it be forever, even in heaven itself, if the redeemed were not made comely in CHRIST'S righteousness, and from the comeliness JESUS puts upon his people. Ezekiel 16:14. I beg the Reader not to overlook what is here said of the trembling of Daniel's companions, and that he alone saw this vision. So was it with Elisha, 2 Kings 6:17. So also with Paul, Acts 9:7. And what is all this, but so many proofs of distinguishing grace, by which we plainly see, the LORD doth according to his own promise manifest himself to his people, *otherwise than he doeth to the world*, John 14:22, 23.

DANIEL 10:10-14

And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands. (11) And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. (12) Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. (13) But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. (14) Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision *is* for *many* days.

I beg the Reader to be particularly attentive to what is said of the silence, fear, and vast humbleness of soul manifested by the Prophet. Think, Reader, what a solemn thing it must be, to have personal communion with the LORD; even when clothed in the LORD'S own righteousness! If Daniel, a man

greatly beloved, felt all this, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? But, observe the gracious hand touching Daniel! Behold another Prophet so favoured, Isaiah 6:1-7. And an Apostle, Revelation 1:17.

DANIEL 10:15-21

And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. (16) And, behold, *one* like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. (17) For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. (18) Then there came again and touched me *one* like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, (19) And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace *be* unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. (20) Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. (21) But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

There is some little difficulty to apprehend the whole of this passage. Daniel had before described a very glorious person, at whose presence he put his face to the ground. And here it should seem, at the first reading, to be *another* person who touched his lips; for he describes him as one like the similitude of the sons of men, and like the appearance of a man. But, is it not, (for I humbly ask the question, and presume not to decide upon it,) is it not probable to be one and the same person? In the *former* manifestation, displaying somewhat greater brightness of his glory Mediator. And in the

latter, of his human nature? JESUS is always found to make the sweetest and most soul-strengthening manifestations of himself, when he comes down to us under the lovely and endearing character of our brother. We feel encouraged, and we delight to go to him. As to what is said of *Michael*, the prince of the people, this serves to confirm it more than lessen it. For the battle in heaven is said to have been by *Michael* against the old serpent the Devil. And though some may be found, who speak of archangels as well as angels; yet, the scriptures uniformly speak only of *one archangel*, for there is but *one*; and this one can be no other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Angel of the covenant. Malachi 3:1. 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Jude 9.

REFLECTIONS

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

Precious LORD! never can thy people sufficiently admire the astonishing love that must be in thine heart, when we behold such evidences of thine attention towards them. Was it not enough, blessed JESUS, when the fulness of time should come, that thou shouldest so readily and freely give *thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair?* And was it not to show thy people in the several ages before the time arrived, how much thy soul was bent to redeem them, and that thine whole heart was towards them, and full of love? And in confirmation of it, didst thou, dearest EMANUEL,

visit then one and then another of thy saints, and tell them, that they were greatly beloved? LORD! shed abroad a portion of that love in our cold hearts, and cause, us to love thee, who hast so freely and so greatly loved us!

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

CHAPTER 11

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 11:1-4

Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even I*, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. (2) And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. (3) And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. (4) And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Here is a plain and evident inference to the kings and kingdom of *Persia*, which arose out of the *Chaldean*; and from the connection which the Church was obliged to have with this kingdom, after *Cyrus* had made proclamation for the Jews to return to their own land; it became to Daniel and to his fellows a very blessed scripture. But to the Church in the present hour it ceases to be prophetic, though thus far we may regard it as a precious monument, in proof of the LORD JEHOVAH'S faithfulness. See Ezra chap. 1, &c.

DANIEL 11:5-45

And the king of the south shall be strong, and *one* of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion *shall be* a great dominion. (6) And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement:

but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in *these* times. (7) But out of a branch of her roots shall *one* stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: (8) And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, *and* with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue *more* years than the king of the north. (9) So the king of the south shall come into *his* kingdom, and shall return into his own land. (10) But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and *one* shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, *even* to his fortress. (11) And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, *even* with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. (12) *And* when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down *many* ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened *by it*. (13) For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches. (14) And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. (15) So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither *shall there be any* strength to withstand. (16) But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed. (17) He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand *on his side*, neither be for him. (18) After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause *it* to turn upon him. (19) Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found. (20) Then shall stand up in his

estate a raiser of taxes *in* the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. (21) And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. (22) And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. (23) And after the league *made* with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. (24) He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do *that* which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: *yea*, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, *even* for a time. (25) And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. (26) Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. (27) And both these kings' hearts *shall be* to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end *shall be* at the time appointed. (28) Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant; and he shall do *exploits*, and return to his own land. (29) At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. (30) For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. (31) And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. (32) And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*. (33) And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days. (34) Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. (35) And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to

make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed. (36) And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. (37) Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. (38) But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. (39) Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. (40) And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. (41) He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. (42) He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. (43) But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *shall be* at his steps. (44) But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. (45) And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

If my Reader be more curious to make search into hidden things, than to turn over again and again those which the LORD hath revealed; I fear that he will not be pleased with the shortness I purpose to observe, in my Commentary on this Chapter, and in including almost the whole Chapter under one view. But my apology is this. Where the word of GOD is not very clear and plain, I humbly conceive, that the LORD's intuition is, in this obscurity, his people should humbly wait

the explanation of prophecy, until that in the accomplishment, the thing predicted, by the event, be explained. If (as some think) what is here said, hath already been fulfilled in the kingdoms of Persia and Greece; and since those periods, in Pagan Rome, and Papal Rome; there will need no further comment. But if there are yet remaining in those scriptures, things to be unfolded, I humbly conceive, they will only be so unfolded, agreeably to all the other prophecies of GOD, as the events predicted come forward. One thing I beg the godly Reader to observe, how several circumstances respecting the Church of GOD, are incorporated and mixed up with the prophecies concerning other nations in this Chapter. Hence the Reader may notice what is said (verse 14) of *the robbers of GOD's people*. And in like manner (verse 16,) of *the glorious land being consumed*. So again, verse 22, of *the Prince of the covenant*; and of *the hatred of the enemies of GOD to the holy covenant*, (verses 28 and 30,) of the pollution of *the daily sacrifice and the sanctuary*, and of taking away *the daily sacrifice*, and placing *the abomination that maketh desolate*, verse 31. All these, and similar phrases, we may, without violence, safely apply to the destruction of the Jewish temple, after our LORD'S ascension; and which JESUS himself foretold. Hence that memorable passage, Matthew 24:15. compared with Luke 21:20. *When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place*. But when we have paid all due respect to this explanatory passage of our LORD JESUS, and which, as far as it goes, becomes altogether satisfactory and decisive; we shall do right by this Chapter, to observe the same conduct, as was ordered to Daniel, in closing up his book of prophecy altogether. *Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up*,

and sealed, to the time of the end. Chap. 12:9. LORD! cause both Writer and Reader, thus far to become wise in prophecy, and which is the wisest and truest improvement of the whole, to see that *to JESUS give all the prophets witness, that through his Name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Acts 10:43.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter, and behold in it the evidences of the LORD's tender mercies over his people. Though they were in captivity, and justly suffering punishment for their sins, yet, still the LORD hath an eye over them for good, and will not, finally *cast away his people whom he foreknew.* Hence they shall be told what is to happen to them, after their deliverance from Babylon. The Persian, and the Grecian, and the Roman government, are shown to be in succession to each other, and all to make way for CHRIST. And no doubt, He that brought the Prophet acquainted with the events which were to come to pass, gave him also an assurance of the Church's redemption in JESUS, with all the blessings that were to follow, by reason of CHRIST'S coming.

Reader! and shall not you and I find confidence in the whole of GOD'S promises in CHRIST, to look still forward, with the most pleasing faith, for the accomplishment of all yet remaining to be fulfilled, in the person, work, and righteousness, of GOD our Saviour? Did Daniel thus receive knowledge in the events to come concerning the Church; and is the interests of the Church less dear to CHRIST now? Have not we lived to see all things accomplished, which were here

foretold; and are not all these so many additional testimonies to the truth, as it *is in* JESUS? Hail holy, blessed, Almighty LORD give to both Writer and Reader, grace, to wait in full assurance of faith, for all the events connected with thy second coming. And oh! grant, that that faith, may be so lively, in all its actings upon thee, that *when thou shalt appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before thee, at thy coming.*

CHAPTER 12

CONTENTS

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

DANIEL 12:1

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Here is a most lovely account of JESUS, and of his office-character, as Mediator. I do not hesitate to believe, that the *Michael* here spoken of is CHRIST. In confirmation, turn to those scriptures. Revelation Chap. 12:7-11. How CHRIST then stood up for all eternity: how in time, and how for ever; all his offices typify. Proverbs 8:22, 23. Psalm 40:6-8. Hebrews 7:24, 25. 2 Thessalonians 1:10. In every point of view, it must be a time of trouble. When CHRIST comes to make up his jewels, he

comes also to take vengeance of *them that know not GOD, nor obey the gospel of JESUS*. Malachi 4:1. 2 Peter 3:10, 11. But what a sweet close is this verse, of the safety of JESUS own! Isaiah 4:3. Luke 10:20. Revelation 20:12-15.

DANIEL 12:2-3

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. (3) And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Those who believe in the doctrine of the *Millennium*, take the first of these sweet verses for one, among the evidences of it. And others refer it wholly to the LORD'S judgment at the last day. In either sense, or in both, the thought is pleasing to the faithful in CHRIST JESUS, and tremendous to unbelievers. See Isaiah 26:19. The blessed account of those who are *wise to win souls*, is very graciously expressed. JESUS takes account now of all that is done upon earth in love to Him, and his gospel. And though not on the score of merit, yet on the score of love, all will be recompensed. Hebrews 6:10.

DANIEL 12:4

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Reader! do not overlook the sweetness of this verse. As Daniel would not live to see the accomplishment of these things, it was enough for him to be made the medium, the instrument in the LORD'S hand, of giving this prophecy to the Church. But as the things here predicted have been fulfilled, and are fulfilling still in the earth, how gracious was it to us, in

the present hour, that this greatly beloved Daniel thus was appointed to minister to our comfort. Oh! gracious LORD, how plain is it that thou hast presided over thy Church in all ages!

DANIEL 12:5-10

Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. (6) And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long *shall it be* to the end of these wonders? (7) And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished. (8) And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*? (9) And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. (10) Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

If the Reader diligently remarks what is said in these verses, he will discover *three* persons here described: *one* on each side of the river; and *one* standing upon the waters of the river! There seems a greater degree of glory and pre-eminency in this person, than in the other two. Probably it was CHRIST, attended by two angels. So it was probably in the visit to Abraham. Genesis 18:1, 2, &c. If this conjecture be right, it is remarkable that the angels knew nothing of the time of these events to be accomplished. They are represented as desiring to look into these things. 1 Peter 1:12. The redemption by JESUS is the wonder of angels, as well as the mystery of godliness among men. But, Reader! pause over what is here said, both of the person, the oath, and the manner of using it, which are all recorded. The person could

be no other than CHRIST. See in confirmation, Revelation 10:5, 6. the oath; JEHOVAH is appealed to, and sworn by. Both hands lifted up. Those sacred hands with which he blessed his people on the Mount in the moment of departure. Luke 24:50, 51. Various have been the opinions of men, in all ages, concerning the *time, times, and an half*. Calculating by years, some have put down the number, and refer it to the *three years and half* of our LORD's ministry on earth. But certain it is, that there is a purposed obscurity thrown over it by the LORD himself, as if it should not be known until the thing predicted be fulfilled. And the LORD's command to Daniel, to go his way, and telling him, that the words are dosed to the time of the end, seems, one might have thought, sufficiently satisfactory, to stop the hands of confident men from presuming to lift up the covering, and becoming bold enough to attempt explaining what they themselves do not know. Reader! let you and I leave it with the LORD. It will be explained in due time. In the mean season, let us attend to what is more plain, and which will be always profitable. The many that shall be purified; and the wicked that shall do wickedly; may serve to show the vast, the mighty difference between them; and to lead us to acknowledge, that that difference is all of grace. Oh! LORD! grant testimonies to thy people. Romans 11:7.

DANIEL 12:11-12

And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days. (12) Blessed *is* he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

I shall not presume to offer a single observation of the times here marked. The *daily sacrifice* taken away, and the abomination that made desolate set up, the LORD hath shown. For when the LORD JESUS CHRIST died, all the sacrifices under the law ceased. And when the Romans put up an image in the temple, here was an abomination indeed. But to what period the one thousand two hundred and ninety days refer, or when the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days commence, I presume not to say. One thing however is certain, that period is declared to be a glorious period, and the man blessed that is permitted to see it. GOD be praised for this, in and through the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

DANIEL 12:13

But go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Daniel is here again commanded to rest satisfied in ignorance of those events, which when fulfilled only are known. And having as a faithful servant, finished his commission, like holy *Simeon*, is to *depart in peace, having by faith seen the salvation of God!* Luke 2:25-30.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

THE BOOK OF *HOSEA*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

The name of *Hosea*, is of the same import as that of *Joshua*, and signifies a saviour. The Jews were remarkable for calling their children by names very expressive of somewhat great and good. *Hosea* ministered in the Church about eight hundred years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; consequently, though placed after the whole *four*, of what is called the *greater* Prophets, he lived before all of them; and delivered his prophecy before all of them. Notwithstanding

this, several of those prophetic writings, which are placed after *Hosea*, were written before his: *Joel*, *Amos*, and *Jonah*, were all prior to *Hosea*. However, it is not of so much moment to know the exact order in which are placed those holy men of GOD; as it is to know, that they all wrote, as well as spake, *as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST*.

It is blessed to observe, in confirmation of the faith, how the servants of the LORD correspond in word and doctrine. If the Reader will compare the writings of *Jeremiah*, who exercised his ministry long after *Hosea*, with the writings of *Hosea*, he will observe in several instances their agreement. Jeremiah 7:34. with Hosea 2:11. So again, Ezekiel 16:15-19. compared with Hosea 2:8, 9. And the New Testament Writers, yea, the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself, confirms the divine authority of the prophecy of *Hosea*, by quotations from it. Matthew 11:13. Romans 9:25, 26. Matthew 2:15. 1 Peter 2:10.

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

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

HOSEA 1:1

The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beerī, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

This is the preface to what follows. It is the LORD's word, and therefore worthy of the greatest attention. And the time of the Prophets ministry is also mentioned. Hosea laboured long in the word and doctrine. For if it be calculated, only the time of his ministry, supposing only from the last year of *Uzziah*, to the first year of *Hezekiah*, this included a period of near seventy years: so that if Hosea began his prophetic character even at the age of twenty, he must have lived to between ninety and an hundred years.

HOSEA 1:2-5

The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD. (3) So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. (4) And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel. (5) And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

Some have thought, that what is here said of *Hosea*, was in vision, and not in reality. But others have deemed it to be literally as is here stated. In either sense, the doctrine is the same. GOD intended to show thereby the divorcement of his people. The name of *Gomer* is very expressive, meaning *waste*. GOD'S Israel are threatened to be wasted and scattered. And *Jezreel* is to the same amount, meaning scattered. Reader! while we read these scriptures, and behold in the day in which we live their fulfillment; is it not sweet to recollect the promise, *He that scattered Israel will gather him*. Jeremiah 31:10. Genesis 49:10. John 11:52.

HOSEA 1:6-7

And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And *God* said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. (7) But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

Perhaps the birth of a son first, and a daughter after, was intended to signify that both sons and daughters had alike corrupted themselves. *Ruhamah* is a beautiful name signifying *beloved*: but the Lo before it, putting a negative upon it, shows the solemn alteration wrought by sin in the human mind. But, Reader! do not overlook the gracious promise that follows, and the way by which the LORD engageth to accomplish it. The salvation promised is wholly by the LORD their GOD. Sweet thought! It is all in JESUS, *for there is salvation in no other*. Hosea 13:9. Acts 4:12.

HOSEA 1:8-11

Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. (9) Then said *God*, Call his name Loammi: for ye *are* not

my people, and I will not be your *God*. (10) Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, Ye *are* the sons of the living God. (11) Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great *shall be* the day of Jezreel.

We have here a further illustration of the doctrine. Israel had forfeited all pretensions to their covenant interest in JEHOVAH; and if it be preserved, it is not because of their deservings, but on account of the divine mercy. And how sweet and full are the promises that follow. And that they are all founded in CHRIST, the smallest attention to the Gospel will confirm. The HOLY GHOST, as if that no mistakes might arise on that ground, appointed two of his servants to tell the Church as much. See Romans 9:25, 26. 1 Peter 2:10. I admire the strength of the expression Lo ammi; for here as before, when the Lo is taken away, (and it is only added now to express the ruined state of Israel, while breaking GOD'S covenant) the ammi still remains, which signifies my people. And how blessed this is done, the last verse of the Chapter fully proves. Both Israel and Judah shall then be formed in one, and all gathered to our glorious Shiloh, the head and husband of his body the Church, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:23.

REFLECTIONS

READER! We may truly say, with one of the Sacred Writers, in reference to the Church in her latter-day glory; glorious things are spoken of thee thou city of GOD! For to behold, as this Chapter relates, the low and impoverished state of the

Church; and GOD putting away, as it were, his people, and yet recovering them by the riches and sovereignty of his grace, all of himself, and from himself, and his own purpose, counsel, and will; surely we are constrained to exclaim, what hath God wrought?

Reader! is it so, that we are by nature, and by practice, like the children of whoredoms, and richly deserve to be forever called, Lo ruhamah, and Lo ammi; but yet by the infinite grace of adoption, brought into acceptance by CHRIST, our spiritual Head? Is it in JESUS, and by JESUS, the one glorious Head of his body the Church, the whole of Judah and Israel are gathered; and when not a people are made the sons of the living GOD; oh! for grace to admire and adore these high privileges, and ascribe all the glory, and the praise, to whom alone it is all due. Precious JESUS! let my soul henceforth be forever eyeing thee, as the cause, the whole means, the whole end. Earnestly as my soul desires to love thee, let not my love to thee be made any more the standard of my safety in thee, but let me consider thy love as the whole sum and substance of all my safety and my joy. Oh! for grace to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge. In heaven itself, the full and clear apprehension of thy love, constitutes the chief happiness of the place. Give me then, dearest LORD, by thy SPIRIT, to be able to comprehend with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of thy love, that I may be filled with all the fulness of GOD!

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

HOSEA 2:1

Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.

I beg the Reader to observe, how soon the change is made from the foregoing Chapter. The *Lo*, the *not* is taken off; and the LORD calls his people again *Ammi*, and *Ruhamah*, beloved. And Reader! pray observe the cause. They are called *Brethren*. Yes! JESUS is not ashamed to call them so. Hebrews 2:11. And the Church glories in it. Song Of Solomon 8:1. Oh! how gracious!

HOSEA 2:2-4

Plead with your mother, plead: for she *is* not my wife, neither *am* I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; (3) Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst. (4) And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they *be* the children of whoredoms.

But yet remember how the LORD pleads with his people under their rebellions. Here the whole Church is represented as our mother; and called in to hear of her backslidings; that when CHRIST was married to her she should run after her lovers. There is somewhat uncommonly gracious, and blessed, in this view of JESUS marrying our nature, by uniting that nature to the GODHEAD. And of all subjects of endearment, surely this is the highest, and the best. Reader! I know not what *your* feelings are on this subject; but to my view, I know of no encouragements to lead my poor sinful soul to the mercy seat

of GOD in CHRIST, amidst all my unworthiness, equal to this; that CHRIST hath taken my nature up with him to the highest glory; and in that nature, that there is one in the throne whom the FATHER heareth alway. I feel a thousand blessings in this one consideration, that poor, and wretched, and polluted, as I am, in this body of sin and death, which I carry about with me; yet in that pure, and holy part of my nature, in the Person of CHRIST JESUS, JEHOVAH'S law hath been magnified, and made honorable; so that a gracious acceptation is given to all his people, in Him, the beloved. When I think of this, and what the Church is in JEHOVAH'S sight, as beheld and accepted in CHRIST JESUS, I am content to be stript and become naked, as in the day I was born, that I may be washed in JESUS'S blood, and clothed in JESUS'S righteousness.

HOSEA 2:5

For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give *me* my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

We have here, if I mistake not, the process of grace, when the LORD is about to work upon the hearts of his people. They are, as Israel is here described, speaking confidently, and with an high hand; resolving to seek in herself and her own attainments, comfort like the oil and the corn; that is, taking refuge in creature enjoyments, and making to herself cisterns, yea, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Jeremiah 2:13. This is in scripture language, playing the harlot, and doing shamefully. But see in what follows, what comes next, and how the LORD works.

HOSEA 2:6

Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

The LORD raiseth perplexities in the soul, to embarrass and entangle the poor sinner in the wild and mad career the sinner is pursuing. And as thorns and briars, which were in the curse pronounced on sin at the first, are suited to this purpose, the LORD will hedge up the sinner's way with them. Reader! do not overlook here how JESUS bore this eminently in his own sacred person, when he became the sinner's surety. You and I have found many a thorny path to our feet in our pilgrimage; but none but the ever blessed JESUS was crowned with thorns, as if to intimate that He should be pre-eminent in suffering, as He is pre-eminent in grace and glory. John 19:1-5. Well then, the LORD (we are told here) will make a hedge of thorns, to stop the sinner's way; and if this will not keep him back, he will make a wall also. For when the LORD is working by the sovereignty of his grace, to deter the soul he is bringing to himself, if one process will not accomplish the purpose, another shall. Reader! pause, and enquire what you know in your own heart of these things. Depend upon it, that it is by these things you live, and in this is the life of the soul.

HOSEA 2:7

And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find *them*: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now.

Here we have the beautiful consequence of GOD'S gracious dealings with his people. Though the LORD'S people have done, and do commit spiritual adultery with the Mammon of

this world, and the Church is continually running after her idols; yet, meeting with nothing but sorrow, disappointment, and vexation of spirit, the LORD mercifully tinging all her pursuits with bitterness and vanity; and by the secret inclinations the LORD works in the heart, working grace, at length issues a cry from the soul, *I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.* Reader! I pray you not to overlook the blessed soul-rejoicing, soul-comforting doctrine here taught the Church. JESUS was, and is, and ever will be, the *first*, and *constant*, and *last*, and only husband of his Church. For whatever idols our poor souls, in the fallen state of an unregenerated, unrenewed nature, through the temptation of hell, may go after, still the LORD JESUS loseth not his right in us, neither we our interest in him. Oh! what a thought is here! Oh! what unknown, unexplored, and endless mercies, are found in it, for every redeemed soul to rejoice in! CHRIST, as Mediator, received his Church, his bride, his spouse, from the hand and gift of GOD the FATHER, before all worlds. True, he was to redeem it in time; but this he had bargained for from all eternity. The lapsed state in Adam, like what is said here of the Church, left our whole nature naked, and as in the day in which we were born, children of whoredoms, and deserving wrath. But JESUS claims his right, and recovers his redeemed, the purchase of his blood, by the sovereignty of his Almighty arm. And having undertaken for her debt, he undertook for her duty also, and therefore makes her *willing in the day of his power.*

HOSEA 2:8-13

For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal. (9)
Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time

thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness. (10) And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. (11) I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. (12) And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. (13) And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD.

These are so many blessed expressions, to show how graciously the LORD is dealing with his people, in the bounties both of providence and grace; while our proud, unhumbled nature, overlooking the LORD's free gifts, is always apt to ascribe every blessing to our own attainment. Moses admonished Israel to be aware of this, and learn to give GOD the sole glory. Deuteronomy 8:10. to the end. We may make application of what is here said to spiritual privileges, as well as temporal mercies. The New Moons and Sabbaths, in the Jewish Church, with their feast days, bear a just correspondence to the several means of grace and ordinances in the Christian. And how often do they become unprofitable in their use from our unthinking, forgetful, and ungracious minds.

HOSEA 2:14-15

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. (15) And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

Reader! I beseech you to pause over every verse, and every part and portion of this most blessed Chapter. Was ever grace like thine, thou dear Redeemer? And when the milder methods of thy recovering mercy lose their effect, still thou wilt not relinquish thy people, nor give them up! A wilderness dispensation, under this blessing, shall accomplish *that* which a fulness of privileges could not induce. The valley of *Achor* itself shall open a door of hope, when thou art pleased to turn the heart; and songs of holy joy shall burst forth from the soul, which before had been given to idolatry. The Reader will recollect, I hope, what was recorded of *Achan*, in the wars of *Joshua*; and from hence see the allusion. As *Achan* troubled Israel, and from thence troubles arose; so from the very troubles of GOD'S people, by the LORD'S sanctifying blessing upon them, from thence blessings shall come. Joshua 7:1. to end. It is very blessed, very gracious, when by the overruling grace of GOD, our sorrows are made the means of joy; and our afflictions, from being instrumental to bring the heart to GOD, become like the spiced wine of the pomegranate.

HOSEA 2:16-17

And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. (17) For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.

I can never say enough on the blessedness contained in these words of the LORD JESUS. I say the LORD JESUS; for evidently they are his words. It was neither the person of the FATHER, nor of the HOLY GHOST, that married our nature, by taking a portion of it into union with the GODHEAD; but it was JESUS: Hence he is emphatically called, the Husband of his people. And there is an uncommon degree of tenderness in the

expression Ishi. And thankful I desire to be to the LORD, not only for his unparalleled condescension in calling himself by that name; but also for watching over the Church when the translators of our English Bible were mercifully raised up, and commissioned to translate the scriptures from the original Hebrew into our mother tongue, that they preserved the sweet word of Hebrew Ishi, in its own state, and gave it to us as it is in our Bibles. It is indeed a blessed word, when graciously spoken by the LORD JESUS CHRIST of himself, and hath a most sweet and loving signification. The word Ishi, and the word Baali, both may be translated Husband: and so the word Baali is rendered in Isaiah. Chapter 54:5. Thy Maker is thine husband. But there is in Baali somewhat of a lordship, or authority, more than in Ishi. And we cannot with propriety say, Baali, my man; but rather it is my LORD. Whereas Ishi more particularly means, my man. As if JESUS would be known to his Church by that endeared name. And I venture to believe, that this injunction of our LORD JESUS to call him Ishi, had respect to the days of CHRIST'S flesh, when he would in a yet more eminent and endeared manner be known unto his Church and people as the Ishi, that is, the man CHRIST JESUS. The Reader will forgive me, I hope, if I add one observation more upon this sweet word Ishi. It is well known, that the word of itself contains one of the letters of JEHOVAH. And this is the highest honor that can be given to any name; so much so, that when at any time (as in the case of Jeconiah, afterwards called Coniah) if the letter be withdrawn it became a decided evidence of divine displeasure. See Jeremiah, chap. 22:24. His name had been Jeconiah, but now he hath lost the first and distinguishing letter Jah, he is now only Coniah. So that Ishi, being formed with one of the letters which belongs

to the incommunicable name of JEHOVAH, carried with it great dignity, and implied man's relation to CHRIST. It is no less certain that the feminine of the Woman in the original hath the same honor, and is a symbol of GOD'S grace in her. So that when, as in the LORD'S original appointment, the Man and Woman are united to each other in the LORD; both then having this character in their names, and both being by grace as well as nature united to Him and in Him, they are blessed in Him, and have all blessings from Him, to their mutual joy and comfort. But if their union be only in nature, and not in grace; not formed in CHRIST; and not from CHRIST; thus they lose this distinguishing letter in their name, and the word is no longer in the man or woman Ishi, but Esh, that is fire; consuming and destroying one another.

HOSEA 2:18

And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

How precious these words! When the LORD is at peace with a redeemed soul in CHRIST; he maketh the whole creation to be at peace with him: that is, the LORD allows nothing to hurt him. Exercised and tried GOD'S people *may be*; but hurt *they shall not be*. So runs the charter of grace; *No weapon formed against thee shall prosper* (saith JEHOVAH, the FATHER to CHRIST Mediator, and to his people in him,) *and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn*. Isaiah 54:17. Ephesians 1:3.

HOSEA 2:19-20

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. (20) I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

Was there ever any compellation of words of tenderness like these. Everyone is literally and truly fulfilled, in that the LORD JESUS hath united himself to his Church and people, and given them union in himself. The covenant that the LORD hath made *for* his people, that none of the inferior creatures should hurt them, was nothing compared to what he here saith, of the covenant he had made *with* them. Betrothing, implies the marriage covenant, and this is not for a day, but forever; an union never to be dissolved. And JESUS hath done this in righteousness, because his righteousness is their righteousness in him, and this righteousness is forever. And this betrothing is *in judgment* also; for not only the whole is founded in divine justice and equity, but by virtue of the soul's union with CHRIST and acceptation in CHRIST, GOD'S justice, and GOD'S holiness, is as dear to the believer as his loving-kindness or his mercy. So that every redeemed soul beholds with delight, that JEHOVAH hath not relaxed a single atom of his demands of righteousness and judgment, but hath received a full, an ample equivalent, at the hands of the sinner's surety, for all sin and uncleanness. *A just God, and Savior*, are here happily blended. Isaiah 45:2. And the betrothing of the people by the Redeemer, not only is done in righteousness and judgment, but in loving kindness and in mercies. Sweet compassion, tenderness, and grace, shall go along with all his dispensations towards them; as the Husband over the wife of his bosom. Isaiah 54:4-6. And, as if all these assurances were not enough, the LORD JESUS sums

up all with a blessed *even so*, in the faithfulness of his Almighty character, and that his people shall know it. Every jot, every tittle of the covenant shall be fulfilled, and his people shall subscribe to that solemn truth, *GOD is faithful*. Deuteronomy 7:9. 2 Timothy 2:13.

HOSEA 2:21-22

And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; (22) And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.

These are very sweet promises, both in a temporal, and in a spiritual sense; and all ratified, and confirmed, to the believer, in the charter of grace. When the LORD hath brought sinners into a state of salvation, all the nether spring blessings, and the upper spring mercies, both pour in upon the soul. The figure here made use of, in that of GOD'S hearing the heavens, and they hearing the earth, is very beautiful. In times of drought and famine, the earth in vain looks to the heavens for their beneficial influences, if the LORD shuts them up. But when the LORD acts upon the heavens, and the heavens upon the earth; then there will be showers of blessings', the corn, and the wine, and the oil, shall abound, and the people of *Jezreel* shall be filled with plenty. The same holds good in grace. When the dry and famished souls of poor sinners are savingly brought acquainted with GOD'S rich mercy in CHRIST, their heaven is no longer to them iron, and the earth brass, but, the LORD hears and answers the intercession of his dear SON; and while prayers are going up, blessings are coming down; and the LORD becomes gracious to his people. Such, and so great, is the wonderful change brought by sovereign, free, and unmerited grace!

HOSEA 2:23

And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God.

This is that which in fact lies at the bottom of all our mercies, JEHOVAH's rich covenant in his threefold person of character, of redemption. The LORD's condescending to take Israel into covenant-relation with himself, in CHRIST, is the foundation, and the sum, and substance of the whole scheme of grace. Observe, it is GOD which saith, *I will sow her into me in the earth*. And it is GOD which first acknowledgeth Israel for his people, before that Israel acknowledgeth the LORD for his GOD. It all begins in GOD, and ends in GOD. JESUS is both the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the *Author* and *Finisher* of our salvation. And it is most blessed, indeed, when the soul is brought to see, and as cheerfully to delight and acknowledge, that the whole of redemption from beginning to end is of JEHOVAH, rich, free, and sovereign grace. Then the redeemed can and do in heart and soul join the hymn of heaven, when addressing GOD and the LAMB, *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood*. Revelation 5:9.

REFLECTIONS

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

their sure acceptance in him, through the infinite merits of his blood, and the covenant-faithfulness, of JEHOVAH.

Behold again and again, how all the mercies of salvation flows in and through this one most gracious channel, by our LORD JESUS CHRIST. JEHOVAH first calls, and calls most lovingly. Say ye to your brethren, *Ammi*, my people; and to your sisters, *Ruhamah*, beloved. Both sons and daughters are called upon: for JEHOVAH had promised in redemption-work, to call CHRIST'S sons *from far, and his daughters from the ends of the earth*; therefore, here the LORD sends to call them, agreeably to his most sure promise. And observe yet further; though the LORD was about to plead with them, and to tell them of their transgression, and the house of Jacob of their sins; yet the original covenant of redemption, founded in CHRIST before the world began; and consequently, before their fallen state, was not destroyed. JEHOVAH'S love to his Church in CHRIST JESUS, Was founded in the ancient settlements of eternity; so that her after-fall in Adam did not prevent GOD'S original purpose and grace, *given in CHRIST JESUS before the world began*. Observe further, the gracious methods of divine love, in bringing his Israel unto him. The LORD hedges up the way with thorns, brings the soul into the wilderness; makes crosses spring out of our supposed comforts, and thus by the convictions of his HOLY SPIRIT, compels the soul to return to her first Husband, because all else is vanity and vexation of Spirit. And when the LORD hath his infinite mercy accomplished the purposes of his grace; then the name of JESUS, husband, brother, friend, become sweet to the soul; and all the fulfillment of GOD'S covenant engagements follow;

the LORD acknowledges them for his people; and they acknowledge the LORD for their GOD.

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

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

HOSEA 3:1

Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of *her* friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

In a vision it should seem, that the LORD spake to the Prophet in this manner. As if he had said, *See Hosea!* whether there be such affection in human-kindness, that a man will still go on to love a woman that is requiting his affection with

committing adultery. Will he still love her? yet such hath been my love to Israel, that no change hath taken place in me towards them, though they have left me days without number. Reader! do not fail to remark this grace of God, for surely it is most precious. Turn to those scriptures; Isaiah 43:22-25. Jeremiah 31:3.

HOSEA 3:2

So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:

The Prophet's purchase hath doubtless an allusion to the redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It was spoken of as a goodly price, the Redeemer was bought for, Zechariah 11:12. Here the Prophet gave but half that sum. But it is remarkable, that the price of retribution to a man-servant, or maid-servant, hurt by an ox was double this sum. Precious JESUS! was thy precious blood so little set by! Exodus 21:32. And how graciously doth the LORD plead for the Church to be faithful. JESUS cannot admit a rival. If the heart be not given to him, there is nothing else he can accept. Reader! think of the graciousness of the LORD, as set forth under these figures. Fifteen piece of silver was but about the value of one pound seventeen shillings of our money. And as for the homer, and half homer of barley, the coarsest of grain, the value of it must have been inconsiderable indeed. And if the figure here used did refer to CHRIST, to the price given for him, what a gracious representation of the Redeemer's unequalled humility? Some have thought, that beside this, it had another reference, namely, to the dowry of CHRIST'S Church, in her lost, ruined, and undone estate. Those who are of this opinion

suppose, that an allusion was made to it by David. 1 Samuel 18:25.

HOSEA 3:3

And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee.

There is a great beauty in this verse, as well as a great and blessed doctrine veiled under it. JEHOVAH JESUS might very justly have put away forever his Israel for their whoredoms, and made the divorce binding; but not so according to the riches of his grace. Israel shall be divorced, if divorced at all, only many *days*, that is, until the fulness of the Gentiles be completed; then will the LORD call his ancient people home, and their union with him, their glorious head shall be shown, that Israel could never be for another; neither could JESUS be but for them. Reader! consult those sweet scriptures in confirmation of the doctrine, and the beauty and grace of it will abundantly appear. Romans 11 throughout. Hosea 2:7.

HOSEA 3:4-5

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim: (5) Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

I beg the Reader to pause over these verses, and when he hath duly pondered their meaning, to consider at this moment the state of the Jews, and behold, how for ages and generations past, the prediction in the *former* part hath been fulfilled in the earth. At the crucifixion of the LORD JESUS, they

publicly declared, that they had *no king but Cesar*; thereby fulfilling the memorable prophecy of the Patriarch Jacob, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh should come*. Compare John 19:15. with Genesis 49:10. The Shiloh was then come, and the sceptre, by their own acknowledgment, was departed. And since that they have had no king; yea the many days in which they were to be kingless, are not even yet run out. The whole nation is to this hour scattered. They have lost all *the five signs* of the temple: yea, they have no temple, but are unchurched, and in the most desolate and ruined circumstances in respect to divine things. But, Reader! pray attend with the greatest diligence to the sweet and gracious promise in the *latter* part of this scripture. There shall be a time, when they shall return and seek JEHOVAH in his threefold character of person in CHRIST; and that, in and through him whom they once despised: JESUS the root and offspring of David, their king. This blessed event is to be in the latter days. Oh! who that hears or reads this gracious promise, but must feel constrained to cry out, *when will the Redeemer arise out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob*, Isaiah 59:20.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS, precious LORD JESUS! let me pass by and pass over every ether thought and consideration furnished by this Chapter, to attend to thee, and to that lovely character of thine set forth in this scripture, as the husband of thy people! It is thou, dearest LORD, and not thy servant *Hosea*, that is here set forth, as loving a woman, an adulteress, in thy love

to thy Church and people. We have indeed all played the harlot, and done that which even the worshippers of the dunghill gods of the earth, never did; changed their gods, which were no gods; but we have changed that which is our glory, for that which cannot profit. But in the midst of all this rebellion, and apostacy, and departure; thou hast not changed thy love, nor given a bill of everlasting divorce, but if at all, yet only for a season. Every act of thine, in all ages of the Church, very fully shows, that thou hast not put away thy people whom thou didst foreknow. And after many days, thou wilt return and visit thine inheritance, and Israel shall again fear the LORD and his goodness, after many days. Oh! for faith in lively exercise, to be always on the lookout for the LORD's coming. Hasten, O LORD, the gracious promise, and arise and have mercy upon Zion; for *the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.*

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

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

HOSEA 4:1-2

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is* no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. (2) By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

Here is an awful account of sin in some of the deadly branches of it. But the most awful part of it is, that it is Israel, the Israel of GOD, that is here spoken of. Sin is sin in any nation, and the crimes here enumerated are horrible wherever they are found. But when GOD's people are the first in the transgression, this makes sin *exceeding sinful*. Reader! do not overlook this; it is a sad proof which the whole world daily affords of our fallen nature, in the mass of corruption everywhere abounding. But Moses speaks of the peculiar offence of sin which the LORD saw, because *of the provoking of his sons and daughters*, Deuteronomy 32:9-29.

HOSEA 4:3-5

Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. (4) Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people *are* as they that strive with the priest. (5) Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

Here the LORD follows the sins of his people with his threatened punishments. And it is not the smallest in the account, that the priest and Prophet shall have no weight with the people. Where the LORD gives not the understanding heart, the labours of both are but in vain. Psalm 127:1, 2.

HOSEA 4:6-7

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. (7) As they were increased, so they sinned against me: *therefore* will I change their glory into shame.

Observe Reader! how tenderly in the midst of judgment the LORD seems to mourn over the perishing circumstances of his people. And is it not now to the same cause in our ignorance of JESUS, that all our miseries and the sins of our nature arise. Did we but know JESUS, surely every blessing in love and obedience would follow. Hence Paul's prayer: and in which I beg of you to observe, the great and leading petition is not that we may love him, but that we may know his love to us in all its bearings. See Ephesians 3:14-19.

HOSEA 4:8-14

They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. (9) And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. (10) For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD. (11) Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart. (12) My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused *them* to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. (13) They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof *is* good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery. (14) I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people *that* doth not understand shall fall.

The first verse in this paragraph is a very striking scripture. In some of our old Bibles the margin hath it in yet stronger terms; they eat up *the excrement* of my people, meaning that which is most to be abhorred, is most delighted in by the enemies of God. And it should seem, that this is what most defines the character of *the seed of the serpent*. Say what men will, yet the fact returns with double strength and

violence, there is an everlasting line drawn between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; between the *Cains* and the *Abels*, the *Esaus* and the *Jacobs* of every generation. The children of the bond-woman will mock and manifest their hatred to the children of the free. Neither can they ever join, either in the life that now is, or in that which is to come. Reader! consult some few of the scriptures in confirmation. John 8:42-44. Galatians 4:22 to the end. 1 John 3:7-12.

HOSEA 4:15-19

Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, *yet* let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth. (16) For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. (17) Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone. (18) Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers *with* shame do love, Give ye. (19) The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

I beg the Reader to observe, for I think it is very observable, and very blessed it is in the observance, what sweet minglings of grace is here amidst the solemn and awful account the LORD gives of his people. Witness the tender watchings over Judah, and the LORD's charge not to follow Israel. As also, the gracious promise of the LORD's feeding them, as a lamb in a large place. I would not determine that it is so: but methinks there is here no small reference to the person and work of the LORD JESUS. I cannot help remarking also, what the LORD saith of Israel's backsliding, in that it is likened to a backsliding heifer. Now it is well known, that the heifer when sliding on slippery ground, is still with her head upward to the place where she aims to go, and hath not turned her back through falling down. So the LORD's people in their backslidings have not relinquished the LORD, though they fall, and make no

progress in the divine life. In themselves they are nothing, yea, worse than nothing. But in the LORD they have an interest, however unconscious to their own hearts. Sweet is that scripture to this amount, Hosea 14 throughout. I cannot but think also, that the other expressions here made use of are more in mercy than judgment. Let Ephraim alone: he is joined to idols! Some have thought that this is spoken of in the most awful manner: as if by letting him alone, his everlasting ruin would follow: Revelation 22:11. And so it would indeed, if the sentence was uttered by the LORD in this way, for none could ever recover himself from the idols of his own heart, if the LORD'S grace did not first enter that heart. And had this been the case with our whole nature after the fall, for what purpose did the SON of GOD come? I rather think the sentence is spoken in great grace and mercy. Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone. For what? To see and feel the wretchedness of such an union; until when like the prodigal, he comes to himself by my making his idols bitter to him, and hedging up his way with thorns, and my secretly inclining his heart to consider my love and his baseness, he is brought back with the cry of grace in his heart, GOD be merciful to me a sinner! See a sweet representation similar to this, and given by the LORD himself, Jeremiah 31:18-20. I do not presume to determine this point. But I venture to think it more in agreement with the whole tenor of scripture. If I err, the LORD pardon. If my views are from GOD the HOLY GHOST'S teaching, the LORD'S hand be acknowledged in it, and may he make it profitable both to Writer and Reader.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! cause my soul to read this solemn Chapter with an eye to what thou hast said, that thou hast declared in it that thou hast a controversy with thy people. Oh! gracious LORD GOD! And what do all thy controversies lead to, but to bring back thy people? Wherefore doth JESUS in his adorable grace, and love, and mercy, send forth his ambassadors, but that they should pray his people, as though GOD did beseech them in CHRIST'S stead, to be reconciled to GOD. Surely the Church hath reason to be humbled in the dust before thee, when she calls to remembrance, that the land mourns for the sins of it; and that the great and crying sins are the transgressions of the LORD'S people. And if the LORD in the days of the Prophet, declared that his people were destroyed for lack of knowledge, what shall be said of the present hour, but that it is a CHRIST-despising generation, who know not the LORD. LORD, take to thyself thy great name, and come forth for thine own cause, and turn back the captivity of Jacob!

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

CHAPTER 5

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

HOSEA 5:1-5

Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment *is* toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor. (2) And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I *have been* a rebuker of them all. (3) I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, *and* Israel is defiled. (4) They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms *is* in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD. (5) And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.

It should seem, that in the days of the Prophet, such was the general defect in the pure worship of the GOD of Israel, that even the priests and the great men openly opposed the truth. *Mizpah* and *Tabor* were places that lay in the path between *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*, so that if any poor Israelite ventured to go up to worship the LORD, those priests watched out to oppose him. Reader! think it not strange, such conduct, for the true spiritual followers of the LORD in every age are dealt with in like manner, and by the like people. The bitterest enemies of CHRIST'S people are among the professors of CHRIST. *The offence of the cross hath not ceased!*

HOSEA 5:6-12

They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find *him*; he hath withdrawn himself from them. (7) They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month

devour them with their portions. (8) Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, *and* the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud *at* Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin. (9) Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. (10) The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: *therefore* I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. (11) Ephraim *is* oppressed *and* broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. (12) Therefore *will* I *be* unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

The Prophet *Hosea* useth many similitudes, in order to convey yet more forcibly his divine truths; but the whole of what is here said, is much to one and the same purpose; namely, the defection of Israel, and the LORD's displeasure. This is a time of Jacob's trouble. None but the LORD can bring him out of it.

HOSEA 5:13-15

When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah *saw* his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. (14) For I *will be* unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, *even* I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue *him*. (15) I will go *and* return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

If we read those scriptures spiritually, and with an eye to CHRIST, (and in this sense will they be particularly profitable,) we discover in them the weakness of all human attainments, and all human strength, to recover from the ruins of the fall. *Jareb*, the *Assyrian*, is a type of the inefficacy of all human means to cure soul-sickness, and to heal the wounds of sin. None can rescue or deliver, neither can any remedy be found, until the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is

known, and felt, in the sovereignty of his power, and *formed in the heart the hope of glory.*

REFLECTIONS

MY soul dost thou behold in this Chapter, the false teachers here described? Ponder well the awfulness of such characters, who to please men, and find favor with the great, set their nets in the *Mizpahs*, and *Tabors*, of the present hour, to harass and afflict the people of GOD. Whatever *Hosea* knew of this in his day, he could not know more than the present time affords, of such deceivers and antichrists. Surely there never was a period of the Church, when in what is called the Church itself, so little is known, and so little proclaimed, of the person, work, office, and character, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The LORD CHRIST, if at all spoken of, is for the most part spoken of by such men, not as He really is, the whole sum and substance of the Bible the whole of ordinances; and of means of grace; but seen only in the back ground of the subject, and cautiously mentioned, and as cautiously recommended to the people. Reader! observe the LORD's jealousy, I beseech you, in this chapter, and mark it well. Oh! for grace to make CHRIST what GOD the FATHER makes him: the whole, substantially so, of all the covenant; yea, the very covenant itself. JESUS is the first, and the last; the author and finisher; the object, means, and end, of everything that concerns salvation. If we seek for pardon, where shall we seek it, but in CHRIST? If for peace, He, and he alone is our peace, *when the Assyrian shall come up into our land.* Need we a promise? JESUS is the sum of all, yea, himself the promise. He is the whole of the law; the substance of all the

types, and shadows; the body of all the prophecies: *to him give all the prophets witness*. My soul! see that thou draw improvement from every scripture, in discovering JESUS in that scripture: *for,*

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

CHAPTER 6

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

HOSEA 6:1

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

Every word in this verse is important and interesting, and I beg the Reader to ponder well the golden sayings contained in it. Some have thought, that what is here said is the immediate result of what the LORD had said in the last verse of the preceding chapter, and ought not to have been separated from it. And indeed I wish the Reader to look back to that verse, and read it with this. For from whence should such a resolution or desire as is here expressed come, but

from the LORD's grace in the heart? How blessed is it to read this, and especially after what we have gone through in the preceding Chapters of GOD's charge against his people, for their revolting from him! And observe, it is not the resolution of one person, and that one going to the LORD alone; but it seems to be a general invitation, Come, let us return unto the LORD. And I pray the Reader to observe with me, how pure the gospel is here set forth, in the reasons assigned for the sinner's return: because He who hath torn can only heal. The HOLY GHOST that convinceth of sin, can be the only comforter, to convince of the all-sufficiency of CHRIST'S righteousness, to justify and save. So said also the gospel Prophet. Isaiah 9:13. John 16:7-11. Precious JESUS! give thy people thus to know thee, and it will be indeed blessed. Deuteronomy 32:39.

HOSEA 6:2

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Here is an abundance of most blessed things contained in this verse. Certainly the Prophet had an eye to CHRIST in his resurrection, as the first fruits of them that sleep. He had an eye also to the spiritual resurrection of every sinner that is made to hear the voice of the SON of GOD and live. John 5:25. And no doubt there is an eye also to the future resurrection of the body, from the same cause, and by the same power. Revelation 20:6. Some have thought that there is a particular reference to the second coming of CHRIST in the Millennium, when the Jews restoration will take place. I only mention it; but by no means, give an opinion upon it. Certainly the verse is most blessed, and the promise most blessed. Every true

follower and lover of the LORD JESUS, will put his hearty Amen to it.

HOSEA 6:3

Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

I beg the Reader at the very entrance upon this verse, to observe with me, that the little word if is in Italics; consequently hath no right to be there, and certainly ought not to be there, if the sense be injured by it, or lessened, or destroyed. And that it doth all this is very evident. For if it be left out the doctrine is plain and clear. Then shall we know; we shall follow on to know the LORD. For as the first knowledge of the LORD is wholly from his grace, and before that grace is given no one ever can know the LORD; so all the after knowledge is from the same divine teaching, and not deriving an atom from human study, or human attainments. Matthew 11:27. And I beg the Reader once for all to remark, that this, and similar ifs of scripture are never put in, as forming any cause or reason for such grace being shown, for the doctrine itself is absolute. Then shalt we know, saith the Prophet: when? even when the LORD hath raised up the poor sinner, and caused him to live in his sight. There is a similar passage, Hebrews 3:14. For we are made partakers (saith the Apostle) of CHRIST, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. Here observe, the HOLY GHOST is giving testimony of a present mercy, not speaking of one in future. He saith, we are made partakers of CHRIST. How was this wrought? Surely by grace. Hence therefore our holding fast the beginning of our confidence cannot be the cause, or

condition of being made; for that hath been already done, and is really and actually enjoyed. It is only spoken of therefore as our truly feeling it, and knowing it, when by the lively actings of faith, we hold fast and live upon it. But what a whole, volume of the richest things is said of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the latter part of this verse. His goings forth have been prepared as the morning. And was it not so, when in the morning of eternity he came up at the call JEHOVAH, prepared in the everlasting council of peace for the redemption of his people? Was it not so, when in the day dawn, and day-star, of the early revelations in time, he came forth, as the sum and substance of every type, every shadow of the law; every promise, every intimation in the gospel? And is he not so now, and hath been in all ages of his Church, to all, and every one of his redeemed, as prepared for them in the sweetest of all mornings, after the dark night of a sinful, fallen, ruined state, which must have ended in the everlasting blackness of despair, had not JESUS arisen as the sum of righteousness, with healing in his wings? And how doth he come to his people, when visiting them under their original dry and barren state of their wilderness nature, at the first, and in all the after manifestations of his grace? Is it not as the rain; both the latter and the former? Every grace of JESUS is indeed as the rain and dew of heaven; that is free, unmerited, unlooked for, and unsought. It tarrieth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men. Micah 5:7. How blessedly JESUS is spoken of under this figure. Psalm 72:6. He shall come down as the rain upon the mown grass: refreshing the earth when weary, and scorched, and dry. And I beg the Reader to observe the great beauty of the Prophet's expression, in putting the latter rain before the former, in allusion to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. For in

Judea, there were generally *two* seasons of refreshing rains; the *one* in Autumn, the *other* in the spring. Now at the close of the Autumnal season the seed was then sown; this was what was called the *latter* rain, though in reality the first after seed time, therefore this is *first* spoken of, with an eye to CHRIST, in watering the souls of his people, when he hath sown the spiritual seed of his grace in their hearts. And the *former* season of the year JESUS refresheth them, in the time of the harvest, when he brings his redeemed home to his heavenly garner. Proverbs 16:15.

HOSEA 6:4

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

If the Reader recollects what I humbly observed in my Commentary on Chapter 4 verse 17. and compares it with this verse, perhaps he may be led to think as I do. Certain it is, we shall think alike, if GOD the HOLY GHOST be the teacher of both. But when I read the gracious, the tender expressions of the LORD, as in this verse, over both Ephraim and Judah, I cannot conceive that the sentence, *let Ephraim alone*, implies the giving up Ephraim to a judicial blindness, and irrecoverable apostacy. Reader! pause over the sweet and gracious expressions of the LORD! Was GOD at a loss what to do? Oh! no. But we are to accept the words as the melting and yearning compassion of the LORD over the sorrowful state of sin in his people. See Jeremiah 31:20. Hosea 11:8. Luke 19:41, 42. The figure of the morning cloud, and early dew, is uncommonly striking, to point out the transient state of anything that can be called good in man. In an hot summer

season, if the morning cloud appears, there is an hope of showers; but soon as the day comes on the cloud vanisheth. And the dew which promiseth to refresh, is soon dried up by the sun. Such is the specious nature of all promised goodness in man!

HOSEA 6:5

Therefore have I hewed *them* by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth.

Probably the hewing by the words of the Prophets, hath a reference to the powerful effects of preaching. We have a striking instance: Acts 7:51-54. And the LORD compares his word to a *fire, and to an hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces*. Jeremiah 23:29. See also Hebrews 4:12.

HOSEA 6:6

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Our blessed JESUS hath made this scripture memorable by twice quoting it. Matthew 9:13. and again, Matthew 12:7. But it should seem, as if by our LORD's expression on both occasions, the sense of it was not then well understood; neither is it now. Some have ventured to suppose, that the sense of it is, that the LORD prefers the mercy and goodness of our hearts to the sacrifices of his own appointing. Whereas the sacrifices, all referring as they do to CHRIST, carry with them a full conviction, that we have neither mercy nor goodness in our hearts. Jeremiah 17:9. I confess that according to my views of the scripture, the mercy here desired by JEHOVAH is CHRIST himself; and the knowledge of

GOD, the knowledge of GOD in CHRIST, as the substance of whole burnt-offerings. For CHRIST is the mercy promised; and CHRIST the one all-sufficient sacrifice with which alone GOD is well pleased. Luke 1:72. Ephesians 5:2.

HOSEA 6:7-11

But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me. (8) Gilead *is* a city of them that work iniquity, *and is* polluted with blood. (9) And as troops of robbers wait for a man, *so* the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness. (10) I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there *is* the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled. (11) Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

We find here the same melancholy account, as in the other parts of this prophecy; the LORD complaining of his people's apostacy; Gilead and the house of Israel; Ephraim and Judah; all alike transgressors. Alas! what but the blood of CHRIST can expiate the offences of the LORD's people!

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is blessed amidst the general; yea, universal corruption of our poor fallen nature, to behold, even in a few instances here and there afforded, of the sovereignty of the LORD's grace. And when we hear the cry issuing from the heart, *come, and let us return unto the LORD*, we may well exclaim, *what hath GOD wrought!* For surely nothing less than an Almighty power could effect the change; and the LORD's grace alone accomplish it.

But it is to thee, O blessed JESUS, as the glorious and efficient cause, the great event in every instance must be ascribed. It

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

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

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

HOSEA 7:1

When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, *and* the troop of robbers spoileth without.

The mercy of GOD here spoken of cannot be considered as intended only, and not executed, but rather the words should be read, when I had healed Israel. For CHRIST the Almighty healer had been set up, as the lamb slain from everlasting. And it appears to me by the expression, as a beautiful instance of the freeness, and greatness of sovereign grace, that the remedy for sin went before the disease. And certain it is, that the fall of man, as is here said of Ephraim's iniquity, becomes more discovered in the prevenient grace and mercy which the LORD had provided against it. What Paul said of himself, in respect of his ignorance of sin, but by the law, is equally true of our discovery, through GOD the HOLY GHOST, of our fallen state, by beholding the previous provision made for our recovery by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. See Romans 7:7.

HOSEA 7:2-10

And they consider not in their hearts *that* I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face. (3) They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies. (4) They *are* all

adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, *who* ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened. (5) In the day of our king the princes have made *him* sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners. (6) For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. (7) They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: *there is* none among them that calleth unto me. (8) Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. (9) Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth *it* not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. (10) And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.

I include all these verses under one view; for they are all to the same amount. They represent the same melancholy truth, only by different figures. The heart of man ready like an oven, always heated; is a similitude to display the unceasing bias of it to evil. All the other wombs of nature wear out by bringing forth. The earth itself, if not replenished, will at length become barren. The parents of every species are prolific no longer than within certain boundaries. And both must concur, during that period, to produce the like. But the human heart in the oldest age ceaseth not the sending forth sin. This is a womb that is never barren. It needeth no other parent than itself; neither tempting devil nor enticing world, (though both too often work with it) to bring forth its inbred, indwelling sins, into being. To use the figure of the Prophet; the heart is like the baker's oven, which burneth all the night while he sleepeth, and in the morning it is ready to his hand; so our hearts are always heated by the sin that dwelleth there, and which, unless restrained by grace, breaks out of itself into evil! Reader! think how infinitely precious JESUS ought to be, and indeed is, when once the HOLY GHOST hath convinced of

sin, and taught to you, or to me, the same lesson as he taught Paul, when he said, *I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.* Romans 7:18.

HOSEA 7:11-16

Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. (12) When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard. (13) Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me. (14) And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, *and* they rebel against me. (15) Though I have bound *and* strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. (16) They return, *but* not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this *shall be* their derision in the land of Egypt.

We have here a continuation of the same subject, namely, the LORD's remonstrance with Israel. But I pray the Reader to observe, how many sweet and gracious expressions of our GOD are mingled with his complaints. The LORD points out indeed their unworthiness and rebellion; but he speaks of his punishments of the people as in mercy. Hence he calls these *bringings down as chastisements*. He saith, *I have redeemed them*, notwithstanding their lies. He *bound and strengthened their arms*, though they imagined mischief against the LORD. Surely there is a great deal of gospel in all this, and, evident proofs, that amidst all his people's forgetfulness of the LORD, the LORD hath not forgot his covenant faithfulness, nor the promises of his grace, which he had made to a thousand generations. Psalm 105:8. Reader! what a mercy it is, that we have a covenant GOD and FATHER in CHRIST to look to, and to

trust in, who *though we deny him, yet he abideth faithful, he will not deny himself.* 2 Timothy 2:13.

REFLECTIONS

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

Reader! when you and I look into ourselves, what do we see but evil, and that continually? When now the LORD hath healed us in JESUS, how is our iniquity discovered? Our hearts are always ready to the lust of evil, like the baker's oven! How have we, like Ephraim, mixed ourselves with the heathen, and learned their works? And though we return, yet how often is it deceitfully, and not to the Most High! is it not so? Think then, how gracious, long suffering, and slow to anger, the LORD is? Gracious LORD JESUS! how shall we ever rightly and fully value the infinitely precious and costly sacrifice of thy blood and righteousness? How indeed shall creatures such as we are,

rightly value what our utmost conceptions cannot fathom, or comprehend? Oh! for grace, to have some glimpses of those infinite dimensions of Almighty love, in all its heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths, which passeth knowledge! Oh! to behold thee, thou blessed LAMB of GOD, in thy unceasing worthiness before the throne; and never, never to forget that thy blood speaketh more for thy boughten ones, than all their sins speak against them. Yea, dearest LORD, do thou enable me to cherish the sweet thought in my soul day by day; that a sense of the remains of indwelling sin in my nature, may not overwhelm me in despair; that thou art still appearing as a LAMB that hath been slain, in the presence of GOD for thy people, and canst, and *wilt save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by thee, seeing that thou ever livest to make intercession for them.* Amen.

CHAPTER 8

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

HOSEA 8:1-8

Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. (2) Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. (3) Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him. (4) They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be

cut off. (5) Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast *thee* off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long *will it be* ere they attain to innocency? (6) For from Israel *was* it also: the workman made it; therefore it *is* not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. (7) For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. (8) Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein *is* no pleasure.

The Chapter opens with a command to some one, and it should seem most likely to be to the Prophet, to cry aloud, in a way of reproof and expostulation. The expression is not unlike that command to Isaiah, chap. 58:1. And if we spiritualize the chapter, and for a moment lose sight of Israel of old, and read in what is here said, the LORD speaking to his Israel now; the word, under his Almighty teaching, will be very profitable. For Reader! mark verse by verse what the LORD here saith, and see if there be not too great a correspondence in GOD'S church, and among GOD'S people, to what Israel is here charged with. Have not we transgressed the Covenant? and trespassed against GOD'S law? And do we not, in the midst of all this, say, as Israel did; *My God, we know thee?* How often have we set up idols in our hearts, as the Kings and Princes of Israel did? How often have we been seeking alliance with creature strength, and creature confidences; setting up a righteousness of our own, instead of living wholly upon JESUS and his righteousness? Reader! do you not feel the full force of the Apostle's expostulation; *what then? are we better than they? No, in no wise, for we have before proved both. Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin.* Romans 3:9. Reader! it is very humbling this, but it is

thus the LORD teacheth us to profit, when we read scripture with an eye to our own state in the Church's history.

HOSEA 8:9-14

For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers. (10) Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes. (11) Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin. (12) I have written to him the great things of my law, *but* they were counted as a strange thing. (13) They sacrifice flesh *for* the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat *it*; *but* the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt. (14) For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

Here is a very striking passage in these words of the LORD, and is as suited to all ages as to the age of Israel. The LORD saith, that the great things he wrote to Israel were counted by them strange things. And Reader! what more strange to thousands, who call themselves Christians, than the pure doctrine of CHRIST'S blood and righteousness, as the only possible means of salvation, and yet what so great and so glorious? Who, untaught of GOD the HOLY GHOST, can enter into a right apprehension of that blessed doctrine; GOD *was in* CHRIST *reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them?* 2 Corinthians 5:19. We shall indeed know these things to be the great things of GOD, if so be the HOLY GHOST condescends to be our teacher. But without his gracious instruction, the mystery of godliness will be to us as strange things, and men will now, as much as in the days of CHRIST'S flesh, call the most blessed truths *hard sayings*, and

go back from JESUS, who never in heart walked with JESUS. John 6:60-66, &c.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Was there ever a period in the Church of CHRIST, when those that are divinely inspired, and called to the office of ambassadors for JESUS, needed to set the trumpet more powerfully to the mouth, and to call upon the sinners in Zion to be afraid for the impending judgments of GOD? Surely the LORD hath a controversy with the people, and he will plead with Israel. But, blessed JESUS! how sweet and refreshing doth it become to thy faithful ones, however few in number, that the interests of thy redeemed are safe, neither shall hell's gates prevail against the Church of JESUS. The enemy may have a momentary triumph; the adversaries of GOD's people seem to rejoice. The Church languishes in all her borders. But there is a *set time to favour Zion*, and in due season the LORD will arise to manifest his sovereignty, and the lighting down of his glorious arm. In the sure expectation of this, let GOD's tried ones repose, looking unto JESUS, who is both the Author, and Finisher, of faith. Shortly he will come to take out of his kingdom all things that offend; and prove himself to be the whole of salvation to his redeemed. In that blessed day of GOD, may it be the felicity, both of him that writes, and him that reads, (if the LORD will,) to be found among the ransomed of Zion, that shall return with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads, when sorrow and sighing, sin, sickness, and death, shall be known and felt no more.

CHAPTER 9

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

HOSEA 9:1-2

Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as *other* people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor. (2) The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.

I beg the Reader to remark with me, how much the Prophet dwells in all his Sermons, upon that feature of character which is so lovely and gracious; I mean the LORD JESUS being the Husband of his people. Though Israel had gone a whoring from her GOD; and worthless, and base as this was, yet, Reader, do not overlook the LORD's grace in Israel's unworthiness. Israel could not have been charged with this crime of unfaithfulness, had not the LORD been her Husband. And while we find the LORD lamenting this perfidy of his spouse, as he doth continually in those scriptures, can there be a higher proof than that the LORD, through the whole of his complaints, is manifesting grace that Israel may return? Isaiah 54:5. Jeremiah 3:1. Oh! how truly blessed is such a view of JESUS!

HOSEA 9:3-4

They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean *things* in Assyria. (4) They shall not offer wine *offerings* to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices *shall be* unto them as the bread

of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD.

Looking with an eye to the captivity in Babylon, the LORD threatens Israel with removing them from the holy land. Indeed, an unfaithful wife ought not to dwell under the roof with her injured husband. The LORD is very jealous for his honor. And when that Israel no longer dwells in the LORD's land, how shall she enjoy the LORD's sacrifices?

HOSEA 9:5-6

What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD? (6) For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant *places* for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns *shall be* in their tabernacles.

Reader, I beg of you to observe the LORD's grace still to Israel. How tenderly doth the LORD mourn over his captives, when beholding them void of ordinances. What will ye do, saith the LORD? If there were no other expressions than these of the kind, I cannot but think that these are enough to prove, that the whole of what is said in judgment, is all with an eye to mercy! *Egypt*, and *Memphis*, are here spoken of as the cities of desolation to Israel.

HOSEA 9:7-13

The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know *it*: the prophet *is* a fool, the spiritual man *is* mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. (8) The watchman of Ephraim *was* with my God: *but* the prophet *is* a snare of a fowler in all his ways, *and* hatred in the house of his God. (9) They have deeply corrupted *themselves*, as in the days of Gibeah: *therefore* he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins. (10) I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time:

but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto *that* shame; and *their* abominations were according as they loved. (11) *As for* Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. (12) Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, *that there shall not be* a man *left*: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them! (13) Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, *is* planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer.

Reader! do not fail still to pursue the subject with an eye to the LORD's grace, for the whole Chapter is full of it. The LORD, to whose comprehensive view, all things past, present, and future, form but one and the same object; beheld the visitation as at the door. His watchmen had shown it. The event cannot be passed over. But pray remark, how tenderly the LORD still speaks of Israel, in the days of his espousals. The LORD found Israel, like grapes in the wilderness; that is, as grapes are peculiarly grateful in such a place; so Israel was to the LORD; pleasant and delightful. See Jeremiah 2:2, 3. Reader there is a peculiar aggravation in the sins of GOD's people, after they have known the LORD. This is *to wound the Redeemer in the house of his friends*. Zechariah 13:6.

HOSEA 9:14-17

Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. (15) All their wickedness *is* in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes *are* revolvers. (16) Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay *even* the beloved *fruit* of their womb. (17) My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

There is the same strain in this part of the Prophet's discourse as in the former: and the whole sum and substance of the

sermon, is the LORD's grace and Israel's unworthiness. But I hope the Reader will not fail, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to discover that the chastisements of the LORD here spoken of, are the chastisements of a friend; and all that is here spoken by the LORD, in reference to punishment, is with the view of sanctifying his dispensations to his glory, and Israel's recovery in CHRIST JESUS. Hosea's text to this and every sermon in his prophecy, is suited in that blessed scripture; O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. Hosea 13:9

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED EMANUEL! how can I fail to behold thee, in this Chapter, under the endearing character of the Husband of thy Church; while hearing my LORD thus expostulating with his Israel of old, for their whoredoms and fornications! Indeed, indeed, precious JESUS! thou hast married our nature, in having taken that pure portion of it, which thy FATHER gave thee, into union with thyself. And thou hast thereby most plainly and fully proved, how great and unequalled the love thou hast fixed on thy spouse the Church. And didst thou not know, holy Redeemer, how unfaithful and unworthy thy wife would prove? Yea, LORD! thou didst not only know it, but didst declare it. I knew thou didst say, that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and be called a transgressor from the womb! Yet such was thy love, that this did not stop the graciousness of thine Almighty purposes; neither prevent thy union, or the manifestation of thy tender affection to thy people. In every age, to the worthlessness of thy chosen, thy grace hath been shown; neither hast thou kept back thy loving mercy from thy

redeemed, even when like Israel here, thy Church hath gone a whoring, and set up the stumbling block of iniquity in the heart! Oh! LAMB of GOD! what patience but thine could have borne with the sins of thy people; yea, with the unceasing rebellions of the hand that now writes? From the first moment that thou didst pass by, and beheld our whole nature cast out to perish, and polluted in our blood, and didst bid us live to the present hour of thy Church; who shall recount most among all the members of thy redeemed, the greatest recoveries by grace, amidst the greatest undeservings of nature? Whose song on earth, or whose note of salvation in heaven, shall be the loudest in praise of JESUS'S love? Precious LORD JESUS! while I read Hosea's prophecy; behold the relation of Israel's sins, and thy mercy; while I call to mind how thy long suffering hath been exercised in the thousand and ten thousand instances of all thy people, from that period to the present; yea, from the garden of Eden, through all the ages of the Church; and to continue until the consummation of all things; I feel constrained to cry out in the language of thy servant the Prophet; who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. Thou retainest not thine anger forever; because thou delightest in mercy. Yes! precious JESUS; thou wilt turn again; thou wilt have compassion upon us; thou wilt subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

CHAPTER 10

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

HOSEA 10:1

Israel *is* an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

Reader! do pray remark the change of circumstances in the Church, by reason of the LORD JESUS coming for the salvation of his people, to what is said of Israel by the Prophet in this verse. Now JESUS is the vine, and his people branches in him, there is no emptiness, no barrenness, nor poverty. And wherefore, but because from JESUS, Israel's fruit is found. John 15:1, &c. Hosea 14:8.

HOSEA 10:2-4

Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images. (3) For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us? (4) They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

Alas! how often do the LORD's people still find a divided heart! Precious JESUS! though I am fully convinced that there can be no happiness but in thee, yet how frequently is my poor heart going after idols! JESUS! do thou exercise thy lawful sovereignty over my affections, and by thy HOLY SPIRIT so bring every thought into obedience, that I may know no LORD but thee!

HOSEA 10:5-8

The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof *that* rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it. (6) It shall be also carried unto Assyria *for* a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel. (7) *As for* Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water. (8) The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

It is remarkable what connection there is in the apprehension of sinners in their fears, how remote soever they are from their sinful transactions. A plain proof of the workings of conscience! Revelation 6:16.

HOSEA 10:9

O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.

The reference here to the battle of Gibeah, seems to be that which is spoken of, Judges 20. But spiritually considered, to the Israel of GOD at large, the allusion is yet more striking. Here the charge is, from the first moment of Israel's call, to the last of Israel as a Church. Under this view, how truly precious is JESUS?

HOSEA 10:10-11

It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows. (11) And Ephraim *is as* an heifer *that is* taught, *and* loveth to tread out *the corn*; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, *and* Jacob shall break his clods.

The expressions and the figure of an heifer, in these verses, are not so clear so as to enter into the full apprehension of them. But generally speaking, they describe the LORD's grace, and Israel's unfaithfulness.

HOSEA 10:12-15

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. (13) Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men. (14) Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon *her* children. (15) So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

In the opening of this paragraph we find blessed allusions to the person of CHRIST: for He, and He alone, is the righteousness to which GOD'S people can sow; and as they are GOD'S husbandry, so JESUS is the only mercy in which they can reap. The figure of fallow ground is very striking, to point out the poverty and leanness of our nature. And the LORD raining righteousness upon his people, is as blessed a figure, whose promise to come to his people is as the rain, the latter rain, and the former in their season. Psalm 72:6. And the awfulness of the barren heath of sinners, which knoweth not when good cometh, is with the same truth set forth under the similitude of *plowing wickedness and reaping iniquity.*

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is very blessed, in reading these scriptures of the Old Testament, to behold how the figures made use of are

explained under the New. Our emptiness as a vine, and the plowing of the heart in wickedness, are strong representations to what is really the case of every man by nature, when the fallow ground is not turned by GOD, and the whole man remains unregenerated and unrenewed by grace. But when the soul is made sensible of this, and under divine teaching is led to behold the infinite preciousness of JESUS; then the poor awakened sinner feels the whole three of the Prophet's words, and finds it to be high time indeed to sow in righteousness, and to reap the rich mercy of GOD'S free and sovereign grace in JESUS CHRIST! Reader! it will be no small improvement of this Chapter, if by GOD the HOLY GHOST'S gracious influence, so much in Israel's emptiness and transgression we discover, as to be made sensible of our own; and from such a conviction of our nothingness, the all-sufficiency and suitableness of the LORD JESUS is discovered; for then we shall gladly flee from all creature dependencies, to take refuge in Creator strength; and feeling what we are in ourselves by nature, most earnestly rejoice in what we are made by grace. Such views will tend to endear CHRIST to the heart; and form him there *the only hope of glory*.

CHAPTER 11

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

HOSEA 11:1

When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

Though I am free to confess, that what is here said may every Word of it be applied to the calling Israel out of Egypt; yet, as we have the authority of an infallible Expositor, Matthew 2:15, to assure us that what is here said of the call of GOD'S Son out of Egypt, expressly referred to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; I hesitate not to consider the whole of Israel's history, as to this event in Egypt, merely typical of CHRIST, and would wish to lose sight of everything that is said of that history, any further than as it may serve to show how important the call of GOD'S beloved Son from Egypt was, which the LORD thought proper to have represented in figure so many ages before. Here the history of Israel's call from Egypt becomes interesting, very highly so, and we do well to keep it in remembrance, and to make use of it for this end. But we sadly overrate any thing, and everything, if we lose sight of CHRIST in the type, or place the one with the other on the same ground. *When Israel was a child, then I loved him*, saith JEHOVAH? When was this? Not surely in the beginning of forming the Church, when coming out of Egypt. When was it then? Not in the first giving the Covenant to Abraham, or the promise to Adam, that the seed of the Woman should bruise the serpent's head. It was long before this! Yea, it was before the foundation of the world. It was at that period in eternity, if any angel of light had a being to count it, when as JESUS himself saith, in the character of Wisdom Mediator, *the LORD possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; when, as the LORD saith, I was set up from everlasting.* Proverbs 8:22 to end. Considered in this light, and what follows is most blessed indeed, the LORD JESUS graciously

condescends to take the name of his people; and as graciously allows his people to call themselves after him. See Isaiah 49:3. Ephesians 3:14,15. He is declared to be *the SON of GOD with power by his resurrection from the dead*. Romans 1:4. And they are said to be *sons of GOD by adoption and grace*. John 1:12. And if JESUS be called out of Egypt; so are they, by sovereign grace, called out of the Egypt of a fallen bondage nature, and shown thereby to be beloved in CHRIST by the FATHER, as the FATHER hath loved CHRIST, as GOD-man-Mediator. John 17:23. Precious LORD JESUS! how blessed it is to behold thee in all thy pre-eminency!

HOSEA 11:2

As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

I beg the Reader, as a further confirmation to what I have observed in the first verse, that the LORD by his servant the Prophet, is here speaking of them, and not as before of him. Whereas, had the first verse referred to Israel in Egypt, there needed no change of numbers here; for the LORD is evidently now speaking of Israel in the plural, even the LORD's Israel the Church. (And this by the way of a change of persons, so frequently to be met with in the sacred writings, ought always to be closely attended to, as a faithful guide to the proper apprehension of the word of GOD.) The strange propensity of Israel to the worship of the dunghill gods of Egypt, and the nations around need not be mentioned. The LORD makes many gracious expostulations with Israel on this account all the way through; so that it is only to refer to their history every where to find instances of it. Reader! what saith the

heart of GOD'S Israel even now, after the wonderful calls of grace? Dearest JESUS! how prone are thy people to backslide?

HOSEA 11:3

I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

Observe the grace of the LORD, by way of heightening that grace, in the riches of it! It was never for want of education, in any period of the Church, that his people revolted; for the LORD did by them as the affectionate mother doth by her infant child; when in leading strings, she watches over the first attempts of the babe to walk. And thus the LORD doth now. The same grace that calls us from the Egypt of a state of nature, leads, by divine teaching, through all the paths of our pilgrimage, and through the whole state of grace. All thy people shall be taught of the LORD, is an Old Testament promise, and faithfully confirmed under the New Testament dispensation. Isaiah 54:13. John 6:45. JESUS both leads, and carries in his arms, and heals all the diseases of his people, though our ignorance is like that of Israel.

HOSEA 11:4

I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

This is a sweet verse, and serves very blessedly to explain the powerful efficacy of the LORD'S grace, at the same time the tenderness of the methods made use of is as plainly set forth. The cords of a man; not the yoke of the beast of labour; the bands of love; not the compulsive force of terror and fear. We have several beautiful illustrations of this: Jeremiah 31:3.

Song Of Solomon 1:3, 4. 2 Corinthians 5:14. It is a sweet doctrine of the gospel this, and thus graciously set forth. The effect produced is not by human persuasion, or human power; but by divine inducements wrought in the soul. The sinner feels constrained in the contemplation, of JESUS love, like the fragrant of ointment to the senses, or the allurements of music to the ear. See John 12:32. And observe, the same LORD that thus drew them to his love, gave them food for their support. Yes! JESUS is both shelter and food; the teacher and the feeder of his redeemed. He is the bread of life, and the water of life; the garment of salvation, and the whole glory of his people Israel.

HOSEA 11:5-7

He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. (6) And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour *them*, because of their own counsels. (7) And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt *him*.

We have here the sad account of Israel's requital of the LORD's kindness. In which Reader, we shall as sadly mistake the subject if we overlook in Israel's history our own. As Israel threatened to return to Egypt, so often do the LORD's people now look back, and in their hearts too often return to the things of the world. And were it not for divine patience, many that are preserved to be among the cloud of GOD's witnesses, might have been like the wife of Lot, pillars of salt. Genesis 19:26. Hebrews 12:1. See also Numbers 14:2-4.

HOSEA 11:8-9

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as

Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. (9) I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I *am* God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

Reader! pause over those precious words, and ponder well their gracious meaning. *Admah* and *Zeboim*, were the cities the LORD destroyed with *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. Deuteronomy 29:23. Now, as the inhabitants of those cities merited punishment, so did Ephraim and Israel, considered in themselves. For, as the Apostle justly reasons upon another occasion, the same doctrine holds equally good here. Are we then better than they? Romans 3:9-20. But the LORD refers their salvation into himself, and his own unchangeable nature, and unchangeable purposes in CHRIST. This is the most blessed of all doctrines, and the most gracious to our poor fallen nature. Oh! for grace, to refer all the glory, and all the praise, where alone it is due. The LORD hath himself provided a remedy in the blood and righteousness of his dear SON; and in his own faithful and unchangeable covenant promises, and in the great plan of redemption hath secured the everlasting salvation of his people.

HOSEA 11:10-12

They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west. (11) They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD. (12) Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

Here the promise is sweetly opened, of the blessedness in the LORD's saving of his people; for *they shall walk after the LORD*;

that is, apprehend, after the LORD JESUS CHRIST. JEHOVAH saith elsewhere, that *he will strengthen them in the LORD, and they shall walk up and down in his name.* Zechariah 10:12. The roaring of the lion is a strong expression, to show the powerful voice of the LORD JESUS, *the lion of the tribe of Judah.* And the trembling of the children, implies what blessed effects in conversion the LORD's voice shall have upon them. John 5:25. And though Ephraim and Israel still carry with them the tokens of their rebellion; yet our glorious Judah is faithful, and his seed the Judahs of the LORD will be preserved in their faithfulness; and shall be kept *by the power of GOD, through faith unto salvation.* 1 Peter 1:5.

REFLECTIONS

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

Gentiles, and the people Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And may we not add from the same authority, in all the works and sufferings of JESUS; thine hand did lead him, and thy right arm did strengthen him. Yea, LORD, the Mediator, in all his soul travail, did cast himself upon thee; and thou didst manifest that he was the very CHRIST, in making the pleasure of JEHOVAH to prosper in his hand!

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

CHAPTER 12

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

HOSEA 12:1

Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

Under the figure of wind is here shown, the vanity and emptiness of the pursuits of Ephraim. Any thing, and everything, seems preferred by Ephraim, to the LORD!

HOSEA 12:2

The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

Here the whole tribes of Israel and Juda are reprov'd. The LORD shows to what a degenerate state the both families were brought, and how different from the conduct of their first common father Jacob. Reader! it is a sad reproach to a family, when the descendants depart from the exemplary godliness of their fathers.

HOSEA 12:3-5

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: (4) Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him *in* Bethel, and there he spake with us; (5) Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD *is* his memorial.

We have here the most honorable testimony of the Patriarch Jacob, in the record GOD the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give of his conduct at Bethel in that memorable night, when expecting the furious anger of his brother Esau to break out upon him the following day. The history is given us, Genesis 32 and the HOLY GHOST hath thrown so much light upon it of what is there said, by what is here recorded, that we can never sufficiently bless the HOLY SPIRIT for his grace and condescension in this particular. I beg the Reader to recollect, that what the Prophet is here commissioned to tell the Church of the Patriarch Jacob, related to an event which took place a thousand years before. Jacob had been now dead for nine hundred and fifty years, and yet the HOLY GHOST refers to it, as though it had been but yesterday. And how delightfully the Prophet is led to introduce it. He took his brother by the heel in the womb. So that he was an hero for wrestling from the very moment of his birth, as if to imply what great events in grace he would be remarkable for in the circumstances of his life. The history itself, with the cause, is very fully given us, Genesis 25:20-26. And as Jacob began, so in the events that followed he manifested the disposition he had to struggle. By his strength he had power with GOD; yea, he had power with the Angel, and prevailed. The Patriarch, it is plain, knew both, and referred to this circumstance when a-dying. The GOD, said he, (as he blessed Joseph's children) that fed me all my life long unto this day: the Angel which redeemed me from all evil. Genesis 48:15, 16. Surely here Jacob rightly considered GOD the FATHER, in his covenant character; and the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the angel of the covenant, to whom he ascribed the great work of redemption. He had power with both: that is, I apprehend, he took hold of the strength of GOD'S covenant

promises, and JESUS'S justifying salvation, and in that strength he prevailed by faith. See Isaiah 27:5. He wept and made supplication unto him; that is, Jacob wept and entreated; not indeed for that the angel touched his thigh and made him halt, but because the object of his petition was so great, and Jacob knew who it was he wrestled with. And hence he called this angel with whom he wrestled GOD, a plain proof of CHRIST'S being known to Jacob as GOD, for he said, I have seen GOD face to face, and my life was preserved, Genesis 32:30. But what I beg the Reader yet more particularly to remark is, that as Jacob found GOD and his CHRIST in Bethel, so it is added, and there he spake with us. Who is the he that is here said to speak with us, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST? And who the us, but all the praying seed of Jacob, that as Levi the son of Abraham, so were we in the loins spiritually considered of our father Jacob, when JESUS met him. In confirmation see those scriptures, Hebrews 7:10. Galatians 3:29. The LORD GOD of hosts, the LORD is his memorial: these blessed words come in at the close of this wonderful relation, as if to silence every fear or doubt that might arise in the timid mind. All the persons of the GODHEAD are alike engaged, in confirmation of the covenant redemption, to the spiritual seed of Jacob in JESUS; and JEHOVAH takes to himself this glorious title of character, as the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as his memorial forever to all generations. Exodus 3:15. So truly blessed and gracious is the record here made of that memorable transaction, and so much light is thrown upon it by the Prophet under the HOLY GHOST'S teaching.

HOSEA 12:6-11

Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually. (7) *He is* a merchant, the balances of

deceit *are* in his hand: he loveth to oppress. (8) And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: *in* all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that *were* sin. (9) And I *that am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast. (10) I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. (11) *Is there* iniquity *in* Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars *are* as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

The Prophet here follows up the just and becoming resolution which ought to take place in every heart of Jacob's children, whether Ephraim or Judah, in pursuing the steps of their father. And he goes on in those verses to show the great folly, as well as sin, in not doing it. What a sad thing must it have been, that in the very place made memorable to the Father by the visions of GOD, and therefore by him called *Bethel*, the house of GOD; the children should make it *Beth-aven*, which signifies the house of an idol or iniquity! But, Reader! do remark the grace of GOD in what is said. The LORD did not cease to be to them the LORD their GOD; GOD in covenant. The LORD did not withdraw from them the gracious tokens of his divine presence; neither the ministry of his holy word, or his servants the prophets. He still spake to them by an open prophecy, and by private visions; although *Gilgal*, which was the city of the priests, abounded in transgression. I venture to think that there is in those verses strong allusions to the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Similitudes and visions all directed their leading points to Him, and in Him had their accomplishment. Revelation 19:10.

HOSEA 12:12-14

And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept *sheep*. (13) And by a prophet the

LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. (14) Ephraim provoked *him* to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

The HOLY GHOST is here again pleased to refer to the history of Jacob, and affectionately speaks of him and his love. But if Jacob be so spoken of under those endearments of character; what must we say of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Jacob fled to Syria to avoid his brother's anger. The LORD JESUS CHRIST came into this our world to remove his FATHER'S anger from his people. Israel served for a wife: JESU'S zeal to his FATHER'S honor and love for his spouse the Church, made him endure the contradiction of sinners against himself. The sheep of Jacob, and the heritage his services obtained him, cost him indeed labour. But JESUS laid down his life for his sheep. He died that his people might live; yea, He became sin, and a curse for his redeemed, that they might be delivered both from sin and the curse, and be made the righteousness of GOD in him. Oh! how do all characters among men sink to nothing, when brought into account in the view of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Galatians 3:13. 2 Corinthians 5:21. How doubly aggravated, yea, bitterness itself doth Ephraim's provocations appear, while contemplating the LORD'S grace! Yet, Reader! notwithstanding this, I pray you still to observe the over-abounding grace of our covenant GOD in CHRIST, that he doth not give up, or lose sight of his covenant relations to his people, in his dear SON, but (as you perceive in this verse) still calls himself Israel's LORD. Oh! the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! Oh! how doth grace shine in the glories of GOD'S rich, free, sovereign mercy in CHRIST JESUS! Precious, precious LORD, from whom cometh

salvation; what shall the Church render thee of love and praise, for all thy mercies? Thanks, thanks be unto GOD, for his unspeakable gift.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! and behold how GOD honored the Patriarch Jacob, a thousand years after his ashes had been mouldering in the dust! Behold what praise the LORD bestowed upon his servant's gallant faith; and learn from hence, how costly such sacrifices are in his sight, when coming up before him in his dear SON'S name. Oh! that you and I may learn herefrom to wrestle with GOD in prayer, that like the Patriarch, we may have strength in the same source, and have power with GOD to prevail.

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

CHAPTER 13

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

HOSEA 13:1-2

When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died. (2) And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, *and* idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

Here is a striking representation made in the character of Ephraim, and which suits all backsliders like Ephraim. First, departures are made with trembling: After falls are in more confidence. Hence the Apostle's kind caution. Hebrews 3:12, 13.

HOSEA 13:3

Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff *that* is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.

All these figures are strong and expressive, to show the transiency and emptiness of all things in man's strength, or man's attainment.

HOSEA 13:4-6

Yet I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for *there is* no saviour beside me. (5) I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. (6)

According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.

Whoever reads the history of Israel, and observes the LORD's kindness, and carefulness over that people, will enter into the beauty and grace here described, of the LORD's covenant faithfulness. See Deuteronomy 32:7-14. But, Reader! who that reads that history with an eye to CHRIST; and considers the whole of Israel's eventful pilgrimage as a type and shadow of the LORD JESUS watching over his redeemed, in leading them from the Egypt of sin, to the Canaan of redemption and glory; but must forget everything of Israel after the flesh, to look with wonder and amazement to the Israel of GOD after the Spirit! And, Reader! to advance one step higher in the subject of meditation, who that is enabled by the divine teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, and by his regenerating grace on the soul, to read the mysterious subject, and discover his own personal interest in it, as it concerns himself; but must feel his soul overwhelmed in the contemplation, and feel constrained to cry out with the astonished disciple; LORD! *how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world?* John 14:22. David, under the impression of distinguishing grace, cried out; *I am as a wonder unto me!* And every child of GOD feels that he is a world of wonders in himself!

HOSEA 13:7-8

Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe *them*: (8) I will meet them as a bear *that is bereaved of her whelps*, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

I do not presume to interpret those verses as with an eye to mercy only; no doubt they contain under several similitudes, tokens of the LORD's heavy judgments. But to the *Ephraims* of the LORD, those whom as the LORD had just before said, he knew in the wilderness, is there not reason to hope his judgments are in mercy? The HOLY GHOST, though the Comforter, is no less a *spirit of judgment, and a spirit of burning*. Isaiah 4:4. Rending the caul of the heart is not unsimilar to taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh. Reader! remember I do not presume to determine this point. But, when I read the whole of *Hosea's* prophecy together, yea, when I go on to the next verse only, and hear what is there said, methinks I behold such loving-kindness in the LORD, and such gracious expressions from Him, that I feel disposed to cry out with the Prophet, *Who is a GOD like unto thee, &c.* See Micah 7:18-20. Pray turn to Ezekiel before you turn from those verses, chap. 36:16. to the end.

HOSEA 13:9

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me *is* thine help.

Oh, what a verse is here! Could it be possible to give a fuller account of the blessed gospel of the ever blessed GOD in a more comprehensive manner! Israel hath destroyed himself. Yea, so hath every son and daughter of Adam. All men have done so. Every sinner hath done so, and is a soul murderer. Then comes in the remedy, the only remedy; *In me is thy help*. And who is it that thus speaks but the LORD JESUS CHRIST. See, Reader! how the whole of salvation is brought into a little compass. Here is the great ruin; and here the great relief. Destruction is of ourselves: Salvation is alone in

CHRIST. Oh! for grace to know it, and to find the saving truth to the soul's joy!

HOSEA 13:10-13

I will be thy king: where *is any other* that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? (11) I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took *him* away in my wrath. (12) The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up; his sin *is* hid. (13) The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he *is* an unwise son; for he should not stay long in *the place of* the breaking forth of children.

All that is here said may be considered as the natural effect of sin, which self-destroyers bring upon themselves. Here is an allusion perhaps to Israel's history, in the case of Saul, king of Israel, whom the LORD appointed, and also rejected. See 1 Samuel 15:23. But the subject is general, and by no means limited to any age or period. The idea of a travailing woman, and the breaking forth of children, may probably have a reference to the soul travail under conviction of sin. The holy scriptures make use of this figure upon several occasions. Isaiah 26:18. John 16:21.

HOSEA 13:14

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

We can have no difficulty in discovering the blessed sense of this glorious verse; neither of the Almighty Speaker of it; since the Apostle Paul was taught it by GOD the HOLY GHOST, to instruct the Church. 1 Corinthians 15:55. And while we behold the LORD JESUS thus speaking by his servant the Prophet to this purport, so many hundred years before his incarnation, and accomplishing the whole by his resurrection

and triumph over death, hell, and the grave; surely we cannot but take part in the glorious tidings to our nature, convinced that both in his victories *for* his people, and his conquests *in* his people; never will he recall his mercies, nor repent in the salvation of his redeemed, and the everlasting destruction of his foes.

HOSEA 13:15-16

Though he be fruitful among *his* brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. (16) Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

Some have thought that it is the LORD JESUS CHRIST that is spoken of as fruitful among his brethren. And no doubt CHRIST is abundantly fruitful; as Jacob prophesied of him, as a fruitful bough whose branches run over the wall. Genesis 49:22. But this cannot be spoken of CHRIST, because it follows that his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up. And as Samaria, which was the chief city of Ephraim, is also said to be desolate, it should seem to be rather a reference to Ephraim, who was fruitful among Israel's children; see Genesis 48:17-19.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST numberless beauties which this Chapter furnisheth for the most blessed improvements under grace; methinks I would attend to what my LORD hath said concerning his ransom of his people from the power of the grave, as eminently important; and indeed as including all blessings in

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

be to GOD who giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 14

CONTENTS

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

HOSEA 14:1-3

O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. (2) Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. (3) Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

We may divide this Chapter into three grand parts. The first, in which the HOLY GHOST points out to Israel his fall, and shows what method he is to take in seeking to the LORD for a recovery. The second sets forth the LORD's gracious assurances of pardon, mercy, and peace. And the third represents the blessed effects which take place in the soul, when the LORD hath given grace and faith, and is pacified to Israel for all the evil that he hath done, in the rich salvation of the LORD. These three verses contain the first of those doctrines. The Chapter begins with a faithful account of Israel's fall, and as gracious a call to return. And the method to be adopted is shown in coming to the LORD, with an

earnest petition for the LORD to take away all iniquity. Reader! mark this method of every sinner's return, for it is the LORD's own method. We cannot come to the LORD after our fall, until the LORD first come to us. We cannot say anything to the LORD, but what the LORD hath first said to us. If we love him, it is because he first loved us. And how very blessed it is to behold the workings of the HOLY GHOST in the heart, when the poor penitent comes to the footstool of the mercy-seat, renouncing all self-righteousness, all the Ashures of created excellency, and laying low and humble at the foot of the cross, crying out, LORD save, or I perish!

HOSEA 14:4-7

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. (5) I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. (6) His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. (7) They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive *as* the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof *shall be* as the wine of Lebanon.

Here we have the *second* division of the Chapter, in a Cluster of the richest promises. Reader! contemplate the LORD JESUS in all these precious things, (for He is the speaker,) and oh! for grace, that both you and I may see and know our own personal interest in them, for they are most blessed. JESUS will heal the backslidings of his people. His blood cleansed from all sin. And he will do it freely. His love is not the result of our prayers, but his own free grace. It comes from himself, and of himself. He doth love, and he will love. This is the only cause. And he will be as the dew unto Israel, that is, as another Prophet explains, *which waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men*. So free, unmerited, unexpected; so great

and copious as the innumerable drops of the morning; and so blessed as the fruitful showers on the earth. And the sweet effects wrought on Israel's mind thereby, shall be like that of the lily, whose roots lie deep, and even in winter still sends forth her shootings; so the lives of GOD'S people, which lie hid with CHRIST in GOD, shall be ever green, and which no wintry seasons can destroy. And as the cedar of Lebanon spreads forth her branches in majesty; so in CHRIST, his people stretch forth, on the right hand and on the left, with a smell as fragrant as the spices; and the sweet scented odour of JESUS name is in them like *ointment poured forth*. For dwelling under CHRIST'S shadow, everything shall partake of his fragrancy. And they shall grow as the branches of the vine, which though unpromising, and apparently like a dry stick, produceth the richest and most luxuriant branches, like the grapes of *Eshcol* or like the corn, which the more it is trodden down, the more it revives and brings forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty fold, some an hundred fold. Precious LORD JESUS! who that considers thy loveliness, and the blessedness of thy people in thee, but must cry out with the Church, *my beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi*. Song Of Solomon 1:14.

HOSEA 14:8-9

Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard *him*, and observed him: I *am* like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found. (9) Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things?* prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Here we have the *third* great branch of doctrine in this most delightful Chapter; namely, the sweet and sure effects of

grace, when that grace is inwrought by the HOLY GHOST in the heart. And such will be the blessed consequences on all truly regenerated and penitent sinners. Therefore GOD the HOLY GHOST closeth this prophecy with a peculiar note of the most important nature, that everyone who is made wise unto salvation, may ponder over the whole, and duly consider the blessed doctrine contained therein: putting his Almighty emphasis upon it, that all GOD'S ways are right ways, and which every justified sinner in CHRIST shall walk in. But while it proves the savor of life unto life to all such, to transgressors it becomes a stumbling stone, and rock of offence, so that they fall therein, and see not the work of the LORD, nor the operation of his hand.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be GOD for the sweet and precious doctrines contained in this Chapter. May GOD the HOLY GHOST write their full import on the heart both of Writer and Reader. I would pray for grace to see my own state described in the first part of it. Indeed every child of GOD may truly exclaim, I am the man that hath fallen by my iniquity. The LORD help me therefore to take with me words, even GOD'S own words, and come to the throne of grace, in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and find grace, mercy, and peace from Him, in whom the fatherless findeth mercy.

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

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

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

THE PROPHET

JOEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

The name *Joel* is significant; it appears to be a compound of Jah and El; that is, the LORD GOD. We have no account of this Prophet's descent or connection further back than his immediate father. Neither can it be determined with any exactness, the period in which he prophesied. Probably, somewhat about eight hundred years before the coming of CHRIST. But we are much more interested to trace the evident marks of inspiration in Joel's writings, than to be particular as to the time in which he delivered his commission. I only detain the Reader with my usual precaution on entering any and every inspired writing; namely, to be careful to implore that Almighty God that guided the Prophet's pen, to influence every Reader's heart, that since to JESUS *all the Prophets give*

witness, we may receive the truth in the love of it, and *the truth may make us free*. May the LORD GOD of the Prophets thus graciously do both by Writer and Reader in the present record now opening before us, *to make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

JOEL 1:1-5

The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. (2) Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? (3) Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation. (4) That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten. (5) Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

The prophecy opens in a very striking manner. It is the LORD's *word*, and therefore demands man's attention. And all ranks and orders are appealed unto to regard the man of GOD's commission; *young men and maidens, old men and children*; for the subject is not to be equalled. Yea, even the drunkards are called upon to listen to it, for the awfulness of the judgment coming upon the land is so great, that it is enough to awaken them into soberness. Reader! have you never met

with any instances in life, where the extremity of affliction hath induced the most astonishing effects; such things are spoken of, where the hair hath become grey, and where such effects have followed as instantly to remove the powers of intoxication?

JOEL 1:6-12

For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. (7) He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast *it* away; the branches thereof are made white. (8) Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. (9) The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn. (10) The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. (11) Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. (12) The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, *even* all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Under the figure of a swarm of insects destroying the fruits of the earth, is represented the judgment of the LORD upon a guilty land. It is blessed to observe, how the LORD pleads with his people by those striking visitations in the various periods of his Church; and with what gentleness in the midst of correction, the LORD manifests the cause for which he thus deals with them.

JOEL 1:13-14

Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. (14) Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn

assembly, gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

There is a vast degree of elegance in these expressions, as well as earnestness; the priests the ministers of the LORD are first called upon, and then all the people. The sackcloth to lie down in, the howling and woe of the LORD's priests, strongly represent and set forth, under types and figures, the desolated state of souls under sin.

JOEL 1:15-18

Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. (16) Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea*, joy and gladness from the house of our God? (17) The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. (18) How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; *yea*, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

The preceding verses having described the ruin of all flesh by reason of sin, here comes the judgment. The Prophet unable to enter into the particulars of the dreadful day of account, only cries out under the apprehension of it. *Who may abide the day of his coming.* Malachi 3:2.

JOEL 1:19-20

O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. (20) The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Here comes in to our relief the blessedness of that gospel, which under the conviction of sin, and a total inability to help ourselves, leads to CHRIST. For I hope, I need not point out to

the Reader, what the whole of this Chapter; namely, that the eye of sin and sorrow loudly proclaims the necessity of salvation by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The Prophet opens with sorrow, which is the effect of sin and closes the Chapter with what only becomes the relief for it. When a soul is convinced of sin, and feels the awful consequence of it, there is nothing that can give consolation to the wounded spirit, but the blood of CHRIST. O LORD, *to thee do I cry!* is the language of every heart taught by GOD THE HOLY GHOST. And the cry that is thus awakened by grace, is sure to be answered in mercy.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark in the instance of this Prophet to what all the other Prophets of GOD bear equal testimony; the process of grace in all ages is the same. Sin brings forth sorrow, and godly sorrow through grace leads to CHRIST for salvation. From the first transgressor in the garden of Eden, to the last fallen son or daughter of Adam to the end of the world, divine teachings invariably produce the same effect. The fathers to the children may therefore make known the LORD's truth, and the LORD's praise. Reader! it is most blessed to see, and yet more blessed to experience, our own personal interest in those divine teachings. *I the LORD teacheth thee to profit,* may be discerned and read by every enlightened eye as the title page of the whole of inspiration. And when, in the corrections and visitations of the LORD, by the LORD's great army, we plainly discover the LORD's hand; when in the locusts and palmer worms of the earth, we both hear the rod and who hath appointed it; when the fatherly reproofs of a gracious GOD in CHRIST are sanctified to bring the heart to

CHRIST; oh! how blessed are the awakening judgments of our GOD, in rousing his people from the sottish stupidity and indolence in which the world and its pursuits have intoxicated the soul, and calling home the heart to JESUS and his salvation. LORD! I pray thee put a cry in every heart of thy redeemed! Especially stir up the ministers of my GOD in the present awful hour of Zion's languishing, to cry aloud and spare not, for the LORD's deliverance of his people. Oh! for the LORD to be very jealous for his Zion, and make her yet the praise and perfection of the whole earth. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

JOEL 2:1

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand;

The Chapter opens with a solemn call to sound the trumpet in Zion. This was the office of the priests, to blow the trumpet, of what kind soever it was, whether the war trumpet, or the trumpet for the calling of assemblies, or the jubilee trumpet, or the new moon, or fast trumpet. See Numbers 10 Leviticus 25:9, &c. But certainly, the great leading object of the whole was with an eye to the gospel, as the close of this Chapter

manifests. And nothing can be more beautiful in relation to *the joyful sound*, than the figure of a trumpet, when the true ministers of JESUS loudly proclaim in his Zion, redemption by his blood, and the day of the LORD JESUS at hand. Isaiah 52:7, 8. Isaiah 27:13.

JOEL 2:2-3

A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations. (3) A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

If we read these verses with an eye to the gospel of CHRIST, (and surely in the present hour it were a folly to read them otherwise,) how graciously do they describe the first dawns of a day of grace upon every poor sinner's soul. Reader! hath the day-spring from on high visited you? Surely then I need not describe the darkness and gloominess your soul found itself in, when to your view *darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people*. JESUS himself is described, as *the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds*. 2 Samuel 23:4. And so he is indeed to every precious blood-bought son and daughter of his; when by his Almighty arm, that soul is brought out of the darkness and shadow of death, and delivered from the terrors of an alarmed conscience, in beholding the fulness and suitability of JESUS for salvation. Never was there a season like this, in the experience of the believers life; neither any after it, even to the years of many generations!

JOEL 2:4-11

The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. (5) Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. (6) Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. (7) They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: (8) Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and *when* they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. (9) They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. (10) The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: (11) And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp *is* very great: for *he is* strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

It will be very easy for a child of God to make a gracious improvement of what is here said, if read spiritually with an eye to soul exercises, in the conflicts of flesh and spirit, when once a life of grace is begun in the soul. The concluding sentence in this portion is very striking, with an eye to this state of mind; for indeed the voice of the LORD is heard through the whole, in all the chambers of the awakened heart.

JOEL 2:12-14

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: (13) And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he *is* gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. (14) Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; *even* a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

What a gracious invitation is contained in these words? How tenderly the LORD reasons with his people? And what an encouraging assurance it folds up with? Reader! do not fail to observe, that its this call of the LORD, the accompanying grace to incline the heart to the observance of it is implied. It is most blessed ever to remember that when the LORD thus comes forth in his endearing invitations, he is secretly inclining the heart to accept them. Grace must first enter the heart, or there will be no inclination to obey.

JOEL 2:15-20

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: (16) Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. (17) Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where *is* their God? (18) Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. (19) Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: (20) But I will remove far off from you the northern *army*, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things.

I beg the Reader to remark with me, what a most beautiful and finished representation is here of a praying assembly, and what blessings might not be expected to follow, where the LORD gives grace to the several characters to seek his favor. The congregation at large; the elders the children, yea, little children and babes at the breast; as if to bring down the

mercy of GOD in CHRIST, upon the helpless, unconscious little ones, who all take part in the common calamity. And the bridegroom and bride are to forego their own private happiness, to take part in the public evil, contrary to the kind provision the LORD had made for the marriage state, in the first year of their nuptials. Deuteronomy 24:5. The priests, the ministers of the LORD, bring up the rear in this assembly, as those more highly interested for the LORD's honor and the Church's welfare. Reader! read this with an eye to CHRIST, and behold him in the everlasting exercise of his priesthood, and the whole then becomes lovely indeed!

JOEL 2:21-27

Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. (22) Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. (23) Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*. (24) And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. (25) And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. (26) And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. (27) And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that* I *am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Here comes in what all along seems to have been intimated, how gracious the LORD would deal with his people. This is ever the case. When the LORD is coming forth to bless, he puts his people to pray. And let the Reader never overlook the cause: namely, the LORD's jealousy for his land, his love to his

people. And all this with an eye to CHRIST, the first and only pre-disposing cause in the salvation of Zion.

JOEL 2:28-32

And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (29) And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (30) And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. (32) And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

But here we have the sum and substance of the whole, in one of the richest promises ever made, as the effect of salvation, and most comprehensive of all blessings. It is impossible to err in the explanation of this passage, or to make a mistake in the application of it. Indeed GOD THE HOLY GHOST would not leave it to any human comment, and therefore commissioned *Peter* the Apostle to take it up, and make it for the subject of his sermon on the day of Pentecost, directly referring to what *Joel*, hath here said, to that glorious event. I beg the Reader therefore to turn to that scripture, and read the whole from beginning to end. Acts 2 throughout. It were to hold up a small lighted taper to the sun, to offer any illustration beyond what these two scriptures so fully explain; this part of Joel's prophecy, with the accomplishment of it, as related in that Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. I only beg the Reader to remark with me, what an answer those blessed scriptures *then* gave to the infidels mockery, of the first descent of the HOLY GHOST; and what an everlasting answer the same

precious portions of GOD'S Holy Word are unceasingly giving *now* to modern skeptics, who impiously presume to confine the out-pouring of the SPIRIT to those early ages of the Church, and to the Apostles of CHRIST only: as if the work of GOD THE HOLY GHOST had ceased, when the Church of CHRIST was once established: as if his blessed agency was no longer necessary, and his glorious act of regeneration was no longer to be known. Blessed SPIRIT of all truth! how plain, how evident it is, that agreeably to our LORD'S own sure promise, thy presence and thy power was to be known and felt by thy people forever. John 14:16, 17. Reader! look over the several interesting particulars in this sweet promise of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, and bless GOD, if so be you find your own personal character marked among the number. Observe the extensiveness of the blessing, it is upon *all flesh*; that is, no longer confined to the Jews, but also extending to the Gentile. It is not only upon the priests, but the people also. Not only upon sons, but upon daughters; not only young men and maidens, but old men and children. Not only Masters, but servants: for in the Gospel Church there is neither *Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, for they are all one in CHRIST JESUS*. Galatians 3:28. And, Reader, go on to remark in the other part of this most blessed prophecy, how fully and completely it hath been confirmed, and is every day confirming in the earth. The out-pouring of the SPIRIT produceth, as was promised, such wonderful changes in the whole system of men's minds and manners, as carry with them the highest demonstrations that CHRIST'S kingdom of grace reigneth in the hearts of his people. God the FATHER promised, that when he poured his spirit upon the seed of CHRIST, and his blessing upon his offspring, they

should show the blessed effects of those gifts in their lives and conversation. And here the whole is proved. They call upon the LORD, and the LORD acknowledgeth the call. *I will say it is my people*, saith the LORD, *and they shall say the LORD is my GOD*. See those scriptures, Zechariah 13:9. Galatians 5:22-25. Romans 8:8-16. And while those and the like scriptures, fully prove the gracious effects resulting from the out-pouring of the spirit, in the latter-day dispensation, under the gospel; there is joined with this promise the solemn threatening of GOD, which will distinguish those characters on whom the regenerating power of the spirit is not found. This is set forth under the strong images of the sun darkened, and the moon turned into blood; intimating the horrible condition of those who count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despite to the spirit of grace. Well may every one that reads this solemn scripture cry out, *from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, good LORD deliver us!* Hebrews 10:26-29.

REFLECTIONS

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

Behold how solemn and how sure the great day of GOD is proclaimed. There is, there must be a day coming, in which all these alarming judgments, which the former part of this Chapter relates in figure, will be manifested in reality! Oh! for grace to sanctify the solemn truths in our houses, and families! Ye ministers of my GOD! do ye not find cause, in the present awful hour, when the LORD's judgments are in the earth, to blow the trumpet in our British Zion, and to sound an alarm in GOD'S holy mountain! Yea! do ye not weep between the porch and the altar, and bear testimony to the truths of your LORD in an holy jealousy and zeal for his honor; crying out with one of old; mine eyes run down with water because men keep not thy law! Ye fathers and mothers of the rising generation! will ye not gather your little ones, and present yourselves with the very infants that hang at the breast before the LORD, to implore the LORD's mercy in the present impending evils, that the LORD may be jealous for his land, and pity his people. And oh! ye humble followers of the LORD JESUS, on whom this spirit of grace hath been poured out, the sure token of JESUS love, and your interest in him! See to it, that ye manifest a spirit of grace and supplication, hath been given you, and is continually in your daily walk, by besieging the throne with earnest cries and prayers, that will take no denial for Zion in her present alarming state of languishing. Go, my brethren, go into the very retirings of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, seeing that you have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS; and give him no rest nor peace, until he establish and make Jerusalem praise in the earth. Oh! for the HOLY GHOST, in his infinite mercy, to pour out of his sevenfold gifts, in a copious fulness, upon all the LORD's heritage, now JESUS is returned to glory, that all the

redeemed may be earnest at the throne, until there shall be *a deliverance in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, as the LORD hath said, and in this remnant whom the LORD shall call.* Amen.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

JOEL 3:1-3

For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, (2) I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. (3) And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.

Though it may, in a subordinate and secondary sense, be said, that these blessings to the Church were in a measure given on the occasional deliverance of Zion from her enemies, when at anytime the LORD reckoned with her foes: yet, it were sadly to enervate scripture, to suppose that the HOLY GHOST pointed to any temporal mercies when speaking of the great day of the LORD. Evidently the days here spoken of were the gospel days, and that time the time of salvation, by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And this scripture, read in this point of view, opens a subject of the most blessed nature. What thanks is there due from

the Church to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for thus preparing the Church so many ages before the coming of CHRIST, to be waiting and looking for her LORD's approach. The *valley of Jehoshaphat* was near to Jerusalem, as if pointing to the very spot of the LORD JESUS ministry. And how was the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem brought again, but by the death of JESUS? Reader! how sweet and blessed this subject becomes, when in the many gracious things said in it, you and I can discover our own personal interest in them?

JOEL 3:4-8

Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly *and* speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; (5) Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: (6) The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. (7) Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head: (8) And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

It is observable through the whole of the sacred word, that the day of vengeance, and the year of the LORD's redeemed are always joined. When JESUS comes to save, he comes also to destroy. And when he comes *to be glorified in his saints*, he comes also *to pour out vengeance on them that know not GOD, and obey not the gospel of JESUS*. Isaiah 63:4. 2 Thessalonians 1:10. And as a further confirmation of this most sure, but alarming truth, it is worthy observation, that the very name of ELOHIM, the blessed GOD, in his threefold character of person, signifies the *Denouncers* of covenant

engagements as equally pledged to fulfil condemnation as promises. And this holy name implies the oath to ADONAI, the mediator. Psalm 110:4. that while his people shall be made willing in the day of his power, his enemies, both men and devils, shall be put under his footstool. Oh! that this were but duly considered, and that scripture regarded. Psalm 2:12.

JOEL 3:9-21

Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: (10) Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I *am* strong. (11) Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. (12) Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. (13) Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness *is* great. (14) Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision. (15) The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. (16) The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. (17) So shall ye know that I *am* the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. (18) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim. (19) Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence *against* the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. (20) But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. (21) For I will cleanse their blood *that* I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

I do not presume to say as much, but I venture to believe, that *Joel's* prophecy in this Chapter is looking so far on, as to the second coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The *valley of Jehoshaphat* is again mentioned. And what violence is there to the term, to suppose it refers to this present world. The valley the Prophet Ezekiel was led by the spirit of the LORD down into, evidently referred to this world; and so it may here. Ezekiel 37:1, &c. And multitudes, multitudes, will be found in it, in that great day of decision, when the whole events of the gospel will be decided. Then, and not till then, will be the peaceable reign of the LORD JESUS, when swords, and spears, and war, will be no more. Moreover the moon will be darkened, and the sun ashamed, from the superior lustre of the glory of JESUS. Isaiah 24:23. And JESUS voice will be heard, and his presence known and enjoyed as King in Zion. Then in truth, and not in figure, will *the mountains drop with wine, and the hills with milk*. Jerusalem will truly be cleansed, and made holy in the blood of the LAMB, and the song of redemption be sung by the whole Church upon earth, as it is sung in heaven. Let the Reader look at some of those most blessed and interesting portions of the word of GOD, and especially the prophecies of scripture which refer to this great event, and let him determine for himself, under the HOLY GHOST'S teaching, in what sense such divine declarations are to be received. Isaiah 4. Ezekiel 40 chapter to the end. Zechariah 14. Revelation 20 and 21. chapters throughout, with Isaiah 65:17 to the end.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

Ye people of the LORD! Ye that are followers of JESUS in the regeneration; take to yourselves the sweet promises and rich consolations of this most blessed scripture. Your JESUS is coming, and will come to save you. Hear what he saith, and take to yourselves the full comfort of it. *You shall know*, JESUS saith, *that I am the LORD your GOD, dwelling in Zion!* You shall enjoy his presence, hear his voice, sit with him on his throne. Jerusalem shall then be holy, and be so forever. Then no more strangers shall pass through. No more the Canaanite

shall be in the land. No longer the remains of indwelling corruption shall vex the soul; nor the temptations of Satan, or the persecutors of the world afflict. JESUS will have taken away all the remains, and have cleansed all the blood of his people that had not been cleansed. And He will be their joy, their hope, their glory, their portion forever! Amen.

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

THE PROPHET

AMOS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

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

The name *Amos*, which signifies *Burthen*; or as some render it, *loading* or *weighty*, from *Omas*; was not unsuitable to the importance of *Amos's* writings, which are certainly very weighty and powerful. It is supposed that he was of *Tekoah* in *Judah*, about four leagues from *Jerusalem*: but there is no certainty on this point. And it is supposed that his ministry was immediately after that of *Joel*. We have the reign indeed in which it took place; but unless we had the very period of the earthquake which he speaks of in the first opening of his prophecy, it is not very easy to ascertain the exact time. Neither is it essential in a work of this kind. The subject matter of his prophecy, and the evident marks of inspiration with which the Book itself is accompanied, become points of much greater importance to regard. The chief scope of *Amos*, in those Chapters, is directed to the reproof of the nations at large, and Israel in particular. He speaks directly of judgments that were hanging over the head of both, and from the solemn prospect calls upon them to turn to the Lord. But what I more earnestly desire the Reader to remark with me is, the

sweet close of his prophecy, in the bright prospect of the coming of the LORD JESUS to his kingdom. Here *Amos* seems to rise to a greater degree of beauty and fulness in his prophecy; and as the other Prophets had done, under various figures; in representing the Mediator's advent and reign; so *Amos* assures Israel, that the Lord would plant them in their own land, and they should never more be plucked up or destroyed. The Lord the SPIRIT, be both with the Writer and Reader of this Commentary, through the whole of *Amos's* prophecy, that *we* may find him, like all his cotemporaries, bearing testimony to JESUS, and to the word of his grace, that to him *give all the Prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Amen.

Chapter 1

CONTENTS

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

AMOS 1:1-2

The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. (2) And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."

The Prophet in a very modest preface, here introduceth himself and his commission, He was but a poor herd man, and that was among the humblest stations. And yet he was called by grace to the work. Reader! recollect how many in all

ages of the Church, have been thus Singled out, and set apart for the ministry. What a damp to the pride of life! *Elisha* shall be called from plowing; and *David* from the sheep cotes; yea, the Apostles of Christ from fishing! The gospel never flourished in our land equal to those days, when men went forth with their lives in their hand, not sent by men, but by the Lord. The time of *Amos* commencing his labors is noted by the earthquake. Concerning this earthquake, we have a more certain account of the fact than we have of the time of it. *Zechariah* con-firms that it was in the days of *Uzziah*, but doth not state the year. Zech xiv. 5. Some make it to be about the time of *Isaiah's* vision. Chap. vi. And others when *Uzziah* profaned the temple. 2 Chron, xxvi. 16-21. But what I more particularly beg the Reader to remark is, the solemn way and manner in which the Lord's warnings are given. *Amos* calls it, the Lord *roaring from Zion*, and *uttering his voice from Jerusalem*. All the Lord's calls are powerful. And those from his Church and people more alarming than *every* other!

AMOS 1:3-5

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: (4) But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad. (5) I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD."

The Lord begins with *Damascus*, one of the most ancient enemies of Israel when in *Canaan*. The three or four transgressions means *many* and for every one of which the Lord will account with them, and a dreadful account it will be when it comes. All the palaces of their kings shall be destroyed, and the inhabitants of their cities shall be

punished. And these things were literally accomplished, as we read 2 Kings xvi. 9. If the Reader compares dates, he will find the distance between the prophecy and the accomplishment near fifty years.

AMOS 1:6-8

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver *them* up to Edom: (7) But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof: (8) And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD."

Similar punishments are here held forth to Gaza, *Ashdod*, *Ashkelon*, and Ekron, the chief cities of the *Philistines*, those bitter foes of the Church. They all are brought in for their punishment, who had been so forward in their cruelties to God's people Israel.

AMOS 1:9-10

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant: (10) But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof."

The conduct of *Tyre* was base towards Israel, and now *Tyrus* comes to be reckoned with. The breach of the *brotherly* covenant, seems to have an allusion to the friendly compact which had been made between *Solomon* and *Hiram* many years before, which we may read 1 Kings v. 12.; and so much friendship was there between them, that *Hiram* called *Solomon* brother, 1 Kings ix. 13.

AMOS 1:11-12

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: (12) But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."

Edom, that is the descendants of *Esau*, now come in for their ac-count. Never surely was there ever a more bitter hatred and animosity, and that descending from father to son, than what *Esau's* children manifested against the children of *Jacob*. But, Reader! the thing is explained to us by the Holy Ghost. Gal. iv. 29. Of all wrath that is the greatest. How blessed is it that there is One looking on, and will ultimately reckon for all.

AMOS 1:13-15

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border: (14) But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind: (15) And their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the LORD."

The Chapter closeth with the judgment of the children of *Ammon*; and a solemn one it is. When the Lord comes to reckon with his enemies, how tremendous his judgments are!

Reflections

READER! we shall lose the beauty of this solemn scripture, and overlook the interests we ourselves have in it, if we do not behold the Lord of hosts thus calling the nations to account for their hatred to Christ and his people! It is all on Christ's account that their hatred began. In all ages of the Church, this bitterness of the carnal hath gone forth against

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

Chapter 2

CONTENTS

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

AMOS 2:1-3

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime: (2) But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kiriath: and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, *and* with the sound of the trumpet: (3) And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD."

We have some account of Moab's cruelty, for which the Lord is here bringing him to accounts 2 Kings iii. 26, 27. It is worthy observation, and I take occasion to remark it in this place, in the Lord's displeasure at *Moab*, that though the Lord doth And will punish sin wherever it is found, yet the sin most to be dreaded is sin in the Lord's people. Here we find the Lord's provocation most marked. Sin is sin in all men, as weeds are weeds wherever they grow; but most offensive, and soonest to be rooted out in a garden. Hence, when the Lord's people became forgetful of the rock that begat them, we are told, *when the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters*. Deut. xxxii. 15-21. Reader! mark this with peculiar emphasis! I do not say as much, but I verily believe it, and perhaps it may be so, all the sorrows and calamities of public life begin at this place; the Church of Jesus in her transgressions.

AMOS 2:4-5

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked: (5) But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

Judah comes now before the Lord's tribunal, and though for a while separated from Israel, yet not from Israel's God. We find the Lord himself speaking of both by the Prophet, under one and the same character. Jeremiah iii. 6-19. Here we ought to pause, and to consider the awfulness of *Judah's* apostasy from the Lord. Reader! punishment and correction must be used, even with God's children, when tenderness and exhortation fail to call home the heart to the Lord. Psalm lxxxix. 30, 31, 32.

AMOS 2:6-16

Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; (7) That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name: (8) And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned *in* the house of their god. (9) Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. (10) Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. (11) And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. *Is it* not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD. (12) But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not. (13) Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is* full of sheaves. (14) Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver himself: (15) Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall not deliver *himself*: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself. (16) And *he that is* courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD."

The Lord having reckoned with all the neighboring nations, Israel's sworn foes, and having also begun with *Judah*, now takes in hand her sister *Israel*. And a solemn account it is. Chiefly beginning in idolatry, and consequently soon falling into injustice and oppression. For in the Lord's people, as well as all other people, sin begins in a departure from God. When men cease to know and love the Lord, the transition is soon made to every evil tendency toward men. And the Lord heightens the aggravation of his people's sin, by showing them how he had blessed them, brought them out of the hands of one enemy, even *Egypt*; and driven out before them another, even the *Amorite*; and still more, took of Israel's young men to be Nazarites and Prophets; that is,

distinguished them with such honors as to be separated from all other nations; *a kingdom and a nation of priests*. And I apprehend yet more *in* the expression of the Nazarites and Prophets! probably making them types and preachers of the glorious One Nazarite, the Lord Jesus Christ; for this was the most distinguishing honor of Israel. The Lord finisheth the subject, with speaking of the sad consequence of his displeasure. In doing which he makes use of a strong figure ; *I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves*. An astonishing expression of the Lord.

But what is meant by it? I humbly apprehend, not simply a pressure *the* Lord felt unable to bear, but as he saith elsewhere, *I am broken with their whorish heart that hat/n departed from me*. Ezek. vi. 9. Reader! pause over the solemn expression. And when you have duly done so, allow me to ask you, is it not Jesus that is thus figured out, who hath borne all the sins of his people, and carried their sorrows? Is there not very evidently an allusion to Him, on whom Jehovah hath laid the iniquities of his redeemed? Seen in this point of view the subject becomes most blessedly interesting. And the cries of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, forms a striking correspondence with what the Prophet saith of him here, *I am pressed under you*. See Heb. v. 7. Matt. xxvi. 38, 39. Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21. The Chapter ends, as might be supposed, with the Lord's threatened judgment. And it is by chastisement the Lord for the most part brings back his people, when that chastisement is accompanied with grace Luke xv, 17, 18, 19. e Ezek. xiv. 22, 23.

Reflections

Reader! think what a sad representation is made in this Chapter of human transgression. Not only the nations of the earth, but the Lord's people, are involved in the same

rebellion against God. It is not *Moab* alone, but *Judah* and *Israel* also. *Had it been an open enemy* that had done the Lord such dishonor, *then it might have been borne*. But the expostulation is cutting indeed, when it is said, *it was even thou my companion, and mine own familiar friend!* Alas! who among the redeemed of the Lord, that can stand forth and plead not guilty to the charge.

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

Chapter 3

CONTENTS

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

AMOS 3:1-2

Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, (2) You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

I beg the Reader to notice what I before remarked in the preceding Chapter, though Judah and Israel were separately there arraigned, yet here *the whole family* are considered as one, consequently Judah is included. And I do as earnestly beg the Reader to remark with me, that the family name and relationship between God and his people is still the same. Though Israel and Judah are rebellious, yet still children, though rebellious children. Though outcasts, yet still God's outcasts; this feature is never lost sight of in the word of God. Isaiah xvi. 3. And I still beg once more the Reader to observe, that in the punishment of Israel, it is as God's Israel; yea, the Lord declares that the correction of them is on this account; because them only the Lord knew of all the families of the earth; that is, knew them in covenant relationship; and therefore the Lord would correct them for their iniquities. Reader! pause over the whole, and stand amazed at the goodness of God! Behold! how even in chastisements the Lord manifests his love to Israel. Read some of the many scriptures to this amount, and form your own conclusions accordingly. If we see at any time a man correcting a child, we may be sure from the act itself, it is the child's own father. Heb. xii. 5-10.

AMOS 3:3-8

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (4) Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? (5) Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin *is* for him? shall *one* take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all? (6) Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*? (7) Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants

the prophets. (8) The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

The Lord is going on in his expostulations. He first shews, that by Israel's revolt that sweet communion between the Lord and his people was interrupted. *Gun two walk together except they be agreed?* While therefore Israel thus rebelled, how could the Lord walk with Israel? And when the Lord called to them in a loud voice of judgments, as the roaring of a lion, if Israel turned a deaf ear to the voice, and became hardened instead of humbled by the correction; if Israel ascribed to *second* causes what evidently came from the *first*, here were still stronger evidences of a deplorably wicked mind. The Lord next appeals to common sense and reason. *Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?* The sword, the pestilence, and the famine; the strife of tongues, and the malice of enemies; these may, and these will be the apparent cause; but every one that thinks at all must know that these are but instruments; the hand and direction is the Lord's. Never should we have known that the malice of Egypt against poor Israel was of the Lord's doing. had not his blessed scripture said so; but as the scripture hath said so, we have not only authority to mark it down as an undeniable truth, but from such an insight into the Lord's government, to form the same conclusions upon numberless occasions in life. See Psalm cv. 25. When the Lord corrects his people in this manner, with the sword or tongue of his and their foes, it is all in mercy to them, and destruction in due season to their enemies. What a beautiful and godly sentiment did *David* express on this occasion concerning *Shimei's* cursing: *let him alone, (said he,) and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him* 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12.

AMOS 3:9-15

Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the midst thereof. (10) For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. (11) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; An adversary *there shall be* even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled. (12) Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus *in* a couch. (13) Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, (14) That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. (15) And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD."

There is somewhat very striking in the Lord's appeal to the nations of the earth for the justification of his conduct concerning his people. It not only is intended to this purpose, for perhaps this is the smallest reason why the Lord publisheth his proceedings; but it is a yet stronger appeal than before to the Lord's degenerate people. We have a striking example, Isaiah v. 3, 4. But in the midst of all the judgments that are to fall upon the people, the covenant relationship is still preserved, see verses 13-17.

Reflections

READER! while you and I pause over a subject of so truly humbling a nature as this Chapter affords, in the contemplation of the Church's backsliding and rebellion against God; and while from a conscious sense of the part we all bear in the great aggregate of human transgression, we take to ourselves, as we justly ought to do, shame and confusion of face; let us learn to form a proper distinction

between the fatherly corrections of the Lord over his children, and the tremendous judgments manifested to his enemies. What the Lord himself hath here said, is enough to lead our hearts to form a right estimate of all his corrections. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* The very scripture, in the moment of threatened correction, carries with it in its bosom a full testimony that that correction is not to destroy but to reform. Hence Reader! let us learn, that the Lord's design is to bring the heart home, not to harden, but to soften; to purge from sin, not to leave the soul in sin; to bring *to* Jesus, not to lead *front* Jesus. A gracious and a blessed end is in every dispensation. And most blessed it is when the poor sinner, led by grace, is brought back with the awakened cry of the soul; *Lord! take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.* Blessed Jesus! how unceasing our need of thee; and how precious thy salvation! Oh! for grace, to have our souls kept from sin, and our souls washed from sin, in thy blood!

Chapter 4

CONTENTS

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

AMOS 4:1-3

Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that *are* in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink. (2) The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. (3) And ye shall go out at the breaches, every *cow*

at that which is before her; and ye shall cast *them* into the palace, saith the LORD."

Under the similitude of the fat bulls of Bashan the Prophet shews how Israel had oppressed the poor and lean among them. And under the figure of fishermen, he sets forth how in the end they that oppressed should be, dragged away. The Reader will observe from hence, what is always connected together, haughtiness and cruelty to men, where the heart is rebelling against God.

AMOS 4:4-5

Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, *and* your tithes after three years: (5) And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD."

It should seem that in the midst of all their transgressions they still carried on a shew of religion. Like their idolatrous neighbours around, they would not be totally void of some form of worship, and therefore set up the appearance of it in Bethel. Some have thought, that they had not only openly established idol worship there, but that the *whole* nation was guilty of it, But we know that in the grossest moments of idolatry, in the days of the kings of Israel, the Lord had *seven thousand in Israel who did not bow the knee to the image of Baal*. 1 Kings xix. 18. Horn. xi. 3,4.

AMOS 4:6-13

And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. (7) And also I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. (8) So two *or* three cities

wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. (9) I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured *them*: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. (10) I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. (11) I have overthrown *some* of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. (12) Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. (13) For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what *is* his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, *is* his name."

Here we have an account of the Lord's sore judgments upon Israel; by famine, by withholding the fruits of the earth, and by marking his judgments in a distinguishing manner, causing it *to rain upon one city and not upon another*; by pestilence, blasting, and mildew; by the destruction of the sword; and by particular marked providences to *some*, not unlike the overthrow of *Sodom*; these were among the methods the Lord was pleased to take to rouse Israel to a sense of sin, and to an awakening concern for his pardoning love and mercy. But the Lord adds, and repeats it many times, as if feeling for his people, *yet have ye' not returned unto me, saith the Lord!* Reader! how sure and certain it is, as the gospel of Christ teacheth, and this scripture fully confirms, there can be no return to the Lord in a way of repentance and faith, until the Lord first comes to the sinner in a way of grace and mercy. Grace must first enter the heart, before the heart wit! cry out, *Lord! save, or I perish!* Oh ! how blessed is it to have such provisions of grace preserved for the recovery of his people in

the person of Jesus, when the enemy hath at any time been thus triumphing over the Lord's redeemed with an high hand! When thus the Lord gives grace, then, and not before, Israel is prepared to meet his God as a covenant God in Christ.

Reflections

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

precious every hour, and then those workings of a corrupt nature, kept under and restrained by thee, will be overruled to thy glory, and our soul's welfare. Blessed be that glorious covenant, which shews the ruin, and brings the remedy! Though sin hath reigned, and doth reign, unto death; yet shall *grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Chapter 5

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

AMOS 5:1-3

Hear ye this word which I take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel. (2) The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; *there is* none to raise her up. (3) For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel."

We have here some sweet tokens that the Lord is coming forth in mercy as well as judgment. When the Lord laments over his people, this is a sign of grace. And I beg the Reader to remark with me, that like our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem, the beloved city, it is the city, and not the people of the city, that is said, *she is fallen, and shall no more rise*. The temporal judgments of the Lord are always to be carefully distinguished from spiritual visitations. See the Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem, and read it in this view, and both

places will he found to correspond. And I beg, both upon these and every other portion of the divine word Ofe a similar kind, to observe, that if these things were attended to, it would prevent those misconstructions of scripture which weak minds interpret, as though they intimated the counsel and purposes of God were changeable, and the Lord's people might fail from grace and be cast away. Here the Prophet is pointing to the Babylonish captivity, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which we know took places And %he Lord Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, referred to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, which also followed by the Roman army. But in both instances, the Church of believers was still safe, and as the Apostle saith, *God did not cast away his people which he foreknew*. Romans xi. 2. Luke xiii. 34, 35.

AMOS 5:4-17

For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live: (5) But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought. (6) Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Bethel. (7) Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth, (8) *Seek him* that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD *is* his name: (9) That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress. (10) They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. (11) Forasmuch therefore as your treading *is* upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. (12) For I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate *from their right*. (13) Therefore the prudent shall keep

silence in that time; for it *is* an evil time. (14) Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. (15) Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph. (16) Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing *shall be* in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. (17) And in all vineyards *shall be* wailing: for I will pass through thee, saith the LORD."

The first verse in this paragraph is a confirmation, if it were needed, of what I advanced in my observations on the former. Seeking the Lord, implies the hope of finding him, and indeed the promise is of life. For the Lord hath never said to the praying seed of Jacob, *see/c ye my face in vain*. Psalm xxvii. 8. It is a sure sign of returning grace, when such rich proclamations come from the throne. See Isaiah Iv. 6, 7. There is a great beauty in the allusion to the planets, those faithful nightly witnesses of heaven. Job speaketh of him that gives to the *Pleiades*, and *Orion*, their sweet influences. Job xxxviii. 31. And as those heavenly bodies testify to God's faithfulness concerning his covenant of day and night; so the Lord engageth to be gracious to his people when they call upon him. Gen. viii. 22. I beg the Reader to remark with me, how again the Lord engageth that his people shall live in seeking him, and that as the Lord of hosts he will be with them. The wailing and mourning in all the streets that are spoken of, do not only refer to the desolations of Jerusalem as a city; but also to the sorrow of the soul, under the awakenings of the Holy Ghost, when the heart is leading under a sense of sin to the Lord.

AMOS 5:18-20

Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end *is* it for you? the day of the LORD *is* darkness, and not light. (19) As if

a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. (20) *Shall* not the day of the LORD *be* darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?"

It should seem from what is here said, that there were characters in those days not unlike the scoffers the Apostle describes, that should come in the last days, who derided the day of the Lord's coming. What an awful thing it is to be hardened in sin? 2 Peter iii. 3, 4.

AMOS 5:21-27

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. (22) Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. (23) Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. (24) But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. (25) Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? (26) But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. (27) Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name *is* The God of hosts."

We have here the Lord's threatenings concerning the captivity of the people, and which we know came to pass. *Stephen*, the first martyr, made a quotation from this scripture. Acts vii. 42, 43. But what I particularly beg the Reader to remark with rue, through this whole Chapter is, that we can clearly discover sweet and blessed tokens of grace mingled with threatenings; so that we feel constrained, again and again, as we go through it, to cry out with the Prophet, *the Lord will not retain his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*. Micah vii. 18, 19, 20.

Reflections

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

Chapter 6

CONTENTS

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

AMOS 6:1-6

Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! (2) Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: *be they* better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? (3) Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; (4) That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; (5) That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; (6) That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

What is here said of Zion, in the (lays of the Prophet *Amos*, is equally applicable to the Church in all days. There is nothing more foreign to a state of grace, than a state of ease in the world. For when a soul is really and truly at ease in Christ, it must be at contention with the world. It was the character which the Lord gave *Moab*, that *Moab* had been at ease from his youth, and had settled on his lees; so that the old tang of nature was the same, and no change of heart had taken place. Jeremiah xlvi. 11. Whereas the Lord Jesus describes his people as being carried into captivity, and called upon as his followers to the taking up a cross, plucking out an eye, cutting off an arm Luke ix. 23. And the Apostle sets it down as a truth not to be questioned, that *if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution*. 2 Tim. iii. 12. We have therefore here a melancholy picture of sinners at ease, unawakened to a sense of sin, and unconcerned for their eternal salvation. And what makes the picture more melancholy is, that it is *in Zion*; that is, under the very roof of God's church. Reader! think how truly awful must it be, to sit under the preaching of the gospel, and yet to be a total stranger to a work of grace in the heart. The Prophet describes in these verses the corresponding conduct of all such; ease, indolence, disregard, and a contempt of salvation.

They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Alas! no-nor for the agonies of the Lord Jesus! *Job* hath given another such a description. *Job* xxi. 7-15. Reader! before you turn away from this awful account, for very awful it is, look round and see whether you cannot find the picture of the Prophet, and what the Man of *Uz* describes; but too sadly brought forth to the life, in the present day in which we live. Yea, bless God if in your own heart, and house, and family, no such features appear.

AMOS 6:7-14

Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed. (8) The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein. (9) And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die. (10) And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that *is* by the sides of the house, *Is there yet any* with thee? and he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD. (11) For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts. (12) Shall horses run upon the rock? will *one* plow *there* with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock: (13) Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength? (14) But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderness."

Probably the captivity here spoken of, in the first sense, had a reference to the Babylonisin captivity. But I humbly conceive it had respect to another of an higher nature in a spiritual sense. But, Reader! think if it be possible to what a desperate state of hardness and impenitency must that man he arrived,

who hath given up even the mentioning the name of the Lord. Well may every one who reads this account cry out, *fronz pride, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, good Lord deliver us!*

Reflections

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

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

On the other hand, look at the people of Cod, and you will discover, that in proportion to the attainments under grace

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

Chapter 7

CONTENTS

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

AMOS 7:1-3

Thus hath the Lord GOD showed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, *it was* the latter growth after the king's mowings. (2) And it came to pass, *that* when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he *is* small. (3) The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD."

The Prophet is here preaching by figure, in vision perhaps it might be; and by a multitude of grasshoppers, he points out the certain ruin of the country by famine. If we compare this scripture with the corresponding history of the times in which *Arnos* ministered, we shall discover the illustration of the figure. It was in the reign of *Uzziah*, see 2 Chron. xxvi. But whether those grasshoppers were literally so, and destroyed the fruits of the earth, or whether typical of the army of the *Assyrians*, the sense is the same: it was for punishment to the people. The Prophet's prayer is beautiful, and the Lord's answer most gracious. Reader! did not the Prophet here become a type of the Lord Jesus?

AMOS 7:4-6

Thus hath the Lord GOD showed unto me: and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part. (5) Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he *is* small. (6) The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD."

The subject in these verses is the same, but the figure is changed. Under the image of fire, and so tremendous as to devour the great deep, the ruin of the people is set forth. But, here as before, the intercession of the Prophet prevents it. There is somewhat particularly striking in all this: and the repeated prayer and success of the Prophet cannot fail, I should hope, to lead our hearts to Jesus. As the judgment was typical, so was the intercession. For it was not Moses, as Moses, standing in the gap; not Aaron, as Aaron, putting on incense, and making an atonement for the people; not Amos, as Amos, so crying for Jacob's arising; that came up before the Lord: because all these themselves were sinners, who alike needed One to intercede for them. And who then could they all represent, but Jesus, who in his sacrifice, was *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; and in his

intercession, the High Priest for ever, sworn into his office by Jehovah himself, after the order of Melchisedeck? See all those scriptures. Dent. ix. 24-29. Numb. xvi. 46, 47, 48. Rev. xiii. 8. Psalm cx. 4.

AMOS 7:7-9

Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall *made* by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. (8) And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more: (9) And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

We have here a third sermon of the Prophet in figure, and to the same amount as the former. The similitude of measuring is adopted, and probably it was here meant to shew, the time limited thereby for the Lord's forbearance, until the captivity commenced. But I beg the Reader to keep in view, what ought never to be lost sight of, that the Lord still calls Israel *his people*. Amos sent to preach to them; and the whole sum and substance of' his preaching tended to this point, the Lord's covenant in Christ was before the Lord. Wretched and unworthy as they were in 'themselves, there is an everlasting worthiness in *the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world*.

AMOS 7:10-11

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. (11) For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land."

This is an interesting passage in the history of *Amos*, and deserves to be particularly considered. It seems that this

Amaziah, priest of *Bethel*, was priest of the golden calves at Bethel which Jeroboam had set up. He had the ear of the king, and, therefore, while the poor Prophet was preaching to the common people, Amaziah was accusing him at the court. In his accusation, he endeavors to make Amos appear as though he had only personally preached against the king. He hath conspired against *thee*, said *Amaziah*. Whereas the whole bent of *Amos's* preaching was to say to the whole house of Israel, that by their sin the land would be laid waste by the sword. *The land* (he said) *was not able to bear with Amos's preaching*. Whereas, we have not a sword of any complaining hut himself. But did he tell the king how Amos had interceded with the Lord for Israel, and. how he had succeeded? Not a word of this! So that in the very moment, while the poor herdman of *Tekoa* was really and truly the best friend of Israel; he is represented as the greatest enemy both to the king and country: a traitor to his people, and a disturber of the people! These things are not uncommon.

AMOS 7:12-13

Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: (13) But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it *is* the king's chapel, and it *is* the king's court."

Observe the awful character of this golden calf-priest. While carrying on a private charge against poor Amos to the king, he use-commend him, as a kind friend, to run away from his station, and to gain popular favour among the men of Judah. Perhaps he intended, had he accomplished his purpose, to bring him back again for punishment., as his flight would have implied his guilt in the charge of conspiring against the king. And as *Amaziah* had no one object in his office of priesthood, but gain: so he advised Amos to gain plenty of bread by his prophecy in Judah. The *king's chapel*, and the *king's court*,

are striking expressions, to shew what an awful state of religion the kingdom was then in, under such idolatrous services, and such idolatrous high-priests as *Amaziah*. Oh! the long-suffering and patience of the Lord!

Amos 7:14-17

Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: (15) And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. (16) Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac. (17) Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land."

Blessed be the Lord for making his servants faithful. Who but must admire the humbleness and modesty of Amos, in his account of his call to the ministry! And who but must be delighted with the firmness of the man, while acting as the servant of the Lord? Observe what holy zeal and boldness an heart truly devoted to the Lord finds in the Lord! Faithful servant of thy God, valiant Amos!. Even in the degenerate age in which we live, still there is grace enough in the Church to admire, if not to follow thy bright example, inn being bold! amidst the Amaziah's around, to glorify the Lord God of Israel, *whether men will hear, Or whether they will forbear.*

Reflections

I take occasion, from the noble conduct of the Prophet in this Chapter, in opposing the priest of Bethel, to remark to the Reader and mine own heart no less at the same time, how truly blessed it must be, thus to defend the truths of God, whenever or by whomsoever they are opposed. Cowardice in

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

Chapter 8

CONTENTS

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

AMOS 8:1-2

Thus hath the Lord GOD showed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit. (2) And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more."

By the similitude of summer-fruit, which of course as soon as it ripens hastens to decay, is shewn, in a lively representation, the transitory state of all men; not only Israel, hut all flesh: for all is as grass, and as the flower of the field. But in this place there is a peculiar reference to Israel's hastening to captivity. In a spiritual sense the image is still more striking. Flow truly short are all the summers of our spiritual enjoyments!

Amos 8:3-10

And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord GOD: *there shall be* many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast *them* forth with silence. (4) Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, (5) Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? (6) That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; *yea*, and sell the refuse of the wheat? (7) The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. (8) Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt. (9) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: (10) And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only *son*, and the end thereof as a bitter day."

When devotion itself is out of tune by the heart being under no influences of grace; alas! what a sacrifice of fools is then offered! Sabbaths are burdens, ordinances tiresome, prayer a drudgery, inn seasons like these. Oh! for grace to be always under the blessed teachings of God the Holy Ghost!

Amos 8:11-14

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: (12) And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*. (13) In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. (14) They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again."

What an awful sound is here! And how dreadfully awful in that land, that parish, that people, that family, or person, in whom it is fulfilled. A famine of bread the common staff of life is distressing. But what is the life of the body to the life of the soul? This threaten-ing was in part accomplished, when the Church was carried into *Babylon*. And what a dark season in after ages took place, from the close of prophecy to the coming of Christ ? And inn our own land before the reformation, what a deplorable condition was this island in! Blessed Lord Jesus I grant that never more our candlestick may be removed out of its place, but let that sweet promise be our portion: *though the Lord give the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not our teachers be removed into a corner any more, but our eyes shall see our teachers, and our ears shall hear a word behind us; saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* Isaiah xxx. 20, 21.

Reflections

READER! while we read the awful threatenings of the Lord to Israel of old, of turning the songs of the temple into howlings, and inducing a famine of the word of the Lord, more to he dreaded than all the famine of bread and water; while we trace the cause in Israel's despising the Lord's sabbaths, is it possible but we must tremble, lest the crying sins of our

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

Chapter 9

CONTENTS

The Chapter opens with solemn threatenings and concludes with gracious promises. The reference to Gospel days is clearly proved from the application made to this scripture in the Acts of the Apostles, under the Apostle's preaching.

AMOS 9:1-7

I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. (2) Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: (3) And though they hide

themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: (4) And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good. (5) And the Lord GOD of hosts *is* he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt. (6) *It is* he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD *is* his name. (7) *Are ye not* as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"

Amos Is here describing what he saw in a vision. So the Lord spake to the Prophets. The whole of Isaiah's prophecy is called the vision of Isaiah. Isaiah i. 1. Observe the opening of this memorable scripture: the Lord standing *upon* the altar, to shew his authority. And observe further, it is the altar, not between the cherubim on the mercy-seat, for now the Lord is come to judge, not to pardon. *Smite the lintel of the door*, said the Lord; as if he meant to say, let it be thrown down. And while those that run away seem to escape, it is but seemingly so, for the Lord will pursue and overtake, whether they take shelter in heaven or hell; whether on mount *Carmel* or the bottom of the sea. Reader! who can protect from the power of such an Almighty avenger of wrong! *Who shall stand when lie appeareth* P See Nahum 1-6. The expostulation of the Lord is striking. *Are ye not, O Israel, as the children of the Ethiopians?* that is, what pretensions have you to my favour more than they. Reader! if we know not the Lord in a way of grace, we are no better than others in the claims of nature!

Amos 9:8-10

Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD *are* upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. (9) For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. (10) All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us."

I have often thought that this part of Amos's prophecy is peculiarly ours, and it is indeed enough to arrest our most serious attention, as a nation and a people. Surely *the eyes of the Lord are upon us!* Our land hath been for many generations like Judea of old, with the gracious eyes of the Lord upon us, from one end of the year even to the other end of the year. Deut. xi. 12. But what hath been our provocations from father to son? What the Lord said by the Prophet *Malachi* is our character, Malachi iii. 7. Let the Reader observe the awful sifting time here spoken of; and though there is indeed, that sweet and precious promise, that in this strict search, not a grain of the pure wheat shall perish or fall to the earth; yet in national calamities, who but must take part? When the Lord for the wickedness of a land maketh it barren, these form awful times. In the days of *Lot*, though sent out of the overthrow, his city was destroyed. Gen. xix. 29. In the days of *Jeremiah*, the good figs as well as the bad were carried away. Jerem. xxiv. 5. And the Lord by *Ezekiel* declared, that in respect to temporal things, he would *cut off the righteous with the wicked*. Ezek. xxi. 3. Oh! who could but mourn to lose even but our ordinances, our sabbaths; and to have the golden candlestick of the blessed gospel removed out of its place! Rev. ii. 5.

**AMOS 9:11-15 "IN THAT DAY WILL I RAISE UP THE
TABERNACLE OF DAVID THAT IS FALLEN, AND CLOSE UP THE
BREACHES THEREOF; AND I WILL RAISE UP HIS RUINS, AND**

I WILL BUILD IT AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD: 12 THAT THEY MAY POSSESS THE REMNANT OF EDOM, AND OF ALL THE HEATHEN, WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SAITH THE LORD THAT DOETH THIS. 13 BEHOLD, THE DAYS COME, SAITH THE LORD, THAT THE PLOWMAN SHALL OVERTAKE THE REAPER, AND THE TREADER OF GRAPES HIM THAT SOWETH SEED; AND THE MOUNTAINS SHALL DROP SWEET WINE, AND ALL THE HILLS SHALL MELT. 14 AND I WILL BRING AGAIN THE CAPTIVITY OF MY PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, AND THEY SHALL BUILD THE WASTE CITIES, AND INHABIT THEM; AND THEY SHALL PLANT VINEYARDS, AND DRINK THE WINE THEREOF; THEY SHALL ALSO MAKE GARDENS, AND EAT THE FRUIT OF THEM. 15 AND I WILL PLANT THEM UPON THEIR LAND, AND THEY SHALL NO MORE BE PULLED UP OUT OF THEIR LAND WHICH I HAVE GIVEN THEM, SAITH THE LORD THY GOD."

If we had the least doubt to what day this referred, or what was meant by the raising *up* the tabernacles of David, the Apostles of Christ would determine both. See Acts xv. 16, 17. And if we could after this hesitate, or need enquiry further concerning the David spoken of, the general scope of prophecy would soon settle this point.. The tabernacles of David can mean no other, than in their fallen and ruined state, our poor ruined nature. But yet as belonging to our spiritual David, the Lord Jesus Christ, it must be raised again in him. And under the beautiful figure of husbandry, the plowman, and the reaper; the mountains, and the hills dropping sweet wine; surely, nothing can more delightfully set forth the spiritual blessings of the gospel. Here the Lord may truly be said to bring hack the captivity of his people, and to feed them with a fulness of salvation. And, I pray the Reader to observe, how blessedly the Prophet closeth the whole, in the assurance the Lord gives of the everlasting duration of his

people in him, and under his favour. Perhaps a more blessed promise is not to be found in the whole body of prophecy. It is similar to that glorious one of the same kind in the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah; and it is confirmed with Jehovah's own solemn declaration, *saith the Lord God. Yea, saith (the Lord,) I will rejoice over them in that they shall do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart and with my whole soul.* Well may all the faithful say, Amen. Jerem. xxxii. 41.

Reflections

READER! Now we have gone through the writings of this highly taught Prophet, let us pause, and gather into one view the whole purport and scope of his ministerial labours in this department, to which God the Holy Ghost commissioned him. We find him, like most of his brethren, in the college of the Prophets, opening his prophecy with marking the desolate state of the Church in the day of his ministry. With what earnestness and zeal do we behold him calling upon Israel to turn to the Lord! How strong and full the figures he makes use of, to set forth the alarming situation in which Zion lay before the Lord. He reproves indeed all the nations around, and fully shews the Lord's determination to arise to their punishment. But it is Israel and Judah more immediately, whom the Prophet mourns over for their transgressions and sins. Here the Prophet finds cause for the exercise of sorrow and affliction, while calling upon them to turn from their iniquities, and to seek the favour and loving-kindness of the Lord. But, Reader! do not forget to connect with the whole, and to gather into one point of view the close of *Amos*: sermons. His last Chapter in the end of it is all gospel. Jesus and his salvation, the spiritual David of his people, is here set forth, SG truly, lovely, gracious, and interesting, that it is

impossible, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, not to see, that to this one object, and to this alone, the whole of the Prophet's ministry was directed. All that *Amos* said before, and all the alarms he rang to the sinners in Zion, all his labours were to introduce the glories of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give the Church the gracious promises, how the Lord would recover his people, and manifest his grace, notwithstanding all their undeservings. May the Lord give both to Writer and Reader grace, to gather the many blessed instructions intended to the Church by this prophecy. Farewell! faithful servant of the Lord! may all that are called to the ministry of the word find equal strength to resist all the *Amaziah's* which oppose them. Blessed Lord Jesus! raise up many an *Amos* in the present day, to hold forth to thy Church and people the truth; and never fail to publish *the whole counsel of God*. Amen.

THE PROPHET

OBADIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

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

It will be rendered profitable to the Writer of this Commentary, and to the Reader of it, if God the Holy Ghost shall be graciously pleased to lead the hearts of both to any

discovery of the Lord Jesus in *Obadiah's* writings. For this will be a further confirmation of that blessed scripture, which saith, that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*. Rev. xix. 10. Reader let us beg the Lord God of the Prophets, so to bless our present attention to this man's labours, that they may be rendered profitable to our hearts, *through the faith that is in Christ Jesus*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

OBADIAH 1:1-2

The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. (2) Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.

We have here the preface, as it were, to this prophecy: and a very awful one it is. It is in vain to conceal the matter; the Lord's distinguishing grace to his people, and hatred to his enemies, is marked in every page through the whole Bible. And what the Lord saith by his servant Malachi, may and ought to be as the contents of the word of God upon all these occasions; Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord! yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau. Malachi i. 2, 3. Rom. ix. 10-21.

OBADIAH 1:3-9

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation *is* high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? (4) Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD. (5) If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, would they not leave *some* grapes? (6) How are *the things* of Esau searched out! *how* are his hidden things sought up! (7) All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and* prevailed against thee; *they that eat* thy bread have laid a wound under thee: *there is* none understanding in him. (8) Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? (9) And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

Edom that is the descendants of *Esau* flourished greatly in *temporal* things. We read of dukes of *Edom*. Gen. xxxvi. 15—19. Yes! high titles and loud sounding names they had. Poor Isaac seemed to hint at this, Gm's. xxvii. 40. breaking the yoke of Israel from off his neck. And is it not so now? What said Paul in his days? 1 Cor. i. 2~. And what were God's people then? 1 Cor. iv. 9. What are they now?

OBADIAH 1:10-16

For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. (11) In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou *wast* as one of them. (12) But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. (13) Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands*

on their substance in the day of their calamity; (14) Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. (15) For the day of the LORD *is* near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. (16) For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, *so* shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

I beg the Reader particularly to remark the cause of the Loan's displeasure at *Edom*, namely, his hatred to *Israel*. And this solely on account of the blessings of redemption. And, Reader! this is now the great and crying sin of the unawakened. It is all leveled against the Loan JESUS CHRIST. This opened the war in heaven. Rev. xii. 7. This is the deadly enmity the devil hath infused into our nature, and it is all against Christ. Remember what the Lord Jesus said upon this occasion, John xv. 18, 19. Reader! it is very blessed to trace the hatred of the world to its source. For then a child of God can, and a child of God well taught will tell the Lord Jesus, both of his exercises and of the cause of them.

OBADIAH 1:17

But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions — What are these? Are they not God in covenant with all his promises? Is it not the Lord Jesus with all that belongs to him? Yea, is it not God himself, Father, Sony and Holy Spirit, as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made over to his people in that comprehensive promise, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*. And God in Christ implies all his fulness in grace here and glory hereafter. Precious, 'precious Jesus! thou art' the purchaser of all those possessions! Holy, holy Father! thou art the giver of them in JESUS! Blessed, blessed Spirit! thou

makest over to thy people the whole of these blessings 'by thy quickening, gracious operations! Glory be to the Holy Three in One for these unspeakable mercies! I crave the Reader's indulgence, to allow me to add on this passage a memorandum of mine which I have this day found on this scripture in my Bible, and which / subjoin in this place *verbatim*.

"This view of the passage was opened to my mind when consulting 'in my little Diary this motto for the day, Sept. 30, 1806. Gracious conclusion of the last morning of the month! Are not the Lord's compassions new every morning? Great indeed is his faithfulness." And the day on which I have now gathered it from my Diary, and inserted it in my Commentary is Feb. 27, 1812. Hitherto the Lord hath helped! What mercies, yea, what a series of mercies between those dates!

OBADIAH 1:18-21

And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken *it*. (19) And *they* of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and *they* of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead. (20) And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel *shall possess* that of the Canaanites, *even* unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which *is* in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. (21) And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.

This scripture, like the pillar of fire to the children of Israel and Egypt, hath a double aspect. Glory to the Church, ruin to her enemies. Certainly this scripture is looking into gospel days, and perhaps as far as to the final consummation of all things. And all speak the language of the Prophet: *Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him. Woe unto the*

wicked, it shall be ill with him. In the LORD, and in the LORD CHRIST alone, shall *all the house of Israel be justified, and shall glory*, Isaiah iii. 10, 11. Isaiah xlv. 25.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

THE PROPHET

JONAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

The time of *Jonah's* ministry is not so accurately stated as to mark it with exact precision. Of himself we have a full account, when he lived and where he sprung from, 2 Kings 14:25. And this refutes the account of those in our LORD'S days, who declared that no Prophet arose out of Galilee, for

Gath-hepher is well known as a town in *Zebulun* of *Galilee*, John 7:52. It also makes *Jonah's* ministry to be more ancient than either of the Prophets; *Hosea*, *Isaiah*, *Joel*, or *Amos*, being during the reigns of *Joash* and *Jeroboam*. But his ministry being directed to *Nineveh*, and not to *Israel*, makes it in some measure unconnected with the general thread of the Church's history.

The authority of *Jonah* as a Prophet, and of those his writings, can need no other than what the LORD JESUS himself hath given of both, Matthew 12:39-41. And in respect to our improvement of this part of scripture, I should hope, that independent of the humbling lesson we here learn in *Jonah's* character, of attempting to flee from the presence of the LORD, as well as his infirmity of temper on the withering of the gourd; the views such things give us of poor fallen nature in its highest characters, will be always profitable. And no less at the same time, the blessed representations here made of divine goodness, patience, and long-suffering towards his servant's frailties; I say, independent of these things; which are highly improving; if we read this book, as setting forth *Jonah* the type of the ever blessed JESUS, a large scope of the sweetest and richest improvements will, under the LORD'S teaching, arise out of it. May that Almighty LORD of his Church and people, who hath given us this scripture, give both Writer and Reader grace also to the wise understanding of it, that as it is *given by inspiration, so it may be profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

JONAH 1:1-2

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (2) Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

By the word of the LORD coming unto *Jonah*, is meant the impression made on his mind, either by vision or revelation; and *Jonah* perfectly understood that the direction to go to *Nineveh* was of the LORD. The reason for *Jonah's* commission is assigned; *the wickedness of the place was come up before the LORD*. Reader! think what a mass of sin and iniquity rising like a cloud, must daily, hourly come up before the LORD, from every great city, and from every place! Think how precious, on this account, must be the person of the LORD JESUS, whose holiness in our nature becomes the preservative of all nature from going to instant destruction. Here it is in this sense I venture to believe the Apostle was directed to teach that CHRIST *is the Saviour of all men*; that is, in providence. For he upholds all things by the word of his power, and by him *all things consist*. See 1 Timothy 4:10. with Colossians 1:17. *Nineveh* itself must have been a great city indeed, the chief city of the *Assyrian* empire, taking three days journey to go through it, and containing six-score thousand persons. Chap.

3:3. and Chap. 4:11. And yet all ignorant of the LORD! Reader! What an awful thought it is now, in the present hour, of the millions that are in darkness respecting salvation! Will you not learn herefrom to admire and adore the LORD's distinguishing mercy to this our land? And will you not still stand more amazed in the recollection, that amidst such fulness of gospel light as is vouchsafed our land, so much depravity should abound? Is there a nation under heaven deeper sunk in transgressions? And yet it remains! To what and to whom shall this be ascribed, but to Him whom John saw as *a LAMB which had been slain*. Revelation 5:6.

JONAH 1:3

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

It is probable that this *Tarshish* was *Tarsus*, a sea-port in Israel. But what an awful attempt in Jonah to run from the LORD, and how foolish as well as presumptuous, the endeavour. Reader let not us by the way overlook the instructions it brings of human nature in its best men, manifesting its corruption. Alas! what is man, yea, every man, uninfluenced by grace?

JONAH 1:4

But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

See how everything ministers to the LORD's pleasure, when and where the LORD designs? Some of the ancient Jews have said, but by what authority I know not, that this wind was only directed to the ship in which Jonah was; for that other

ships passed and repassed in safety at the time. But be this as it may, I hope the Reader will not fail to make a spiritual improvement of it, and remark herefrom, how the LORD sends storms and winds into the consciences of men, when rousing them by his grace to the consideration of their ways, while others around are in a calm.

JONAH 1:5

Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

What a striking instance doth Jonah here afford, how men's minds are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. He, for whom this storm was raised, was the only one insensible of danger. Sinners asleep in a storm of national judgments, are the Jonah's of the present day.

JONAH 1:6

So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

The LORD sometimes sends preachers like this ship-master, from even the unawakened, to rouse his own people. But had *Jonah* considered it: what a reproach was this to him; that he, whom the LORD of heaven had sent to reprove a great prince and his people, should be brought down to the humbling state of being called to account for neglect of prayer by the master of a little vessel? Reader! what can any man mean, that is asleep in the present hour to all the concerns of eternity, while death is opening before him in every view?

JONAH 1:7

And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

It should seem that those shipmen thought that there was somewhat very singular in this storm, and so far they were all led to interpret a divine judgment in it, by this plan of casting lots for the discovery.

JONAH 1:8

Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What *is* thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou?

There is somewhat very interesting in this history, simply as an history, but considered spiritually it riseth in importance. When in the threatened shipwreck of our whole nature by reason of the fall, and when the LORD's lot, in the person of JESUS, fell on him, every eye, and every thought, is directed to enquire into the cause. When the sons of Jacob went down into Egypt, and were all detained there by reason of Benjamin, how strange and mysterious was it to the whole to find the cup in Benjamin's sack. Genesis 44:12, 13. In the Patriarchal history, we see the hand of Joseph to detain his brethren. In Jonah's history, we behold the hand of the LORD to bring Jonah into the state for which, as a type of JESUS, he was to be brought, and in both the hand of the LORD bringing mighty things to pass.

JONAH 1:9

And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry *land*.

It appears by the following verse, that he not only told who he was, but his whole history, and particularly that part of it which referred to his running away from his duty; and for which this singular storm was brought upon them. Jonah interpreted it right. So did the sons of Jacob, in their cruelty to their brother, when they were brought into prison. Genesis 42:21.

JONAH 1:10-16

Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. (11) Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. (12) And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest *is* upon you. (13) Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. (14) Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee. (15) So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. (16) Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

This is a beautiful part of the history. The modest enquiries of the mariners; the honesty of Jonah; the reluctances in the minds of the ship's-company to cast Jonah into the sea; their cry unto the LORD; and the offering they made when they had done it, to be freed from the guilt of his blood; all these form most interesting points for improvement. But it is high time to pass over the history to what is infinitely more interesting, and to inquire for that which no doubt was the one great point to which Jonah's ministry was directed, and for what the

HOLY GHOST hath caused it to be written; namely, to consider him, as the LORD JESUS points him out, an eminent type of himself. Here the subject riseth to a sublimity and importance which demands our closest attention in every part of it. When we behold the storm thus pursuing the mariners, we behold in it the wrath of divine justice represented as pursuing our whole nature unto universal destruction. In the person of *Jonah* embarked with the ship's company, we behold the representation of CHRIST in our nature; who though he had no sin of his own, neither *was guile found in his mouth*; yet was *he made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him*. 2 Corinthians 5:21. In the throwing *Jonah* into the sea as the only means to abate the storm, we behold the total helplessness of anything short of CHRIST saving our whole nature from the wrath of GOD. In *Jonah's* being thus given for a ransom, and the storm as instantly ceasing, we behold how CHRIST hath borne the sins of many, and by his voluntary offer of himself, thus once offered, he hath satisfied divine justice, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. It is true indeed, *Jonah* himself was the sole offender in this storm; and the LORD JESUS CHRIST altogether holy. Yet, as CHRIST became the surety of his people, he stood forth with all the guilt of his people before JEHOVAH, and both bore our sins, and carried our sorrows; and in this state was strikingly represented by *Jonah* when cast into the sea. Wonderful working GOD is our GOD, *whose ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts!* Isaiah 58:8.

JONAH 1:17

Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up *Jonah*. And *Jonah* was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

I stay not to enquire what fish this was. Our LORD JESUS himself hath said it was a whale. Matthew 12:40. Neither do I consider myself as called upon to show how Jonah could remain the time here spoken of, without being suffocated. The subject itself is miraculous; and as such, he that appointed the means, made it effectual to the end. I only beg the Reader to observe with me, that the time here mentioned of three days and three nights, doth not mean, neither was it ever intended to mean, three whole days and three whole nights; but only part in each, of the first and third of those times, that is to say, one whole day, and part of two others. For the Jews have no way of expressing a day and a night separately, but together. So it was by CHRIST when he lay in the grave; that is, part of the day of his crucifixion, from the time he was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb; then the whole following day; and then to the next morning before sun rise; for that CHRIST was risen before the sun is evident from what is said of the godly women. Mark 16:2. And as Jonah was an express type of the LORD JESUS, it should seem that the time in both events was the same.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! improving as the history of Jonah may be found in numberless instances, I cannot, I dare not for a moment lose sight of thee, while beholding thy type in the wonderful account here given, and which so strikingly sets forth thy glorious person, as three days and three nights *in the heart of the earth*. If Jonah was the only sign given in the days of thy flesh, to an evil and adulterous generation, let my, soul bless the LORD for the sweet testimony this brings with it,

to thy sovereign grace and salvation. Yes!, dearest LORD! Jonah did resemble thee, when delivered to the raging sea for the salvation of the people. Thou didst indeed bear the overwhelming torrents of thy sufferings, when the vials of justice were poured out upon thy devoted head, and when thou didst tread the wine-presses, of thy FATHER'S wrath alone. And although in thy holy nature there was no shadow of guile; and never wert thou otherwise from one eternity to another than the unceasing object of thy FATHER'S love; yet, as the sinner's surety, like Jonah, thou didst stand the only cause of the dreadful storm; and all the cataracts of tempest came in upon thy soul, until thou wert *sorrowful even unto death, sore amazed, and very heavy*. And hence those cries of soul; *I sink in deep water where there is no standing, I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me*. Blessed LORD JESUS! may my soul frequently meditate on thee in this endearment of character! And as often as I read of Jonah's being cast forth, and the tempest of the sea ceasing in consequence, may I feel my soul refreshed in the contemplation; JESUS I will say was made this and infinitely more for me, that I might be made *the righteousness of God in him!*

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

JONAH 2:1-3

Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, (2) And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice. (3) For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

Let the Reader here learn, and learn with trembling, that sin will bring trouble even to GOD'S dear children. So runs the charter in the covenant of grace. Psalm 89:30-32. Learn also, that it is nothing for the most part brings the heart home to GOD, after departures, but the LORD's sanctifying affliction. And let the Reader learn moreover, that the greatest of all afflictions, is the thought in those afflictions, that they are the LORD'S. A soul deserted of the LORD, or supposed to be so, is the heaviest of all distresses. It was the sense of this which aggravated the Redeemer's sorrows. Psalm 22:1, 2. But Reader! when you have duly pondered those weighty considerations, look at Jonah again, and behold him in this state as a type of the ever blessed JESUS. None but Jonah, among all the sons of men, ever experienced a state like this. It was none but the LORD JESUS that ever experienced the soul agonies of the garden, and the cross. *Of the people there was none with him.* Isaiah 63. And as Jonah remained here the exact time which the LORD JESUS in after ages remained in the heart of the earth, so CHRIST expressly declared that this was in Jonah a sign of Jonah's LORD. Matthew 12:39, 40.

JONAH 2:4-9

Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. (5) The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. (6) I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;

the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. (7) When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. (8) They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. (9) But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation *is* of the LORD.

The words of Jonah are very remarkable when he saith, though he was cast out of the LORD's sight, yet he would *look again*. A plain proof that he had *looked before*. But what I particularly beg the Reader to notice in Jonah's resolution of looking again is, that he would look towards the LORD's holy temple. Everyone knows that reads the Bible, that this temple was the type of CHRIST. GOD in CHRIST, is, and was, the sum and substance of the whole temple, and of the whole furniture. Hence Jonah, like all the holy men of old, was looking for salvation, to a GOD in CHRIST. And, Reader! I pray you to keep in remembrance, that let the afflictions and exercises of GOD'S children be what they may, there can be no relief to any, or to all, but faith's confidence and hope in GOD'S CHRIST.

JONAH 2:10

And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry *land*.

See! what a gracious prayer-hearing, and prayer-answering GOD our's is! Sweetly did another Prophet bear testimony to the same. Psalm 130:1-3. But, Reader! do not lose sight of the typical representation in all this to the person and work of the LORD JESUS. As the belly of the whale could not detain Jonah, when the LORD commanded his deliverance, so neither could the grave detain CHRIST, when he had paid the debt of

our sins, and satisfied both law and justice. JESUS was *justified in the Spirit*, it is said, when he came forth from the tomb; and GOD the FATHER took to himself the glorious name of *the GOD of peace*, when bringing again from the dead the LORD JESUS CHRIST, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*. Such, and so blessed, are the great events of the Redeemer's deliverance from the grave, as typified by the Prophet's detention in what he calls the belly of hell. See 1 Timothy 3:16. Hebrews 13:20. Hosea 6:2.

REFLECTIONS

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

circumstances, and those of the Church at large, and the improvement will be blessed.

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

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

JONAH 3:1-2

And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, (2) Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

Reader! I pray you observe the grace and condescension of the LORD in again calling Jonah to this service. Was it because the LORD had no other servant to employ? that is impossible. But because the LORD will send by whom he will send. Methinks here is a sweet and gracious lesson for ministers.

How condescending is it in the LORD to employ any; and more especially such as have before slighted, or run from his service, and done the work of the LORD negligently, Malachi 1:13, 14.

JONAH 3:3-4

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. (4) And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

According to all historians, this city was greater than Babylon, and yet in gross darkness respecting divine things. Reader! think of *the mercies of our land! And then stand amazed at the wonderful subject of our abuse of them, and the LORD's forbearance! I admire the faithfulness of Jonah. See how the LORD can, and the LORD doth, and will, strengthen his people!*

JONAH 3:5-9

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. (6) For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. (7) And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: (8) But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. (9) Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

What! But the sovereign grace of GOD could have induced such effects! What nation, what kingdom or people shall we look to, for similar humblings, at the preaching of a poor

despised Prophet? Do we not see in it the LORD's Almighty hand disposing all orders of the people to this conduct!

JONAH 3:10

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

Who but must admire and adore the goodness and mercy of the LORD in this pardon to Nineveh. The change here mentioned is not in the LORD's mind, but in the LORD's providence. What is said through all the scriptures concerning the LORD's repenting of what he had before said he would, and doing it not, is meant to show the change by his grace wrought in man, and not the least, change in himself. See this doctrine more fully explained in my Commentary on Genesis 6:6. and Jeremiah 18:7-10.

REFLECTIONS

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

But here, Reader, as in all other instances, do not forget to behold the blessed cause in the provision made for Prophet, Priest, and People, in the person, and by the one all-sufficient sacrifice, of *the LAMB slain before the foundation of the world*. To this, and this alone, GOD hath respect in all his dispensations, both in providence and grace. It is for JESU'S

sake sin is pardoned, and the sinner forgiven and received into favor. CHRIST is both the mercy seat, and propitiation; and we have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

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

JONAH 4:1

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

We have not a similar instance in scripture, of a minister of the LORD being displeased at the success of his labors; and it is hardly possible on common principles, to assign any cause. Did Jonah dread being found a false prophet more than being made an unsuccessful preacher? Reader! what a character doth Jonah here appear in? Pause over the view!

JONAH 4:2-3

And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. (3) Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for *it is* better for me to die than to live.

Is this Jonah, who offered such a lovely prayer but a little before? Can it be, the same man? Alas! Reader! what is

Jonah, what is any man, if for a moment left without the influences of grace?

JONAH 4:4

Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

Oh! precious, precious LORD JESUS! do we not see thee here, in this gentle tender expostulation? Reader, pray turn to Luke 9:51-56.

JONAH 4:5-8

So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. (6) And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made *it* to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. (7) But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. (8) And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, *It is* better for me to die than to live.

I cannot sufficiently admire, nor adore, the condescending benignity of the LORD, in the tender method the LORD took to recover the Prophet from his petulance. Reader! look at the LORD in those gracious acts, and then say what a blessed proof is here given of his own character; the LORD, the LORD GOD! merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Exodus 34:5, 6.

JONAH 4:9

And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, *even* unto death.

Was there ever an instance of grace so recompensed with open contumacy? Was there ever an example of impudent rebellion more pointed than this?

JONAH 4:10-11

Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: (11) And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle?

Reader! behold the conclusion! and say shall we not in the view of it cry out with the Prophet, *Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage?* Micah 7:18, 19.

REFLECTIONS

HERE, Reader, let us pause as we finish the history of Jonah, and gather together into one view the wonderful subject, as it relates to the LORD's servant, and as it relates to the LORD himself, in his abundant grace manifested to such a wayward and rebellious frame of mind. We shall read the account of Jonah's preaching to Nineveh, and his displeasure at the LORD's mercy to little purpose, if we do not learn from the whole to bring the subject home to our own hearts, and under divine teaching discover that the seeds of the same sins, as we find in the *Ninevites*, and the Prophet, are in our nature also. *What* (saith the Prophet) *are we better than they?* No! (saith he) *in no wise. For we have before concluded all under sin.* And to whom, or from what cause do we ascribe the whole of salvation, but to JESUS and his wonderful

undertaking in our nature? Chiefly let the people of GOD from this history learn, what man in his highest attainments is, if for one moment left to himself. Though like *Jonah* we have cried from the deep of affliction, when the wormwood and the gall of sin hath been bitterly drank by us; and though from the very belly of hell we have been brought to know the LORD, yet the withering of a gourd will open a-fresh our rebellion, if that thwarting providence, be it what it may, is not sanctified. Precious LORD JESUS! cause both him that writes, and him that reads, to live under the unceasing teachings of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that a spring of humblings and sorrow may be constantly kept open in our souls. LORD, keep from us, as the most dangerous of all evils, every thought of anything and everything in ourselves as righteous; that a sense of the daily workings of corruption, however graciously restrained by thee from breaking out into actual commission, may cause us to go humbly and softly all our day. And above all, dearest LORD, let the daily consciousness of our need of thee, and of thy greatest salvation, make thee daily, yea hourly, more precious to our souls.

Farewell Jonah! I bless my GOD and Saviour for the profitableness I find under his blessed SPIRIT'S teaching of thy ministry. Even the frailties of my LORD'S servants, so faithfully recorded in his holy scriptures, afford instruction to my soul. Men of like passions with ourselves, are better suited in my LORD'S service than angels of light. But oh! gracious LORD JESUS! what shall I say, or what shall I offer of thankfulness in beholding thy wonderful condescension in causing a *Jonah*, amidst all his unworthiness, to be a lively type of thine own person, when accomplishing the purpose of redemption. Here

surely LORD, as in a thousand other instances, *thy thoughts are not our thoughts, nor thy ways our ways*. I bow, LORD, to the dust before thee, and thankfully acknowledge, that both in thine unequalled humiliation and exaltation, thou hast a name above every name, and all creation shall confess that thou art LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.

THE PROPHET

MICAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

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

The Reader of this Commentary will be much more interested to find in Micah's prophecy the testimony to his inspired

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

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

MICAH 1:1-9

The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. (2) Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. (3) For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. (4) And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. (5) For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem? (6) Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover

the foundations thereof. (7) And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered *it* of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot. (8) Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls. (9) For her wound *is* incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, *even* to Jerusalem.

There is a great sameness between the writings of *Isaiah* and *Micah*; their vision opens much alike, only *Micah's* vision is concerning *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*; and *Isaiah's* of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*. *Samaria* was the chief city of the ten tribes of Israel; so that between the two Prophets, both *Judah* and *Israel* are alike reprov'd. See *Isaiah* 1:1, 2. But what I wish chiefly from both is, to impress the Reader's mind with the one leading object of this and of all prophecy; namely, that the LORD is preparing the Church for the coming of CHRIST, by showing the universal depravity of the human mind. The gracious way the HOLY GHOST takes to bring to CHRIST is, by *convincing of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*. *John* 16:8.

MICAH 1:10-16

Declare ye *it* not at Gath, weep ye not at all: in the house of Aphrah roll thyself in the dust. (11) Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir, having thy shame naked: the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Bethel; he shall receive of you his standing. (12) For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem. (13) O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast: she *is* the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee. (14) Therefore shalt thou give presents to Moreshethgath: the houses of Achzib *shall be* a lie to the kings of Israel. (15) Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah: he shall

come unto Adullam the glory of Israel. (16) Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee.

I do not trespass on the Reader with observations on what is here said; it is sufficient to remark, that the Prophet is speaking of the low estate of the Church, and he calls in the neighboring nations as if to witness it. Gath is one of the chief cities of the Philistines. *Aphrah* means the land of dust, from its lowness and poverty. *Saphir*, though beautiful, shall know her shame; and *Zanaan*, which means a country of flocks, shall also be brought into trouble. The Prophet indeed refers to all the neighboring nations; for when the LORD hath a controversy with his people, he will also reckon with the nations. Reader! it is blessed when the LORD goeth forth to judgment, to have the chambers of his covenant to run into. That is a sweet promise to this amount. Isaiah 26:20, 21.

REFLECTIONS

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

yea, all the earth are called upon to the charge. The LORD grant, Reader, that you and I, in the Prophet's call, may feel interested, so as to impress the necessity and suitableness of the LORD JESUS, and that the HOLY GHOST may bring him home to our hearts, and form him there, *the hope of glory!*

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

MICAH 2:1-2

Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. (2) And they covet fields, and take *them* by violence; and houses, and take *them* away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

We have here the continuance of the same subject; the LORD's charge against *Israel*. It is not the nations around, but *Israel*, against whom the LORD pleads. Sin in GOD'S people becomes exceeding sinful.

MICAH 2:3-6

Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time *is* evil. (4) In that day shall *one* take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, *and* say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed *it* from me! turning

away he hath divided our fields. (5) Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD. (6) Prophecy ye not, *say they to them that* prophecy: they shall not prophecy to them, *that* they shall not take shame.

When we consider the LORD's dealings with *Israel*, we cannot sufficiently lament their depravity. Other nations of the earth, which knew not the LORD, we behold with a different aspect to that of the seed of Jacob. A family like this, so blessed, so fed, so taught, and so protected! What apology can be made for their apostacy! surely every beholder must be astonished!

MICAH 2:7-9

O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? *are* these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? (8) Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. (9) The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.

Do not forget, Reader, nor overlook the sweet feature of grace here appearing. Though unworthy, degenerate, and fallen, still Jacob is reminded of his name, and called upon to recollect, that Him with whom is the residue of the Spirit, is not straitened, limited, or confined. Reader! I have found this thought precious under all heart-straitenings in prayer; the Spirit of the LORD is not straitened. JESUS still lives, still appears as a LAMB slain in the midst of the throne, and ever acts as the Intercessor of his people!

MICAH 2:10

Arise ye, and depart; for this *is* not *your* rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy *you*, even with a sore destruction.

I would read this verse by itself, because I humbly conceive, that it is not connected with what went before, neither in what follows. And moreover, I think it is a blessed verse, suitable to be read with every Chapter in the Old Testament and the New. Is it not indeed the call of GOD the SPIRIT to every awakened soul, to come up out of all the unsatisfying things around, and to behold them as they all are, in reality proposing nothing to satisfy the desires, or to answer the expectations of an immortal soul. All, all is polluted. Doth the Reader ask; and what is not? I will beg to answer him by sending him to his Bible, in a few passages, for they will lead to others; and I love to send all serious inquiring souls to the fountain head in the word of GOD. See Isaiah 28:12. Psalm 116:7. Matthew 11:28-30.

MICAH 2:11

If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, *saying*, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.

Here is a very awful scripture. The LORD alone knows in how many instances it may be daily fulfilling. Alas! when false teachers are given to a people of a deluded mind, what a state must that people be in!

MICAH 2:12

I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of *the multitude of men*.

Remark, Reader, in the worst of times, how the LORD is richly giving out sweet promises concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST to his people. For to whom is the gathering of the people to be,

but to the LORD JESUS CHRIST? And observe the expression, *all of Jacob*; not an hoof, as Moses told Pharaoh, should be left behind. Exodus 10:26. *Bozrah* was a place remarkable for cattle. And therefore under this figure is shown what a multitude of Israel shall be assembled. Sweet thought! CHRIST'S fold is many. *John* saw in his day, already in glory, *a multitude which no man could number*. And who shall say what a vast accession since? Revelation 7:9.

MICAH 2:13

The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.

Here is a verse concerning the LORD JESUS, which it would take the whole of life to go over every part and explain; and after all, numberless beauties pointing to the LORD JESUS in it would be left unexplored and unknown. That by the *breaker* is meant the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the general consent of all commentators have agreed. The name seems to be taken from *Pharez*, meaning a breach. See Genesis 38:29. And CHRIST is come up in the everlasting counsel of JEHOVAH, in his glorious Mediatorial character, as *a Repairer of the breach of his people*. Isaiah 58:12. And in this view it is most blessed to behold CHRIST, and to remark how he corresponds in every point to this character. He indeed came up before his people, when he arose at the call of JEHOVAH, in the infinite mind, as the HOLY ONE of Israel, the Maker, and Redeemer thereof. And as in the eternal counsels he thus appeared the glorious Head and Representative of his body the Church; so in time his goings were for the salvation of his people. Micah 5:2. Habakkuk 3:13. Through the whole of the scripture history

before his incarnation; who but JESUS came up as the sum and substance of every type, shadow, and figure; both before the law, and under the law, and the Prophets? And when at his miraculous conception, birth, and ministry, death and resurrection; he manifested himself under each, and every particular, as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; who but JESUS came up, and went before his people in all the glorious offices which testified to his character? And who but JESUS broke asunder the bars and gates of death, when he arose from the dead, and conquered the grave in its own territories, for his people? Who but JESUS broke up the clouds, when in his ascension he returned to take possession of the kingdom of heaven, for his people? And who but JESUS is it that now goeth before his redeemed every act of grace, and enables them in his power to break up and break through every difficulty that would impede their way to glory; and as this blessed scripture saith, are passed through the gate, and are gone out by it? We hail thee, O thou Almighty Breaker! thou art indeed all this and infinitely more to thy people; for thou art *the* LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

REFLECTIONS

READER! from the perusal of this truly gospel Chapter, behold the gracious provision made for you, for me, for all that are of the house of Jacob, spiritually considered; the Spirit of the LORD is not straitened, neither the power of the Almighty Breaker diminished! Everything around us, in us, and about us, join the Prophet's cry; *arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest because it is polluted.* Surely then we must desire a better country, that is an heavenly. And blessed be our God,

there is not only prepared for us a better country, but JESUS, our Almighty Breaker, hath broken up, and gone before, and taken possession of it in our name, that as he is there, we may be also. Precious LORD JESUS, we pray thee break through for thy people all that would oppose our following thee! Break for us all the chains of sin, all the devices of Satan, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And do thou, Almighty LORD, break in us all the remaining power of indwelling corruption, and open our prison frames, and prison doors, and bring us out into the glorious liberty wherewith thou makest thy people free. Then shall we, in thy strength, trample over all the power of the enemy, and be made more than conquerors through thy grace helping us. Yea, we shall then pass through the gate, and go out by it; JESUS *our King is before us, and our LORD on our head.*

CHAPTER 3

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

MICAH 3:1-5

And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; *Is it* not for you to know judgment? (2) Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; (3) Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. (4) Then shall they cry unto the LORD,

but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings. (5) Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.

It must have been a sad day with the Church, and indeed the history of those times proves it was, when it was as with the priest, so with the people. A state of general corruption prevailed. *Isaiah* the *contemporary* of *Micah*, hath described it. Chap. 24:1-12.

MICAH 3:6-7

Therefore night *shall be* unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. (7) Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for *there is* no answer of God.

But here we have the most awful account, when the ministers of GOD, or the pretenders to that ministry, are given up to a deluded mind. While the LORD keeps his sanctuary pure, and the streams unpolluted, there is hope that the minds of the people may through grace, drink of those fountains of life and salvation in the sacred word: But if those who minister in divine things, are themselves given up to strong delusions; what must the end be to the common people? Reader! look into what is said by the Apostle concerning the last days, and then consider how near the present hour is approaching them. 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12.

MICAH 3:8

But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.

What a blessed verse is this! And what a gracious relief from the awful account which went before. Who that reads it, but must feel constrained to cry out, LORD! give to thy Church and people, pastors after thine own mind, and full of the Spirit of the LORD. Jeremiah 3:15.

MICAH 3:9-12

Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. (10) They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. (11) The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, *Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.* (12) Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed *as* a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

The Chapter closeth as it opened, full of judgment; but all preparatory to mercy, as the following Chapter declares. Indeed we ought to read both together, that we might do as the Psalmist did, when he sang both *of judgment and mercy*. The HOLY GHOST in his divine office convinces of sin, and convinceth of CHRIST'S righteousness. Psalm 101:1. John 16:8-11.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! we thank thee, that amidst all our unworthiness and departures, like Israel, thou hast not withdrawn our sabbaths, nor made the sun to go down upon our Prophets. Still there is in our midst, the blessed word of thy Gospel, the means of grace, and the cry proclaimed every returning LORD'S day; *he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear*

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

CHAPTER 4

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

MICAH 4:1-5

But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. (2) And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (3) And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (4) But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*. (5) For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

So very important in the eye of GOD the HOLY GHOST, is this blessed prophecy, that he thought proper to commission two of his servants the Prophets to deliver it to the Church, and almost in the very same words. If the Reader will look back to the second Chapter of *Isaiah's* writings, he will find the same there delivered to the Church, as the Prophet *Micah* hath in this Chapter. And is not this as if to say, *in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall, every word be established?* 2 Corinthians 13:1. Reader! do mark the several features here set forth, of the blessings of JESUS and his gospel. His Church shall be established in spite of hell and the world. All nations shall flow to it. Every redeemed soul shall invite his neighbor. The enemies of the Church, the LORD will judge. Peace shall be established in the earth, and the Church shall enjoy uninterrupted quiet. Who that hears this, but must join in the ardent prayer of the Church; LORD! *thy kingdom come!*

MICAH 4:6-7

In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; (7) And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

Here are sweet promises also to the weak and fearful. Halting, and the trembling souls, under the thoughts of being cast off; shall be strengthened. JESUS will be their strength, and their confidence, and will plead their cause. Observe, Reader, how often that sweet word I is mentioned. I the LORD will assemble; I will gather; I will make her that halted a remnant. Yes! all must be done by the LORD. And when the LORD works, who will let or hinder?

MICAH 4:8-10

And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. (9) Now why dost thou cry out aloud? *is there* no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. (10) Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go *even* to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

If, as some have supposed, that the word *Migdol-Eder*, which we translate Tower, means *Bethlehem*, and the very place where the Jewish shepherds were keeping their flocks by night, when the angels announced to them the birth of CHRIST. Luke 2:8, 9. there is an uncommon beauty in this passage in reference to CHRIST. Certain it is that the Church is CHRIST'S flock, and CHRIST himself as a tower of defense, See Zechariah 9:12. and Ezekiel 34:31. And it may be truly said, that CHRIST'S kingdom began from thence, when CHRIST was born in Bethlehem king of the Jews, Matthew 2:2. Here also, in the travelling pains spoken of, is an allusion to the Church's first going into *Babylon*, and from thence being delivered.

MICAH 4:11-12

Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. (12) But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

The Church is and ever must be, upon earth, the envy of the carnal world. But, Reader, what a sweet thought it is for you, for me, for all, that when the enemies of CHRIST and his redeemed seem to triumph, their boasting is but momentary,

and the LORD is thereby hastening their destruction. This was memorably fulfilled in the Church's persecution in *Babylon*; for when the impious monarch insulted the people, and profaned the holy vessels of the sanctuary, the same night he was slain. Daniel 5:2-30.

MICAH 4:13

Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.

See, Reader, see! what holy triumphs await the Church in the end. It is not enough that JESUS will drive out all the enemies of his people *before* them; but he will bring all their enemies *under* them. Satan shall not only be bruised, but bruised under the feet of the poor timid followers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The song hath been already sung in heaven, in the assurance of those events; and ere long, the same song shall be sung by all the redeemed upon earth. *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our GOD, and the power of his CHRIST; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our GOD day and night; and they overcame him by the blood of the LAMB.* Revelation 12:10, 11.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not dismiss this precious Chapter, until you have again and again pondered well the contents of it. Think at what distance this blessed prophecy was delivered. Behold the fulfillment of it in the coming of the LORD JESUS. See what positive assurances are given for its complete

accomplishment. Then consider the days in which you live; upon whom the ends of the world are come; and then in fervent earnest prayer, get into the very retirings of the LORD, and give him no rest nor peace until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Oh! that the cause of JESUS was more generally and warmly taken up, by those who call themselves his people! Oh! that men were less selfish, and instead of seeking their own, would seek the things of JESUS CHRIST. Reader! let you and I beg of GOD to give us grace to prefer Jerusalem's interest above our chief joy. LORD! I would say, *Do good in this good pleasure unto Zion!* Hasten the blessed hour, when thou wilt establish thine house upon *the tops of the mountains, and cause all nations to flow unto it.* LORD! *cause the law of the glorious gospel to go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem!* Amen.

CHAPTER 5

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

MICAH 5:1

Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

The Chapter is introduced with an account of *Zion's* troubles. She is to be brought down to great affliction. Troops of foes are to encompass her. No doubt this looked further than the captivity of the Church in *Babylon*, because the next verse is a comfortable promise in the midst of this trouble; and as it refers to the person, and the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, I am inclined to think that the troops here spoken of mean the *Roman* government; under which *Judea* was a province in the moment of the birth of CHRIST. See, Reader! how when troubles abound, consolations abound!

MICAH 5:2

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

Every word in this blessed verse is important; and therefore let us regard every word in it. *Bethlehem* means the house of bread! how suited this to him, and his birth, who is *the bread of life*. *Ephratah*, or *Ephrath*, meaning *fruitfulness*, was the name also of the city of *Bethlehem*, about two leagues from *Jerusalem*, supposed to have been so named from *Ephrah*, Caleb's wife; 1 Chronicles 2:19. *David* was also born here. John 7:42. Observe also, how humbly it is spoken of, *little among the thousands of Judah*. Yes! where JESUS the humble Saviour is born, all the corresponding circumstances shall be humble also! Now mark the features of the GOD-MAN, also Mediator. *His goings forth have been from of old*. How? not as GOD *only*, for then in that sense there is neither goings forth nor retirings. His immensity filling all space, is one of his divine attributes, and could not need mentioning. And not as man *only*, for then his goings forth could not have been

eternal. But in the union of both, as GOD-MAN, JESUS-Mediator went forth in the decree of JEHOVAH from everlasting. Sweet and precious testimony this to the character of the LORD JESUS, as the CHRIST of GOD. His character of office is next to be noted, a *Ruler in Israel*. And so the LORD JESUS was amidst all the humbleness in which he appeared in the days of his flesh; for though he was despised and rejected of men, yet did he reign and rule in the hearts of all his redeemed, and *manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him*. John 2:11. Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for this precious portion in the testimony of the Prophets, to the person, character, and offices of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! In confirmation of the whole, let the Reader consult, Matthew 2:6. There is one sweet thought more in this verse which must not be overlooked, because it is highly important; and that is, who is the speaker of this memorable verse? Doubtless it is GOD the FATHER. Well then, Reader! see here a blessed testimony of GOD the FATHER, to the mission of his dear SON; that this Ruler, this Saviour in Israel, whose goings forth had been from everlasting, had been and should be, *unto GOD*: he shall come forth *unto me*, saith JEHOVAH. Here lies indeed the great blessedness in the commission of CHRIST, that it is the authority of GOD the FATHER. So spake JESUS. John 5:36-43. So spake his servant John! 1 John 4:14.

MICAH 5:3

Therefore will he give them up, until the time *that* she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

The sense of this verse seems to be, that there shall be great trouble in Israel, until this glorious event of CHRIST'S birth

should take place. And certain it is that Israel was brought very low before CHRIST was born. Some however make these words wholly spiritual with respect to the new birth, in the heart of CHRIST'S people, whose awakenings in grace are well known to be called in scripture travailing in soul. Galatians 4:19.

MICAH 5:4

And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

It is very easy to enter into a proper apprehension of what is here meant concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST. His person being before proved, we may well suppose the Prophet is speaking of his offices. *Feeding*, comprehends the whole office of a shepherd; restoring, healing, leading, protecting, and the like. In this sense, CHRIST'S *kingly* office, as well as his *prophetical*, and *priestly*, are plainly included. And as it takes in the whole of CHRIST'S character, so it extends to the ends of the earth. Such was indeed, and is, and ever will be the dominion of the LORD JESUS. Psalm 72:8-17.

MICAH 5:5-6

And this *man* shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. (6) And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver *us* from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

Wherefore the translators of our Bible into English, put in the word *man* into the first of these verses, I know not, for certain it is they had no authority to do so, not being in the

original. But we have no objection to the insertion of it, if by the expression they mean the GOD-MAN, the glory-man, spoken of before, whose goings forth had been from everlasting. For sure it is, the Prophet could mean no other. CHRIST alone is our peace, and hath made our peace in the blood of his cross. And he, and he alone, is this peace against every *Assyrian*, that is, every enemy from without, or from within. *Seven* shepherds, and *eight* principal men, it should seem had respect to some of the more eminent servants of the LORD, probably the apostles, or evangelists, or both. The number of *seven*, and *eight*, doth not I apprehend mean a specific, but a certain number mentioned for an uncertain.

MICAH 5:7

And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

This is a very lovely description of the people of GOD. They are called a *remnant*. So they are in the Gospel; and a *little flock*. Romans 9:27. Taken from Isaiah 10:21, 22. Luke 12:32. They are promised to be distinguished from the world around them by divine blessings, as the fleece of *Gideon*, from the dry earth. Judges 6:36-38. But how beautiful the figure. They are to be as the dew, and from the LORD. And what is this? and how is it known? The LORD hath said by Hosea, *I will be as the dew unto Israel*. Hosea 14:5. First observe, it is all of the LORD, *not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD*. Zechariah 4-6. Now as the dew is from the LORD, so are the remnant of Jacob. They are born, saith John, *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of GOD*. John 1:13. Moreover, this remnant, though known

and distinguished as the dew when fallen, yet what eye sees the dew fall? who observes the method of its coming? Precisely so by Jacob's remnant. The work of GOD the HOLY GHOST upon the soul is unknown in the time of his operation, unnoticed, unperceived by the world; yea, the very receiver is for a while a stranger to the LORD's work within him. Still further in reference to this beautiful allusion; as the dew comes down in abundance on the earth, so the grace of GOD the SPIRIT comes down most plentifully on the soul. The promise to the LORD JESUS was, that *from the womb of the morning he should have the dew of his youth*. Psalm 110:3. Multitudes of souls should be given to CHRIST, as incalculable as the dew-drops of the morning. And as the dew is like the crystal, clear, pellucid, and shining; so the remnant of Jacob should be amidst the unclean and clouded around. Hence David's song concerning JESUS, the Rock of Israel, and his people in him. 2 Samuel 23:4. And not only dew, but showers; not only a few here and there, like the droppings of rain, but multitudes, like the plentiful outpouring of the clouds, that refresheth the whole earth with their copiousness. And what endears the whole, and recommends the whole to show the sovereignty of grace, and the good pleasure of the LORD in bestowing all these mercies; this remnant of Jacob shall be so blessed, not only before they ask for the blessing, or are deserving of it, but before they have any consciousness of the blessing itself, or their want of it; for it *tarrieth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men*. Reader! I do beseech you, pause over this rich verse, and read it again and again. And then may we both fall down before the mercy seat, and freely, fully give all the glory of rich, free, and sovereign grace, where alone it is due, *crying*

out with the Apostle, *now thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift.* 2 Corinthians 9:15.

MICAH 5:8

And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

The same distinguishing blessings on Jacob's remnant, only adopting another figure, are here promised, to show the freedom of GOD'S grace and love to his people. In the former Jacob's remnant is made *passive* in receiving blessings from the LORD, to denote the LORD's chosen. In this they are shown to be *active*, in going forth in the LORD's strength, to the LORD's cause. Acting under the name and authority of the lion of the tribe of Judah; *the worm Jacob is enabled to thresh the mountains.* Isaiah 41:14.

MICAH 5:9

Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

Is not this spoken of CHRIST himself? I do not presume to answer the question. But if it be, it is a blessed promise. And if not, it is still blessed to CHRIST'S people, for it must be to them in him?

MICAH 5:10-15

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: (11) And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: (12) And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no *more* soothsayers: (13) Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of

thine hands. (14) And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. (15) And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

I include all these verses under one reading. They all, according to my view, proclaim the same doctrine, namely, the LORD'S promise that the remnant of Jacob shall be defended, blessed, and protected, by Jacob's LORD. They shall be stripped of all false confidences in themselves, and secured from all deceitful errors from others. The LORD undertakes for them, and will in one and the same moment keep them from all spiritual pride, and beat down all their spiritual foes. Precious promises of a more precious, promising, and performing GOD! Reader! what can be more blessed, than when the LORD engageth for himself, and engageth for his people. Do turn to that sweet scripture of the Prophet before you close your review of this Chapter. Jeremiah 32:37-41.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! I would leave all other subjects, all other considerations, to follow thee thou LAMB of GOD, wherever I find thee in thy scriptures of truth. And as here in this Chapter thou didst commission thy servant *Micah* to tell the Church, ages before thine incarnation, where thou wouldest be born; at *Bethlehem Ephratah* would my soul meditate the mysterious birth of Him, whose name was, and is, and ever will be, Wonderful! Take wing, my soul, this morning, and fly to the honored spot. A greater light than the ministry of a star, which guided the wise men, will guide thee; for JESUS himself, by his blessed SPIRIT, will go before, and pointing to the place, will say, as in his own blessed words, *this man was*

born here! But, oh! Almighty JESUS! even when in sweet meditation at *Bethlehem*, shall I not in devout thought run back into the contemplation of eternity, and call to mind that *thy goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* Indeed, indeed, my honored LORD, it was before all worlds that thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for their salvation wert thou then the anointed. So that all thou hast done afterwards in time, and all that thou art unceasingly engaged in now in eternity, and will be forever and ever, is on the same blessed design, for the glory of thy FATHER, in the redemption of his and thy chosen. Hail! thou Almighty GOD! Hail! thou Wonderful Man. Thou art, and wilt be, the peace of all thy redeemed, when the whole troops of *Assyrians*, even the whole host of the Church's enemies, shall come into our land. Thou will stand and feed thy flock in the strength of JEHOVAH, in the presence of their foes, and make their cup run over! And thy remnant shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew, so numerous, so beautiful, so refreshed and comely, from thy comeliness put upon them. And all this, yea, and more than eye, hath seen, or ear heard, or the mind can think, wholly from thyself, and to thyself, and thine own glory; not waiting their cry, or their deservings, but like the sweet influences of heaven in the falling showers, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. LORD! be thou thus according to thy promise, as the dew unto all thine Israel. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

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

MICAH 6:1-2

Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. (2) Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

This seems a new Sermon of the Prophet's, opening at this Chapter. The stile is as usual in the prophetic way. Not only the people are called upon, but the inanimate part of the creation, to be witness of Israel's stupidity. See Isaiah 1:2, &c.

MICAH 6:3-5

O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. (4) For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. (5) O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.

I beg the Reader particularly to notice in the very commencement of the LORD's discourse, that the covenant relation between the LORD and his Israel, is kept in remembrance. *O my people!* do not, I beg you, forget this, for it is most gracious and most blessed. Of all the parts of scripture, these are certainly what come home most powerfully to the heart; the LORD's appeal to his people concerning his unalterable goodness, and their continued rebellion. *Jeremiah's* prophecy is full of this. See Chap. 2. In a short compass the LORD here sums up the outlines of the

whole eventful history of his grace over Israel, in bringing them out of Egypt, and bringing them through the wilderness. And in the last of these verses the LORD as briefly sums up the blessings he had manifested to them, when bringing them into the promised land, and his special mercy in the case of *Balaam* and *Barak*, on the borders of it. Numbers 22, 23, 24 and 25 Chapters. But I beg more particularly the Reader to observe with me, what the LORD here saith was his gracious design in all this; that *ye may know the* righteousness of the LORD; or, as it might be read, the *righteousnesses* of the LORD; for this doth not consist in one, or two, or ten thousand acts, but it is in all acts. The Hebrews delight in plurals in this way. So in the first Psalm, the word is *blessedness* is the man, that is the Man CHRIST JESUS. Meaning that he, and he alone, is blessedness, for there is blessing in no other. See Psalm 1:1. and Psalm 72:17. I must observe once more on this part of the Prophet's verse, in the reason assigned that *ye may know the righteousness of the* LORD; that the *Syriac* version applies this to the enemies of Israel, that *they might know*, that is *Balak*, and *Balaam*, and the rest of the reprobate crew, might know the righteousness of the GOD of Israel. And if read thus, it is equally beautiful. It is as if the LORD had said, that they shall know my love to my people, and my justice in punishing the malice of their unprovoked foes.

MICAH 6:6-8

Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, *and* bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? (7) Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? (8) He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and

what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

This is that memorable passage in scripture which hath given rise to numberless opinions, both in the moral and religious world, and by the perversion of it, untaught by GOD the HOLY GHOST, hath produced endless disputes among the carnal and worldly minded in all ages. I beg the Reader's indulgence on this account, to be somewhat more particular upon it than I otherwise should have done; and when I have finished, I shall leave the whole before him that he may form his own judgment; begging of him first, as I now do, to seek the light and instruction of that Almighty SPIRIT which is promised, and whose office it is *to guide into all truth!* And first I should observe, that some have thought that the enquiry, *wherewith shall I come before the LORD*, and the proposal of *burnt offerings*, and the like, is not from Israel, but from *Balak*. They that are of this opinion, conceive, that before *Balak* and *Balaam* parted, the former put such questions as in these verses, and *Balaam* gave the answer as in the eighth verse. And the reason such writers have assigned, is, that Israel never could be so ignorant as to ask, whether they should offer human sacrifices, as in the gift of their first born for the sin of their soul. But I confess that this kind of reasoning doth not appear satisfactory to me. We know that in the case of Israel, at the very time *of Balaam's* hiring himself to curse the people of GOD, that by the advice of that infamous enchanter, *Moab* got Israel, by means of their daughters, to join the *Moabites* in their sacrifices. See Numbers 25:1-3. Compared with Revelation 2:14. I cannot but think therefore, that the enquiry is not *Balak*, but *Israel*. And I humbly conceive that it corresponds to the anxious enquiry of every soul, when first

brought under the awakening distress of his own heart concerning sin, and before GOD the HOLY GHOST hath brought him savingly acquainted with the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Reader! let us accept the inquiry in this light; and now attend to the answer. *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD?* that is, say some, in every department of life to do the just, the honest, the upright part; to be merciful according to a man's ability, in acts of alms-giving, and the like; and to observe an humble reverence towards GOD. This, say they, is the sum and substance of all moral and religious obligations. But I bless GOD, that *I have not so learned* CHRIST. For on this presumption, the words of the LORD JESUS CHRIST would be inverted, and instead of making the love of GOD the *first*, and grand concern; and causing the *second*, which is the love of our neighbor, to arise out of it; the love of men in this sense would become the first, and the love of GOD the last, and least. And did men attend to the plain sense of scripture, and not the presumptuous reasoning of their own minds, they would discover that those acts here spoken of, in doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly, are expressly said to be *with* GOD, that is, with an eye to Him, and serving Him in all. And if we thus accept this memorable passage of scripture, and explain it under the terms of the Gospel, the sense of it will be as plain and obvious as need be. Reader! you and I shall indeed *do justly with our* GOD, *if* we confess that in ourselves, by reason of sin, we justly deserve his wrath and indignation, having broken all his righteous laws. We shall indeed *love mercy*, if the LORD JESUS CHRIST be the mercy we love, who is himself *the mercy promised*; (Luke

1:72.) and in his own person, blood, and righteousness, comprehends the whole of mercy and salvation. And we shall indeed *walk humbly with our GOD*, while from a daily sense of sin, and from feeling the workings of corruption within, we walk as those, who in the moment they seek mercy, constantly acknowledge their total undeservings of it. This is indeed to walk humbly with our GOD, when we make a free and full confession of all sin, and subscribe as fully and freely to the rights of GOD'S justice. It is called in scripture, *accepting the punishment of our iniquity*. See Leviticus 26:40, 41. And it is also said to *be justifying the divine government*, in condemning ourselves. So did David. Psalm 51:4. If, to the anxious inquiry in this memorable passage, we thus interpret scripture, according to the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST. See John 16:8-11. And under the humblings of the soul we do the first act of justice to the first of Beings, in acknowledging ourselves to be virtually nothing but sin; and in the consciousness of this most unquestionable truth, we so love mercy, as to accept on our bended knees in transports of rejoicing, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the whole of our salvation; then will follow all the blessed effects in walking humbly with GOD, and in love, justice, and charity with men. But to suppose that this blessed passage of scripture refers only, or even principally to the *second* branch of duties, while overlooking, or only slightly regarding the *first*, is, according to my views of the word of GOD, sadly perverting the whole purport of scripture. May the LORD be the teacher of him that writes, and him that reads, that to both may be given a right understanding in all things. Amen.

MICAH 6:9

The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and *the man of wisdom* shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

GOD'S voice is his word, his ordinances, his providences, his mercies, his judgments. And the man of wisdom will see and regard it. In the margin of our old Bibles, the words are, *thy name shall see that which is*, that is, by the name is meant person; the LORD shall see. Thus the LORD saith, *thou hast a few names in Sardis*; that is, thou hast a few persons there. Revelation 3:4. And speaking of CHRIST, it is said, *in his name shall the Gentiles trust*; that is, in CHRIST shall they trust. Matthew 12:21. *Hear the rod*, is an uncommon expression. One might have expected it would have been said to *feel* it. But GOD'S rods differ from the rods of men. His rods speak as well as correct; for the sinner is made to connect with the punishment the sin which brings it.

MICAH 6:10-16

Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure *that is* abominable? (11) Shall I count *them* pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? (12) For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue *is* deceitful in their mouth. (13) Therefore also will I make *thee* sick in smiting thee, in making *thee* desolate because of thy sins. (14) Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down *shall be* in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and *that* which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. (15) Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine. (16) For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.

These expressions are all directed to one and the same end, namely, to teach Israel the enormity of his transgressions. *Omri* was a king in Israel, and so was *Ahab*, his son; both transgressors before the LORD, and yet their statutes were obeyed. How awful was it in Israel therefore to forget the LORD! 1 Kings 16:23-33.

REFLECTIONS

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

mercy, yea, mercy itself in all the fulness of it, shall we not love JESUS for his great salvation, and GOD the FATHER for giving it? And if all that is required of a poor sinner, that is so poor and insolvent that he hath nothing to bring, is, to do this justice, and love this JESUS, and to walk thus humbly with his GOD; can there be terms more gracious, more blessed, and condescending? LORD! give both to Reader and Writer this grace, that we may hear the LORD's voice thus crying to the city, and under divine wisdom, see thy name, and rejoice in thy salvation. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

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

MICAH 7:1-4

Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: *there is* no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit. (2) The good *man* is perished out of the earth: and *there is* none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. (3) That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince *asketh*, and the judge *asketh* for a reward; and the great *man*, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. (4) The best of them *is* as a brier: the most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen *and* thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.

Here is a sad complaint of the Prophet concerning the times in which he lived. Like another *Elijah*, he was inclined to think that faith was lost in the earth. 1 Kings 19:10. He compares his state to that of a glean gatherer of the vineyard. Isaiah 28:4. The several images he makes use of are very striking.

MICAH 7:5-6

Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. (6) For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies *are* the men of his own house.

These are strong expressions, and if taken spiritually, are very much to the purpose. What hath any man to trust in, but JESUS and his great salvation?

MICAH 7:7

Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

There is an uncommon degree of beauty as well as godliness in what the Prophet here saith. And it is truly blessed, when from the little dependence that we can find in men, we look unto the LORD. Oh! what a happy frame is that man in, who can thus from the heart address the LORD! And how blessed is that disappointment, trouble, sorrow, or whatever affliction it may be, that compels the heart to leave everything to the LORD!

MICAH 7:8-13

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD *shall be* a light unto me. (9) I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for

me: he will bring me forth to the light, *and* I shall behold his righteousness. (10) Then *she that is* mine enemy shall see *it*, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets. (11) *In* the day that thy walls are to be built, *in* that day shall the decree be far removed. (12) *In* that day *also* he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and *from* the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and *from* mountain to mountain. (13) Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.

Reader! it is truly blessed when a child of GOD can thus look at every foe and triumph in CHRIST. Times of darkness are times for faith to be in lively exercise. It is of no real consequence in what state of exercise a believer is placed in, if faith be in action. His safety is always one and the same. And dark seasons are equally favourable with bright seasons, in respect of his everlasting security. His comfort may vary; but his security cannot. And therefore dark seasons afford only a better opportunity for the triumphs of faith; because then it is the soul finds special comfort in JESUS, when all creature comforts cease to satisfy.

MICAH 7:14-17

Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily *in* the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old. (15) According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous *things*. (16) The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay *their* hand upon *their* mouth, their ears shall be deaf. (17) They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.

Here seems to be a call to the great shepherd of Israel to regard his fold, and that with peculiar manifestations of favor,

because they are dwelling in solitary places. Perhaps void of ordinances, and the enjoyment of their sabbaths. Reader! a child of GOD hath peculiar claims upon GOD, when outward circumstances are unfavorable. I admire the conduct of the Patriarch Jacob in a situation of this kind. And I admire yet more the grace of Jacob's GOD, which afforded an occasion for the exercise of such lively faith. If the Reader will consult the passage in the Patriarch's history, he will perhaps think with me, how blessed was Jacob in being brought to such a trial, and grace given him to make use of it. And how very gracious was the LORD, who both brought him into the exercise, and gave him suited strength and wisdom to carry him through it. See Genesis 32:7-12.

MICAH 7:18-20

Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. (19) He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (20) Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

Reader! do observe from those blessed expressions, how the mind of the Prophet is lifted up, in admiring and adoring the riches and fulness of Almighty grace: He takes his contemplation of the greatness, and depth of it, from the vast ocean of congregated waters. It is all free, full, rich, and sovereign! It is not only grace, and abounding grace, but the exceeding riches of his grace; so that *if the iniquity of Israel be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of Judah shall not be found.* Jeremiah 50:20. And what I chiefly admire in this rich scripture is, the source and fountain of all this

overwhelming mercy; namely, that the LORD may perform his truth to Jacob, and his mercy to Abraham; that is, his covenant of redemption, founded in the person, work, and offices, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in whom JEHOVAH had promised Abraham all his seed should be blessed. Genesis 12:3.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

THE PROPHET

NAHUM

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

*upon earth they flourished as the flower of the mountain, which shed its fragrancy, and is but little known or noticed of men. Reader let us enter upon this sacred Book, as we have all the other inspired writings, with prayer and supplication; that all the blessings intended from it to the Church may be in our enjoyment, and that it may prove an *engrafted word*, which in and through the LORD JESUS, *is able to save our souls!**

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

NAHUM 1:1

The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

Here seems a double title to *Nahum's* book. It is a burthen. And it is the book of a vision. Perhaps this double title might signify ruin, and an heavy burthen upon *Nineveh*, and a vision of peace and glory to *Israel*.

NAHUM 1:2-8

God *is* jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and *is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies. (3) The LORD *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet. (4) He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. (5) The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

(6) Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. (7) The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. (8) But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

The Prophet opens his sermon with the most striking text, such as the LORD himself opened his sermon with, when he preached before Moses. See Exodus 34:1-7. It were to weaken the words of this solemn and gracious passage, to offer any comment upon them. The LORD's sovereignty, and the LORD's grace are awfully set forth. I only beg the Reader to remark how beautifully blended the one is with the other. A child of GOD that reads this passage, can do as David did, *sing of mercy and of judgment*, and direct his holy song *unto the LORD*. Psalm 101:1.

NAHUM 1:9-14

What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. (10) For while *they be* folden together *as* thorns, and while they are drunken *as* drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry. (11) There is *one* come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor. (12) Thus saith the LORD; Though *they be* quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. (13) For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder. (14) And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, *that* no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile.

It is very evident that the Prophet's whole discourse is directed to warn the *Ninevites*, who thought of destroying Israel, that they should thereby only hasten their own destruction. And the event in the history of that people have so proved. Reader! turn to that sweet scripture promise upon

this and every other occasion, for it is a promise that never hath failed or can fail; and may be applied as opportunities need, for GOD'S people in all ages. Isaiah 55:15-17. In both spiritual concerns, and temporal, this holds good. But, Reader! do not forget to connect with it the cause, namely CHRIST. Connect also Psalm 72:17. the blessing is in Him, and 2 Corinthians 1:20. the promises. Sweet consideration to the believer!

NAHUM 1:15

Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

Here is the blessed verse which throws light upon the whole Chapter, and fully explains the whole. This shows that the Prophet was not speaking of the men of *Nineveh*, or the Babylon of his day; but the oppressors of JESUS'S Church of every day, and all the day, during a life of grace. Yea, the mystic *Babylon* of all ages, which joined with the powers of hell, have conspired to crush the cause of the LORD, and His Anointed. Psalm 2:1, 2. Revelation 17:5, 6. How blessedly was the Prophet commissioned in this verse to point to JESUS. And how blessedly also was the Prophet commissioned to comfort *Judah* with the assurance of his coming? Reader! those are sweet feasts of our Judah in the present hour, when the presence of JESUS is seen and enjoyed in them! Ordinances are truly blessed, when they lead the heart *to* CHRIST! LORD grant that they never may be used by any of thy people to keep *from* CHRIST. For this they always do, when forgetting the end, we rest in the means; and lean upon the ordinance, instead of wholly enquiring in the ordinance for the LORD JESUS! See the LORD'S solemn expostulation on this subject, by one of the Prophets. Zechariah 7:4-6.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 2

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

NAHUM 2:1-2

He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make *thy* loins strong, fortify *thy* power mightily. (2) For the LORD hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches.

Most commentators have agreed, that as the burden of *Nahum's* prophecy is concerning *Nineveh*, they confine the observations the Prophet hath made to the destruction of that great city. But, I confess, with me the subject appears to have a much higher and more spiritual meaning. And what is said in the last of those two verses concerning Jacob and Israel, confirm me in my opinion. For if the LORD hath turned away Jacob's excellency, and if the emptiers have emptied them out, surely then *Nineveh*, as well as Babylon, may be considered as mystical. And in this sense we may discover the Church, here brought under affliction by the enemies of her salvation, and the exercises of Israel rendered subservient to the promotion of the Redeemer's glory, and the final happiness of his redeemed. If we read this prophecy in this point of view, we shall find much of gospel in it; and the LORD here as in all other instances, correcting Israel in love and mercy.

NAHUM 2:3-13

The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men *are* in scarlet: the chariots *shall be* with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. (4) The

chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings. (5) He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defence shall be prepared. (6) The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved. (7) And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead *her* as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts. (8) But Nineveh *is* of old like a pool of water: yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, *shall they cry*; but none shall look back. (9) Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for *there is* none end of the store *and* glory out of all the pleasant furniture. (10) She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain *is* in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness. (11) Where *is* the dwelling of the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, *even* the old lion, walked, *and* the lion's whelp, and none made *them* afraid? (12) The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin. (13) Behold, I *am* against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.

After the observations I ventured to make on the preceding verses, I do not think it needful to dissect the several parts of the subject contained in this whole paragraph. If I mistake not, the LORD is describing, under a great variety of figures, the character of Israel's foes; their shields, their chariots, their swords, are commissioned in all they do by the LORD. But when they shall have executed, and finished their appointed service, like the rod which a kind but wise father takes to correct a favorite but disobedient child, he throws it away. So the LORD declares. *Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD.* This sums up all in one, the LORD's love to his people; and his displeasure against all their enemies!

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

NAHUM 3:1-5

Woe to the bloody city! it *is* all full of lies *and* robbery; the prey departeth not; (2) The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the pransing horses, and of the jumping chariots. (3) The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and *there is* a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcases; and *there is* none end of *their* corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: (4) Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. (5) Behold, I *am* against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.

The last verse in this passage serves to throw a light upon the whole; and proves that it is the cause of the Church which the LORD is contending for. And if the Reader attends to the whole prophecy of *Nahum* under this view, I humbly conceive he will find it a blessed portion of the word of GOD. I do not wish to be considered singular, but I venture to believe, that all we meet with in scripture concerning the nations of the earth, is introduced purely on account of Zion. The care of the Church of the LORD JESUS, is the one sole cause of all the LORD's government of the earth. And to the promotion of the glory of Zion, all the events of nations and empires minister. Hence all things, and all persons, whether for correction or for comfort, are directed and guided by Him, and to his own glory. See Isaiah 10:5-12. A striking passage this, to be referred to upon all occasions in subjects of this nature.

NAHUM 3:6-19

And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile,

and will set thee as a gazingstock. (7) And it shall come to pass, *that* all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee? (8) Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, *that had* the waters round about it, whose rampart *was* the sea, *and* her wall *was* from the sea? (9) Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength, and *it was* infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers. (10) Yet *was* she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. (11) Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy. (12) All thy strong holds *shall be like* fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater. (13) Behold, thy people in the midst of thee *are* women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars. (14) Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brickkiln. (15) There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts. (16) Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm spoileth, and flieth away. (17) Thy crowned *are* as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, *but* when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they *are*. (18) Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell *in the dust*: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth *them*. (19) *There is* no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?

I include the whole of this passage in one view for the sake of shortness, having already extended the Commentary very much beyond the original design. The whole of *Nahum's* prophecy, if taken *literally*, *and* with an eye to the history of *Nineveh*, and the Church, is interesting. But if read *spiritually*, as typifying in *Nineveh* the enemies of the Church, and the LORD's deliverance of his people, and the final destruction of

their foes, in the redemption by CHRIST, riseth to a degree of sublimity, beautiful, interesting, and glorious. Reader! may the LORD give to us both the sweet and powerful proofs of his divine teaching, that we may *know the things which are freely given to us of GOD!*

REFLECTIONS

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

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

THE PROPHET

HABAKKUK

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

The prophecy of *Habakkuk* is a most precious portion of scripture, and which hath received very ample testimony, both of its authenticity and inspiration. It is quoted more than once by the New Testament writers: Acts 13:41. compared

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

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

HABAKKUK 1:1-4

The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. (2) O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! *even* cry out unto thee *of* violence, and thou wilt not save! (3) Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause *me* to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence *are* before me: and there are *that* raise up strife and contention. (4) Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

We have the Prophet at his devotions, pleading with the LORD concerning the sorrows and exercises of the Church. He not only laments the iniquities of those that oppress the LORD's heritage, but the inroads made by sin among the heritage of the LORD. Reader! mark this I beseech you. Good men cry out when beholding the *wickedness of the ungodly*. *But they groan yet more deeply when feeling the corrupt workings of their own hearts. And it is a blessed frame for a child of God to be in. See the workings of Ezra's heart on this point. Ezra 9:5, 6.*

HABAKKUK 1:5

Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for *I* will work a work in your days, *which* ye will not believe, though it be told *you*.

I would desire to read this verse by itself; because I humbly conceive it is not connected with what follows. Though this verse, and the six that follow, are spoken by the LORD, yet the subjects differ. And I ground my opinion from the Apostle Paul having quoted this verse in his Sermon. Acts 13:15-41. and directly applied it to the subject of the gospel. I beg the Reader to turn to Paul's discourse and read it; which will at once convince him that what follows in Habakkuk's prophecy concerning the Chaldeans had nothing to do with this marvellous work, the LORD said he would do in the days to which he referred. It was indeed a marvellous work, that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles. And it was, and still is a marvelous work, that many reject the truth of God, and equally marvellous that any should receive it, and indeed without grace cannot. All is marvellous! But I beg the Reader, after he hath diligently read the sermon of Paul, if he thinks

with me, that this verse wholly refers to the times of the gospel; that he will join me in praising GOD for this sweet testimony to the truth, as it is in JESUS, and from such a scriptural record of our adorable LORD by the way, be for ever on the lookout for similar testimonies in the Prophets, who all with one voice preach wholly of JESUS.

HABAKKUK 1:6-11

For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, *that* bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces *that are* not theirs. (7) They *are* terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. (8) Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle *that* hasteth to eat. (9) They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up *as* the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. (10) And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it. (11) Then shall *his* mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, *imputing* this his power unto his god.

After the observation I ventured to make on the preceding verse, it will be expected from me, that I should say in what sense I consider what is here said of the *Chaldeans* coming up upon the land. To which I readily answer, that no doubt the LORD by the Prophet was here predicting the sad events which were to come upon the Church by the Babylonish captivity. But, when we consider yet further, that those events, calamitous as they were in themselves, were all ministering to the one great object, to which the whole of the law, and the Prophets ministered, even to the person, work, and glory of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; it is blessed to perceive how GOD the HOLY GHOST, by the ministry of his Servants, is

holding forth comforts to the Church, while correcting the people for their sins. See Zephaniah 3:20.

HABAKKUK 1:12-17

Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. (13) *Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, *and* holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth *the man that is* more righteous than he? (14) And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, *that have* no ruler over them? (15) They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; therefore they rejoice and are glad. (16) Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion *is* fat, and their meat plenteous. (17) Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

This is a most blessed prayer, and if I mistake not, it takes into its bosom all the great leading points of redemption. The Prophet by this figure of speech, of seemingly as king, the LORD concerning the glorious and eternal excellency of his nature and character is most blessedly confirming it. He doth indeed thereby more strongly assert it, and grounds the subject of his prayer upon it. It is as if he had said, *Thou art, O LORD, O JEHOVAH ALOHIM! GOD in covenant, and that from everlasting!* Redemption is not a work of yesterday. CHRIST the Holy One, hath been set up from everlasting; yea, *the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world!* Psalm 89:19. Revelation 13:8. And what endears it yet more, the Prophet calls him *his* Holy One. And so may, and so ought every true believer in CHRIST to do; for so JEHOVAH himself commanded. Jeremiah 23:6. Hence by the way, if a child of GOD be demanded in this sinful and adulterous generation, wherefore

do you call CHRIST JEHOVAH; and wherefore do you call him your HOLY ONE, your righteousness? The answer is direct: So JEHOVAH the FATHER hath enjoined. *This is the name whereby he shall be called.* JEHOVAH. And not only so—but OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. And yet more than all this. He who directed the Church so to call CHRIST, and so to esteem him, hath made Him what he is to all his redeemed; for so the Apostle Paul was commissioned to tell the Church: *who of God* (saith the Apostle) *is made unto us.* Mark that! while you and I behold CHRIST as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. JESUS is *made* all these to his people by GOD the FATHER himself! Hallelu-JAH! 1 Corinthians 1:30. Well then, the Prophet having looked up to a GOD in covenant, now pleads in this sweet prayer for the salvation of his people. Surely we shall not die. Though *Babylon* correct, yet *Babylon* shall not finally prevail. The enemies of the Church must perish, but the Church shall outlive all. Reader! look at this prayer, as it is evidently offered up in the faith of the rich redemption by CHRIST; and it is all over gospel, from beginning to end. All that the Prophet pleads is founded in the LORD'S free covenant, and consequently by faith he is pleading for all blessings, in the name of the LORD JESUS!

REFLECTIONS

READER! over and above the numberless precious things this Chapter holds forth to us in divine truths, we are here blessed by GOD the HOLY GHOST, with a sweet sample of an Old Testament Saint at his devotions; and the LORD'S gracious answer to his servant. When a child of GOD cries out, as *Habakkuk* here did, in contemplating the iniquity of the times,

and feeling his own corruption also, see how gracious the LORD is? The Prophet no sooner calls to the LORD, but the LORD hears and makes answer. I cry out, because of violence, saith the Prophet; and wilt thou not hear? Yea, saith a gracious GOD, I will not only hear, but I will do such a work of grace in the gift of my dear son, as shall do away all the ruins of the fall. And yet, though I will work thus marvelously, there are thousands that will not believe. Reader! think what the LORD hath done in our day and generation, now redemption work is finished, and CHRIST returned to glory; and yet, may it not be asked in the Prophet's words, *who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* Oh! for grace, to cry out with the Prophet, *art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my GOD, mine Holy One?* LORD grant it never may be said, either to him that now writes, or him that reads, *behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you!*

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

HABAKKUK 2:1

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd.

This is a beautiful and an interesting account of a child of GOD, after having given in his petition at the court of heaven waiting for an answer. Such should be the conduct of all the praying seed of Jacob.

HABAKKUK 2:2

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make *it* plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

Here the LORD is answering his servant, and a gracious answer it is. Reader! it is very blessed to wait upon the LORD in prayer; and when we are at anytime admitted into the retirings of the LORD, never to come away until he hath given us an answer of peace.

HABAKKUK 2:3-13

For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (4) Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. (5) Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, *he is* a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and *is* as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: (6) Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth *that which is* not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! (7) Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them? (8) Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and *for* the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. (9) Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! (10) Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned *against* thy soul. (11) For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. (12) Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth

a city by iniquity! (13) Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?

What vision is this? The whole prophecy of *Isaiah* is called a vision. Isaiah 1:1. And that we know to have been concerning the LORD JESUS and his gospel. And is not this the same? Was not JESUS sent forth in what is called the fulness of time? Galatians 4:4. I humbly conceive that this is the meaning of the passage, and that it points to CHRIST. And under this view the several expressions are easily to be understood.

HABAKKUK 2:14

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

I would read this verse by itself, in order to enjoy the full meaning of it. And as the Prophet *Isaiah* hath a similar one, in the close of one of the most plain and palpable prophecies of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, there can be no hesitation to make application of this to the same. And I beg the Reader to determine for himself, whether under such testimonies as *Habakkuk's* prophecy furnisheth in allusion to the LORD JESUS, we can hesitate a moment to interpret the whole sum and *substance of it to the person, work, and righteousness of the* LORD JESUS CHRIST. *Isaiah 11:9.*

HABAKKUK 2:15-19

Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to *him*, and maketh *him* drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! (16) Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing *shall be* on thy glory. (17) For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, *which* made them afraid,

because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. (18) What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? (19) Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it *is* laid over with gold and silver, and *there is* no breath at all in the midst of it.

I should conceive, that in allusion to gospel salvation, which the enemies of the cross will endeavour to counteract, the expressions here mean the awful character of those who aim to intoxicate the minds of men, in order to keep them from that knowledge of CHRIST, and the glories of his person, which is promised to fill the earth. We know that the HOLY GHOST, in reference to mystical Babylon, calls her delusions by the name of the wine of wrath, and of fornication. Revelation 14:8. And in explaining this state by the drunkenness of Noah, whom Ham, his son, intoxicated, it is called making a man drunk to look on his nakedness; that is, in respect of divine things, for a drunken man knoweth not what he consents to. But shame, as this scripture declares, will be instead of glory; and well it may, when men subscribe to things under the state of a deluded mind!

HABAKKUK 2:20

But the LORD *is* in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

There is somewhat very striking in this scripture. Silent adoration is a solemn service. The LORD himself gave direction concerning those humblings, and silent waitings of soul. Isaiah 41:1. And it must be confessed that there is somewhat

very awful and solemn in such a frame of mind before the LORD, Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2.

REFLECTIONS

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

become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

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

HABAKKUK 3:1

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.

Various have been the opinion of the learned concerning the word Shigionoth; The word itself is no doubt the plural of Shignion, which the Septuagint have rendered Song. But some derive it from the Arabic Schaga, to be in trouble. Be this however as it may, one thing is certain, and that is the most important for us to know, the prayer of the Prophet is in the full view of the glorious redemption by CHRIST, and therefore it is a prayer of faith.

HABAKKUK 3:2

O LORD, I have heard thy speech, *and* was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

The Prophet we left at his watch tower, in the opening of the foregoing chapter, to receive the LORD's answers, to his humble supplication, and here we find him again thankfully acknowledging the faithfulness of JEHOVAH, in hearing and answering his petitions. But, Reader! do observe how all he

saith hath an eye to mercy, and to GOD'S own work. And what were both in the Old Testament Church, and Old Testament language, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Is not JESUS, as CHRIST, the CHRIST of GOD; the work of GOD in redemption? John 9:4. And is not JESUS *the mercy promised*; yea, the first born in the womb of mercy? Luke 1:72.

HABAKKUK 3:3

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

Teman was a city in the land of *Edom*: Jeremiah 49:7. and *Mount Paran* near to *Mount Sinai*, for when the Israelites left *Sinai*, we are told that they came into the desert of *Paran*. Numbers 10:12. Indeed, from the account of *Moses*, it should seem to be one and the same, or so near each other as not to be separated at any great distance; for he describes the LORD's coming from it, as *Habakkuk* hath done in this chapter; from whence it is probable the Prophet borrowed the account. See Deuteronomy 33:2. The opening of this verse is a most blessed and glorious description of that visible display the LORD made at *Mount Sinai*, when he came down in a cloud. See Exodus 19:20. Here it was he gave the law. But who was this glorious person? I speak with reverence, as one treading on holy ground, when I say I humbly conceive not the person of GOD the FATHER: neither of GOD the SON, as GOD only; for we are told in scripture, that *no man hath seen GOD at any time*. But certain it is, that upon this, as well as many other occasions, there was a visible manifestation of divine glory. I therefore humbly conceive, that it was the display of the GOD-MAN in our nature; for the same scripture tells us, that *the*

only begotten Son, who lay in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him. John 1:18. And Reader! who so proper to give the law, as He who with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST made the law; and as GOD-MAN-Mediator in after ages fulfilled it? Who could give the Sermon on the Mount as He who gave the Law on the Mount, and was, and is the sum and substance of the whole? Matthew 5:1, &c. I detain the Reader one moment longer, just to make a remark on the word *Selah*, in the midst of this verse, which is found *three times* in this Chapter, and *seventy times* in the Psalms. The opinions of learned and godly men are so divided concerning its real meaning, that it is extremely difficult to determine about it. *Some* have concluded that it is a note of admiration, as if to say, *take notice*; and *others* have translated it, *verily; for ever*. Amen. But I must not omit to mention one writer of the name of *Paschi*, who wrote an express treatise upon the word, to show that it is a name of our GOD. I have just noticed it in this cursory manner, but shall not enlarge. If the latter opinion be well founded, it makes it more interesting than any. We have to lament that the certainty is not discoverable.

HABAKKUK 3:4-12

And *his* brightness was as the light; he had horns *coming* out of his hand: and there *was* the hiding of his power. (5) Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. (6) He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways *are* everlasting. (7) I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: *and* the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. (8) Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? *was* thine anger against the rivers? *was* thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses *and* thy chariots of salvation? (9) Thy bow was made quite naked, *according* to the oaths of the

tribes, *even thy* word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. (10) The mountains saw thee, *and* they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, *and* lifted up his hands on high. (11) The sun *and* moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, *and* at the shining of thy glittering spear. (12) Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

It is impossible by any comment, even if written with the pen of an angel, to add any beauty to this most sublime passage. I retire from it therefore, and only beg the Reader, as he reads it, to connect with it what is uniformly said of JESUS. Surely the whole scriptures, with one concurring voice, speak of Him as the only visible JEHOVAH. And who that remembers CHRIST'S transfiguration on the Mount, and compares it with what is said of glory here, can doubt but that it was a renewal of the same scene as at Sinai. Who that calls to mind Peter's observation at that vision, can question whether the same spirit did not rest upon him and his companions, James and John, as filled the mind of Moses? Compare Exodus 24:10 to the end, with Matthew 17:2.-5. and 2 Peter 1:19.

HABAKKUK 3:13

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, *even* for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

This blessed verse serves as a key to open to us the whole passage, and according to my apprehension, defines at once the glorious visible JEHOVAH, spoken of through the whole, to mean CHRIST. The words may be rendered, thou *goest forth*; *Micah* therefore had authority to say, whose *goings forth* were from everlasting; and expressly declared it to be Him, who in after ages should come forth from Bethlehem. Micah 5:2.

Matthew 2:6. And indeed of Him, and Him only, could the expression be warrantable, and that in his mediatorial character as the GOD-MAN, the Glory-man, CHRIST JESUS. For considered only as GOD, in the immensity and ubiquity of his essence and nature, there can be neither *goings forth*, nor *retirings*. I beg yet further to remark on this blessed passage, that some read this passage, thou *wentest forth*, or thou *goest forth* to save thy people, *thine anointed ones*. I apprehend that the *Alexandrian* copy of the Septuagint version so translates it. Hence, if so, the point is still yet clearer; for then it will be, JEHOVAH JESUS goings forth was for the salvation of his anointed ones. So called from being one with CHRIST, and anointed with Him, and in Him. Ephesians 4:7. I beg the Reader to observe, that I do not presume to determine the matter. But I beg to say, that according to my view, it seems to correspond on this grand point to the tenor of the whole Bible. I cannot think it necessary to detain the Reader with any further observations of what salvation the Prophet is speaking. Surely he must see that it can be no other than the eternal salvation of the Church from death and hell: which the deliverance from *Egypt*, and afterwards Joshua's carrying the Church into *Canaan*, were but types and shadows.

HABAKKUK 3:14-15

Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing *was* as to devour the poor secretly. (15) Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, *through* the heap of great waters.

These verses form a part in the sublime description of what went before the preceding verse, on which I do not think it needful, after what hath been said, to detain the Reader.

HABAKKUK 3:16-19

When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops. (17) Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd in the stalls: (18) Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (19) The LORD God *is* my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

If we read these verses as we ought to read them, implying the spiritual effect wrought upon the mind of the Prophet, and in like manner what may be supposed in the same way to influence every child of GOD; they describe to us the wonderful and blessed consequences wrought in the heart by the HOLY GHOST, in the contemplation of JESUS and his great salvation. Convinced by GOD the SPIRIT of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, there will be trembling under a sense, of iniquity, and like another Prophet, our comeliness will be turned into corruption. Daniel 10:8. While from the same sovereign and Almighty teaching, the soul of the poor self-condemned, and self-loathing sinner, will rejoice in the LORD, and joy in the GOD of his salvation! I beg the Reader, while admiring the beautiful expressions of the fig-tree blossoms, and the fields yielding meat; not to overlook the infinitely more important things veiled under those figures; for the whole is but figure. Fig-trees do not blossom; neither is the grass of the field food for man. But these expressions are all spiritual, and highly descriptive of the rich provision in CHRIST; when ordinances, which are like the pleasant plants and fruits of the earth, and all things else fail. These words of

Habakkuk, *are the strong faith of the man living wholly upon CHRIST, when the fig-tree of ordinances, when the fruit of the vine, in all the means of grace, when there is even a famine of hearing the word of the LORD; yea, believers, which are the flock of the fold, are cut off; so that like Elijah, he considers himself alone, and not one of the herd remaining in the stall. Ezekiel 34:31. Micah 7:14. The close of Habakkuk's prophecy is, as might be expected in a man of strong faith like him. And every true believer in CHRIST, who can from the heart adopt the same language of faith, to rejoice in the LORD JESUS himself, the fountain of joy, when the streams of all creature comforts fail, may, and ought to say with Habakkuk, the LORD GOD is my strength, he will make me to walk upon mine high places. For my poor opinion on the address of this prayer of Habakkuk, I refer the Reader to what I have offered on the title of the fourth Psalm; which is to the same purport.*

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou Almighty LORD JESUS! do I not behold thee in this precious scripture, set forth as the great Saviour and Redeemer of thy Church and people? Truly, LORD, thy goings forth have been, in this divine character, from everlasting. Before the earth was formed; yea, before thou hadst gone forth in any acts of creation, thou didst stand up at the call of thy FATHER, thy Church's glorious head and husband, from all eternity. And until the fulness of time appointed in the counsel of peace arrived, what were all the manifestations in the Old Testament Church, but tokens how ardently thou didst long openly to come and tabernacle in our nature, for the redemption of thy people. Didst thou reveal thyself to

Abraham, to *Isaac*, to *Jacob*; didst thou call *Moses* at the bush, and go before thy Church, when bringing the Church out of *Egypt*; didst thou give the *law at Sinai*, and make the inhabitants of *Palestina* and *Midian* to tremble; what, dearest JESUS, what were all these, and numberless other revelations of thyself, but to testify how assuredly thou wert come forth for the salvation of thy people. And what is it now, O LORD, now thou hast finished redemption work, and art returned to glory, but every day, and all the day, renewed manifestations of the same, that JESUS will bring home his ransomed ones finally, fully, and completely; that where he is, there they shall be also. Hail then, thou glorious, gracious, great I AM; the visible JEHOVAH of thy Church and people! Oh! grant, that like thy servant the Prophet, whether fig-trees blossom or withhold their fruit; whether the olives fail, or fields yield their meat; JESUS lives and loves, and will live and love forever. *He is a rock, his work his perfect*: and He is the rock of my salvation. Farewell *Habakkuk!* thy GOD is my GOD; and He is the horn of his people. Blessed be the LORD for this sweet ministry of thine; and blessed be thy labours. Above all blessed, blessed for ever be the GOD of all mercies in JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

THE PROPHET

Zephaniah.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

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

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

This Chapter contains God's judgments for divers sins.

ZEPHANIAH 1:1

The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

This verse is only an introduction to the body of the discourse contained in the prophecy. Some have thought that *Zephaniah*, in its extent of meaning, is alike the name given to Joseph, *Zaph-nathpaaneah*; a revealer of secrets. Gen. 41:45.

ZEPHANIAH 1:2-6

I will utterly consume all *things* from off the land, saith the LORD. (3) I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. (4) I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, *and* the name of the Chemarims with the priests; (5) And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship *and* that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham; (6) And them that are turned back from the LORD; and *those* that have not sought the LORD, nor inquired for him.

The captivity of *Babylon*, was to reach both to men and beast — A type of sin in the original fall of man, which brought a curse upon the ground, and for which the whole creation groaned, and still groans. Genesis 3:17. Romans 8:22.

ZEPHANIAH 1:7-13

Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD *is* at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. (8) And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel. (9) In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the

threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. (10) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, *that there shall be* the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. (11) Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off. (12) And it shall come to pass at that time, *that* I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. (13) Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.

I do not presume to determine, but I humbly conceive that there is an allusion in this sacrifice of the Lord, to the One glorious Sacrifice, by the Lord Jesus Christ. And as this stone the Lord hath laid in Zion, though a rock to Israel, yet a stone of stumbling, and of offence to them that are not Israel; so all that follows in these verses corresponds to the same great truth. That very gospel, which is to some a *savor of life unto life* is to others a *savor of death unto death*. The year of the Lord's redeemed, is also the day of his vengeance. And the discovery of both is with Him, who undertakes *to search Jerusalem with candles*. Reader! think of these solemn things! See those scriptures: Isaiah 28:16. 1 Peter 2:6, 7, 8. 2 Cor. 2:15, 16. Isaiah 163:4.

ZEPHANIAH 1:14-18

The great day of the LORD *is* near, *it is* near, and hasteth greatly, *even* the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. (15) That day *is* a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, (16) A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. (17) And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust,

and their flesh as the dung. (18) Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

All these verses are to one and the same purport, namely, to intimate God's judgments, and the total inability for any to resist them. Reader! what a blessed privilege is it for you, and for me, to read those solemn scriptures through the medium of the gospel. In this blessed gospel of the ever blessed God it is alone we discover how the aboundings of sin make way for the aboundings of grace. Sin was felt by all men in all ages; but the remedy to sin only discovered in the person, work, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:19, 20, 21.

REFLECTIONS

THINK Reader! from all that you and I have seen and gone through, in reading of the sins and sorrows of poor fallen nature, what an awful state was that nature in by the fall, and what a blessed deliverance from the guilt, dominion, and endless punishment of it, by the gracious undertaking and accomplishment of salvation, by the Lord Jesus Christ! Oh! thou Great, thou Glorious, and Almighty Benefactor of thy people. It was thine, O Lord, to bring us out from a ruin which nothing could have delivered from but thou. It is thine now, O Lord, to keep us from. A ruin that would still cast us down, did not thy grace preserve us. And it is thine, O Lord, for ever to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before thy throne, in thy kingdom. Precious Lord Jesus! do thou who hast been our preserver, and the preserver of thy Church in all ages, keep us to the end, and bring us to thine eternal glory. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

ZEPHANIAH 2:1-3

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; (2) Before the decree bring forth, *before* the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you. (3) Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

The Prophet takes occasion, from the awful and impending judgments denounced in the foregoing Chapter, to press upon the people the vast importance of turning to the Lord with full purpose of heart. The expressions are very earnest and interesting. There is one thing to be noticed in the character of the people, which we should regard. They are called, *O nation not desired*; that is, say some, not desirable, not lovely. And certainly if considered in themselves, and in their covenant relation, there could be nothing lovely or desirable in them. In Jesus' view his Church was always desirable; and hence, when it is given to him by the Father, it is so said. Psalm 21:2. Some however read the words different, as if they were intended to say, that the nation of God's people were *not desired by other nations*. And in this sense it is also very true. For as they were a people not reckoned among the nations, so were they hated of all men for Christ's sake. Numbers 23:9. But there is yet another construction put by

some, who apply the words, *O nation who hath no desire towards the Lord*. In either sense, or in all, the force of the Prophet's exhortation is striking; that before the judgment now at the very door begins, the Lord's grace may be sought, and his mercy found. But what I chiefly wish to press upon the Reader's mind is, what is said in the last of those verses, of *seeking the Lord, and seeking righteousness*. By which I understand, Christ is most plainly set forth. Let the Reader observe for himself, and then determine. The Prophet directs all *the meek of the earth* to seek the Lord, and to seek righteousness and meekness. Whereas, if by meekness is meant a meekness they have already, to what purport seek it? Whereas, the cry of the Prophet is to *Israel*, because of God's judgments coming upon the whole earth for sin; and *Israel*, as sinful as their neighbors, they are admonished to seek in humbleness of soul the Lord Jesus Christ; that meek one, that righteous one of his people. And observe the foundation of this hope; *it may be*, saith the Prophet, that ye shall be hid in the day of wrath. Sweet encouragement! The Lord's *may be's* are better than man's *shall be's*; founded as they are in God's own gracious and eternal purpose; and secured in the blood and righteous ness of Christ!

ZEPHANIAH 2:4-7

For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. (5) Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD *is* against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. (6) And the sea coast shall be dwellings *and* cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks. (7) And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity.

Here we have the *Philistines*, and the other ancient foes to *Israel*, accounted with; and an awful account it is. But what I beg the Reader in this visitation to remark is, that their destruction is for their behavior to the Lord's people, and for the Lord's people possessing their cities; *the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah*.

ZEPHANIAH 2:8-15

I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified *themselves* against their border. (9) Therefore *as I* live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, *even* the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. (10) This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified *themselves* against the people of the LORD of hosts. (11) The LORD *will be* terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and *men* shall worship him, every one from his place, *even* all the isles of the heathen. (12) Ye Ethiopians also, ye *shall be* slain by my sword. (13) And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, *and* dry like a wilderness. (14) And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; *their* voice shall sing in the windows; desolation *shall be* in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work. (15) This *is* the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I *am*, and *there is* none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, *and* wag his hand.

I would beg to make the same observation as before, only with this addition, that here the Lord calls Israel his people, and takes offence chiefly on their account at the nations. The Lord repeats it often, yea, twice in one verse, *my people*; as if he took delight in the, relationship. Reader! it is the principal feature, according to my view, in this Chapter; and therefore I

pray you not to overlook it. And observe moreover, that though the Prophet opened his commission in judgment, as in the second verse of the prophecy, declaring that the Lord would consume all things from off the land; yet how soon is mercy declared to Israel, and how often repeated in this Chapter! The Lord is about to make Moab, and the nations, as Sodom and Gomorrah, yet Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation. And where shall we look for the cause, or to whom shall we refer for the mercy, but to that Lord, that Holy One, that Meek One, whom Israel is commanded to seek? Isaiah 45:17.

Reflections

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

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

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

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

ZEPHANIAH 3:1-5

Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! (2) She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. (3) Her princes within her *are* roaring lions; her judges *are* evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. (4) Her prophets *are* light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. (5) The just LORD *is* in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

I venture to believe, that the mind of the Prophet was led out to speak in those verses concerning Jerusalem, in the day of Christ, and the age that followed; and perhaps the Reader will not be of a different opinion, if he attends to one or two particulars here mentioned. The Prophet describes a woe to Jerusalem. And he saith, her princes, and judges, and prophets, and priests, are the cause. Now this could not be in *Babylon*, for *Jerusalem* then was trodden down of the Gentiles, and had neither temple nor priest. Besides, he adds,

the just Lord is in the midst thereof. And so the Lord was at all times indeed but eminently might it be said, if we consider the time referred to, when Christ came to his own, and *his own received him not.* But if we suppose *Zephaniah* in those verses, spoke of the day in which he lived, then would it have been more of an history than a prophecy; for he ministered in the Church much about the time of *Jeremiah*, as hath been before observed. And the woe pronounced by the Prophet, corresponds to our Lord's own declaration concerning *Jerusalem*, as a city given up to destruction. Luke 13:34, 35. And what an exact description in the character of her judges, priests, and prophets, to the elders and scribes in the day of our Lord? Luke 11:42-51. And above all, the high crime here mentioned proves it. *She drew not near to her God.* Look into the gospel, and behold the continued contempt the leading men of the nation manifested to the Lord Jesus!

ZEPHANIAH 3:1-5

Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! (2) She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. (3) Her princes within her *are* roaring lions; her judges *are* evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. (4) Her prophets *are* light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. (5) The just LORD *is* in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

As a further confirmation that this part of *Zephaniah's* prophecy referred to the days of Christ, the cutting off of the nations comes in to the support of it; for it is well known, that the ancient enemies of Israel were subdued, and a profound peace through the earth was established, when He, the Prince of Peace, came. And though in deed *Judea* was living under tribute to the Roman power, having been thus humbled for

her sins, yet this only made way for the more eminent manifestation of Israel's king and Savior. How beautiful and gracious doth the Lord speak in this passage of his word, concerning his people. *I said, surely thou wilt hear me, thou wilt receive instruction.* That is, everything around my people becomes a motive for them to seek unto me, as well as my manifestation to them!

ZEPHANIAH 3:8-10

Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination *is* to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, *even* all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. (9) For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. (10) From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, *even* the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

If I mistake not, here is a corresponding prophecy to that of our Lord's, concerning *Jerusalem*; and which we know took place in the appointed season, when the city was given up to the destruction of the *Roman* army, agreeable to our Lord's account. Matt. 24:21. And when we consider how the Lord, by the pure language of his gospel, then beginning to spread among all nations, and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, caused the work of his grace to prosper, even from beyond the rivers of *Ethiopia*; his people being brought to him from all the varieties of the earth, as the first fruits of a glorious harvest of souls, I think the subject of the Prophet's prediction may well be supposed to have respect to those blessed times.

ZEPHANIAH 3:11-13

In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain. (12) I will also

leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. (13) The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make *them* afraid.

Had we any doubt concerning the period to which *Zephaniah's* prophecy referred, the opening of this paragraph would tend to explain. *In that day*, is the general phrase of all the Prophets, when meaning gospel day. And the character given of the gracious impressions wrought upon the minds of true believers, wholly corresponds to the general feature of the gospel. The awakened, convinced, and truly converted sinner, takes shame to himself while giving glory to the Lord. The Church of such is made up of afflicted, and the poor in spirit; and the remnant of grace adorns the doctrine of God their Savior in all things. And then they are spiritually fed, and sustained, and nourished with the body and blood of Christ. Jesus himself is both their food and shepherd. They lie down in safety under the assured blessing of pardon, mercy, and peace in Him and his righteousness See Ezek. 16:63. Matt. 5:3. Ephes. 4:22, &c. John 6:51-58.

ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. (15) The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, *even* the LORD, *is* in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. (16) In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: *and to Zion*, Let not thine hands be slack. (17) 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. (18) I will gather *them that are* sorrowful for the solemn assembly, *who* are of thee, *to whom* the reproach of it *was* a burden. (19) Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. (20) At that time will I bring

you *again*, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.

Here comes the hymn of praise, suited for the day of redemption, and such only as redeemed souls can sing. It is a part of the same song as is sung in glory, and equally proper to be sung by faith here below, as the Church in glory sings above. And this comes in most blessedly and proper, after what the Prophet had said before. The Prophet *Zechariah* had it in commission, to command the Church in his days to sing it. And what I beg the Reader particularly to observe, in confirmation of all that I have been saying in this Chapter, that this prophecy refers to the times of the gospel, is that *Zechariah*, when calling upon the Church to begin this song, assigns this very cause, because Zion's King is come to his Church, See Zech. 9: 9. And as a further confirmation, the Evangelist declares Christ's entry into Jerusalem to have been the fulfillment of this prophecy. Matt. 21:4, 5. Reader! do not overlook this! And, Reader! how precious are the several parts of this hymn of praise; *thou shalt not see evil any more*. No! a redeemed soul is a secured soul, a safe soul, an happy soul! Even his afflictions are as angels and messengers of sanctification and wisdom, all tending to his good. Romans 8:28. And Reader! observe further *how* blessedly in this part of the Prophet's Sermon, the presence and glory of the Lord Jesus is spoken of, *in the midst, of his people*, as a sun in the center of the heavens; yea, Christ, as the sun of righteousness in the heart. What a thought! And in this *he will rest*; or as the margin of our old Bibles hath it, he will be *silent* in his love; no upbraidings for all that is past, but resting in one constant everlasting act of divine love and divine delight. Isaiah 62:5. Neither is the next clause in the verse less expressive; *he will joy over thee with singing*. Have you never seen in a summer's day that sweet bird of the air,

the sky-lark as she is called, mounting over her little brood, and rising into the air to a great height, still singing as she ascends, while looking down on her darlings in their nest below, until at length descending again with vast rapidity, she drops upon them, and rejoices over them in all the expressions of delight? So methinks Jesus looks on all, and every individual of, his redeemed below; and as his soul is said to have *grieved for the miseries of his people*, so having planted them in their own land, he is said to *rejoice over them to do them good, with his whole heart, and with his whole soul*. Compare Judges 10:16 with Jeremiah 32:41. The close of the Prophecy is full of the most blessed promises to the same purport, of recovering every poor, halting, timid, fearful believer, and comforting every sorrowful one. And the whole is closed in with a solemn confirmation, for JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, put their One glorious covenant name to the promises of God in Christ, with a thus *saith the Lord!* To which all the faithful say, Amen.

Reflections

BLESSED Lord! how delightful is it to trace the footsteps of thy grace by the ministry of thy servants, in teaching and leading thy Church in all ages! How truly condescending was it, O Lord, to comfort the Church before their captivity, in the prospect of thy coming! And how truly gracious to open to their view such sweet features of thy person, character, and offices, as might direct their minds to the knowledge of thee in that day, when thou wouldest come to bind up the breaches of thy people, and to heal their wounds. Hail, thou holy Lord! Thou hast indeed fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, this prophecy of thy servant, in thy coming. Thou hast taken away the judgments of thy people, and cast out the enemy. Thou hast prevented the sight of evil any more, by doing

away sin, with all its dreadful consequences, by the sacrifice of thyself! Do thou then, O blessed Jesus, manifest the truth of this precious scripture, by thine indwelling residence in the midst of thy Church and people. Gather every poor follower of thine to thyself. Save her that halteth, and get praise and fame to thy glorious name, in every land where thy redeemed have been put to shame. Yea! blessed. Lord, prove by these sovereign acts of grace, that thou takest part in all that concerns thy Church, and that thou art, and ever will be Jesus, for thou wilt save thy people from their sins. And let thy people, as this scripture hath promised, be so completely and fully gathered to thee, that their name, in and from thine, may be a praise among all people of the earth, when thou hast turned back their captivity before their eyes, and thou hast put thy great name to the truth of it, as the Lord God ! Adieu *Zephaniah!* thou art indeed *Zephaniah*, or *Zeph-neth-paaneah!* for thou art a revealer of secrets, and hast faithfully revealed to the Church the wonders of redemption by Jesus. The Lord be adored for thy ministry, and the ministry of all his servants, and their faithfulness in Jesus! Amen.

THE PROPHET

Haggai

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

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

Chapter 1

Contents

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

HAGGAI 1:1-2

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, (2) Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.

The text *Haggai* would have chosen to have preached this Sermon' from, had he been blessed with it, would have been those sweet words of the Lord Jesus: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Matthew 6:33. He was stirred up to call the people to the consideration of their ways, and the deplorable state in which the Lord's house laid waste. That awful delay which for the most part forms the character of most men, in providing for their grand concerns, operated with the people of God, after their return from *Babylon*, in respect to the Lord's house. They found *Solomon's* temple in ruins; but none thought of rebuilding it. *Haggai* is informed of this by the word of the Lord; and it should seem that the prophet's mind was greatly excited thereby. What a sad state of putting off it is in soul concerns!

HAGGAI 1:3-11

Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, (4) *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house *lie* waste? (5) Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. (6) Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye

eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes. (7) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. (8) Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. (9) Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. (10) Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit. (11) And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

Haggai is instructed to rouse the attention of the people to the solemn consideration, how truly awful it was, that the people should be so much alive to build ceiled houses for themselves, while the Lord's house lay waste. And the Lord declares by his servant *Haggai*, that he had been punishing them for this in withholding the general influences of heaven; so that nothing did the earth bring forth to them that was profitable, neither did they feel delight in the enjoyment. Reader! It will be no unprofitable improvement, from what is said in this scripture, if you, and I, at any time find vexations, where we had expected comfort; and disappointment in our best schemes, to enquire into the cause. The Lord sometimes damps our enjoyments, and tingeth them with sorrow, to bring our hearts home to the recollection of some neglect, some inattention or misimprovement of the blessings given us, that we may be brought to a sense of our undeservings, and the Lord's glory.

HAGGAI 1:12-15

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. (13) Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD. (14) And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, (15) In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

This *Zerubbabel* is a remarkable name. It means a *stranger*: from Zer and Babel, confusion; alluding to the Old Tower in the plains of *Shinar*. But his father's name is yet more so, *Shealtiel*; a compound word from *Shealtu*, I have asked, and *El*, God. Joshua is well known as being the same name in Hebrew, as Jesus in Greek, and both meaning a Saviour. There is somewhat very striking in what is here said, of the Lord's exciting the minds of those men, and all the people to the work. Reader! Recollect that scripture, Philippians 2:13, And learn from hence, an additional testimony of the truth of sovereign grace. Oh! how certain it is, that *all the good that is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it himself!*

REFLECTIONS

Who can call to remembrance the desolated state of the Church, in the ruins at the return of the people from the *Babylonish* captivity, but must feel concern at the sad and deplorable visitation! And who that beholds the backwardness of the people to remove the ruins, and to erect a place of worship to the Lord, but must be astonished at a conduct so

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

Chapter 2

Contents

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

HAGGAI 2:1-2

In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, (2) Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

The Prophet hath been particular in marking down the dates of the word of the Lord coming to him; which may serve to teach God's people in all ages of the Church, the profitableness of their making memorandums of all their

Bethel visits also. *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua* were both types of the Lord Jesus, and therefore are signally honored in those commissions of the Prophet.

HAGGAI 2:3

Who *is* left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? *is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

It is worthy remark that the period from the Church being gathered out of Egypt, to the time of building the first Temple by *Solomon*, was about four hundred and eighty years. And from the children of Israel being delivered from *Babylon*, to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, was about five hundred years. We are told, that on building the second temple, the ancient men wept, and the younger shouted for joy. Ezra 3:11-13.

HAGGAI 2:4-5

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I *am* with you, saith the LORD of hosts: (5) *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

I beg the Reader particularly to remark with me, those sweet expressions of the Lord, *I am with you*. And again, according to the *word* that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt. And again, for *my spirit* remaineth among you. I would humbly ask, and but ask, not presume to decide upon a subject so infinitely sublime and mysterious, are there not all the persons of the Godhead here described, in their office-character, in redemption? Is not the presence of God the Father with the Church? Is it not the *Uncreated Word*, with

whom the covenant of redemption is, and who is indeed the covenant itself, and the whole sum and substance of it? And hath not God the Holy Ghost constantly been with the Church from the beginning? Reader! Do not forget that those blessed privileges of the Church of Christ have never ceased, and never will. Matthew 28:20.

HAGGAI 2:6-9

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it *is* a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry *land*; (7) And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. (8) The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts. (9) The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

The little while is spoken in reference to the Lord's calculation of time, and not of ours. A thousand years in his sight are but as one day. It was now somewhat about five hundred years before Christ would openly tabernacle in substance of our flesh; and yet the Lord calls it but a little while! Think, Reader! of the eternity of his nature and essence, by those distinctions of character! And observe What is to introduce this glorious *Shiloh*; the Lord will shake all nations, yea, the very heavens, and the earth; meaning the raising up and throwing down kingdoms and powers; the *Persian*, the *Grecian*, and the *Roman* monarchies, each were to minister, in their turn, and all to this one event. But, Reader! above all, do mark the blessed feature by which Christ is described; namely, *the desire of all nations*. And so he is to every poor sinner upon earth, to whom he is revealed. If he be not so, the reason is, because they know not their own wants, neither his suitability, and all-sufficient fulness, and grace, to

supply. But in all nations, all climates, tongues, people, and languages, where sin is felt, and Christ made known, nothing but Christ can satisfy. And I beg the Reader to remark yet further, how contemptibly the Lord speaks of silver and gold. The *first* temple of *Solomon* had a profusion of gold and silver indeed. Whereas this *second* temple had but little ornaments in the days of *Haggai*. But what of that? The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former. And so it was most eminently, when the Son of God in our nature entered it. I do not myself conceive, that the ancient Jews, who wept in the view of the second temple, did so on account of the want of things ornamental only. But there were matters, of an higher moment, in which it was defective. The Jews confess, that the *second* temple had none of the *five* signs which the *first* temple had; namely, 1st. the Ark, with the Mercy-Seat and Cherubim: 2dly. the Shechinah: 3dly. the Spirit of Prophecy: 4thly. the Urim and Thummim: and 5thly. the Holy Fire on the altar. But, *in* the presence of the Lord Jesus, they had more than all these; for these were but the type. Christ the substance. So that nothing can be more decisive, in confirmation of this most blessed prophecy of *Haggai*, pointing to Christ, and in Christ being fulfilled. And he is indeed the whole peace of his people.

HAGGAI 2:10-19

In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, (11) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying, (12) If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. (13) Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. (14) Then

answered Haggai, and said, So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so *is* every work of their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean. (15) And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: (16) Since those *days* were, when *one* came to an heap of twenty *measures*, there were *but* ten: when *one* came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty *vessels* out of the press, there were *but* twenty. (17) I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye *turned* not to me, saith the LORD. (18) Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*, *even* from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider *it*. (19) Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless *you*.

Here is another of *Haggai's* Sermons, and a most striking one it is. I humbly conceive, by the figure of uncleanness here spoken of, the Lord meant to set forth the polluted, and utterly lost state of our whole nature; and that the cleansing can only be in Christ. The smitings, blastings, and mildews, are figurative expressions of the sorrows, disappointments, and troubles, the consequence of sin. But, from the day the temple in Christ is founded, the whole face of things is changed. Temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, are with the Lord's people. When God the Father comes to bless a soul in redemption by his dear Son, *he blesseth him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*. Ephesians 1:3. Having Christ for our portion, we have all things in Christ, and with Christ; a portion to live upon in time, and to all eternity.

HAGGAI 2:20-23

And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth *day* of the month, saying, (21) Speak to

Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; (22) And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. (23) In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

Haggai is commissioned to close his prophecy with a particular and special message to *Zerubbabel*, governor of *Judaea*. And this I apprehend principally, as typical of Christ. For though the Lord in shaking kingdoms and nations, might tell this governor not to feel alarm, yet this could not be intended to hold forth to *Judaea*, or *Judaea's* governor, peace in temporal things in the midst of the commotion; for in fact it was not so. *Judaea* became a province subject to *Rome*, before the coming of Christ. No doubt therefore, the shaking here spoken of alluded to the overthrow of Satan's kingdom and power; the heathen idolatry, and all that oppose Christ and his blessed gospel. And in this, as a type of the Lord Christ, *Zerubbabel* hath sweet assurances. But, Reader, look at Jesus, and the type is lost in the reality. Is *Zerubbabel* called the servant of Jehovah? Here he became the type of the glorious Mediator. *Behold my servant*, saith Jehovah, *whom I uphold!* Isaiah 42:1. Is *Zerubbabel* called the chosen of the Lord? Here again he typified Christ. Is *Zerubbabel* a signet? Surely we discover the type again here representing Him, whom God the Father sealed. John 6:27. Indeed, is not Christ called *Zerubbabel*, as he is very frequently called David? See Zechariah 4:7. The Targum renders the words in the last verse, *for I have chosen thee: in thee I am well pleased:* which can never be said of any but of Christ, and of

him it is repeatedly said, Matthew 3:17 and Matthew 17:5. Precious testimonies of our Lord Jesus Christ!

REFLECTIONS

READER! Pause, and consider, while going over this blessed prophecy, concerning the person, work, character, and offices of the Lord; whether He, who is here said by Jehovah himself, to be the desire of all nations, is the first, and last, and comprehensive object of all thy desire; for life and death, for time and eternity? Behold the Lord Jesus in this most blessed and delightful point of view. Sweetly was it prophesied of Him by another Prophet, that *He should sprinkle many nations*. And when we discover him as the One great and glorious ordinance of heaven for salvation, *neither is there salvation in any other*: When we look at him as Jehovah's gift, for the common, and only remedy, for the sins of a whole world: When we know the suitability, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus on the one hand, and the freeness, fulness, greatness, and everlasting nature of that rich grace of God the Father on the other; surely the Lord Jesus doth appear so blessedly answering to this character, as the desire of all nations. And did all nations but know him, all nations would be in love with him. As one sun in the heavens answers for all the world; and one ocean supplies all the earth; so one Lord Jesus Christ is enough for all, and answers the wants of all. Reader! Bring home the point to your own person, and enquire whether He is so altogether lovely in *your* view, as to be the fairest and chiefest among ten thousand? It is indeed truly blessed, when a man's own experience bears a correspondence to the divine testimony; and Christ is formed in the heart, as the one desire of the heart, and the hope of glory. Precious Lord Jesus! Thou, who by thine appearance in our flesh, in thy temple

didst fill the latter house with greater glory than the former; do thou fill thy Church now upon earth, as thou art filling thy Church in heaven, with thy presence. Surely, thou thyself, O Lord, art the temple, the altar, the mercy-seat, the propitiation, the High Priest, and the sacrifice! All, all is centered in thee, for all before thee were but types and shadows. Thou, thou art He, whom Jehovah hath chosen, the signet of the Lord of hosts, and the seal of the covenant of peace between heaven and earth! Oh! then precious Jesus, grant that on thee, as the foundation, thy whole Church being built, all thy redeemed upon earth may be growing up *unto an holy temple in the Lord, for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, until we join the Church above, when the last stone of the spiritual building is brought home *with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it*. Farewell *Haggai!* We thank thy Lord, and our Lord, for thy ministry and testimony concerning our Jesus. Once upon earth, thou didst witness the weeping of some, and the joy of others, in beholding the second temple. Ere long thou wilt behold the whole body of Christ, forming one temple, of his body the Church, in glory. And then, when the Lamb is on his throne, and encircled by the innumerable multitude of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and all the redeemed out of every nation, kindred, and clime, then will the hymn of salvation be sung amidst the vast host, where all tears are wiped away from all eyes, and the song of redemption to God and the Lamb, will be the everlasting song of heaven! Amen.

THE PROPHET

ZECHARIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

Zechariah's name (or Zachariah, as read by some,) is truly significant. Our pronunciation of it in English differs from the original, and thereby lessens to our recollection its power. It is *Zachar* and *Jah!* meaning *remembrance*, and the Lord. And is not this, when compounded, (I merely ask the question, not determine it,) as an office under the Holy Ghost, to bring to remembrance of the Lord? The period of Zechariah's prophecy was at the same time as Haggai ministered, and

probably he was one of those that returned with the captivity from Babylon, somewhat about five hundred years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord the Holy Ghost give to him that now writes, and to him that reads the words of this prophecy, grace to understand what is herein contained concerning Him, to whom all bear testimony, that we may with thankfulness receive the things which are freely given to us of God.

Chapter 1

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 1:1

In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

If the Reader be interested to discover the exact date of Zechariah's entrance upon his prophetic office, by comparing it with what Haggai saith of his time of ministering, he will find there were but two months between them. Haggai 1:1.

ZECHARIAH 1:2-6

The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. (3) Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. (4) Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil

doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD. (5) Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? (6) But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

The leading points of this first sermon is, to show the people the cause of God's judgments upon his people, by causing them to go into *Babylon*. Some of the Prophets, such as *Hannaniah*, had taught their fathers lies. And when the Lord called upon them to return, led away by the false teachers, and their own corruptions, they would not return. Now, saith the Lord, where are these prophets? They are dead. But my words live for ever. See Jeremiah 28. throughout, a solemn Chapter.

ZECHARIAH 1:7-17

Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which *is* the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, (8) I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that *were* in the bottom; and behind him *were there* red horses, speckled, and white. (9) Then said I, O my lord, what *are* these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these *be*. (10) And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These *are they* whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. (11) And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. (12) Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? (13) And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me *with* good words *and* comfortable words. (14) So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts;

I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. (15) And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are* at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. (16) Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. (17) Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

The Prophet is very particular as to the date of this Sermon, for he mentions the name of the very month in which he delivered it, which we do not find in any Prophet before. Perhaps it is on account of the greatness of the vision, for in every point of view it is great and interesting. Zechariah tells the Church, that he saw by night, that is in visions of the night, a man riding upon a red horse. It will be highly proper to enquire who this was. And if we look diligently to what is said, it will not, I apprehend, be difficult, under divine teaching, to discover.

First then, let the Reader observe, that this man, who is called a man in the eighth verse, is called an angel in the eleventh verse. And then let the Reader next observe, that the Prophet addressed himself to him, and called him Lord, that is, Adonai, a well known name of Christ. See Psalm 110:1. The Lord said unto my Lord, my Adonai. A plain proof whom Zechariah instantly considered this Almighty Rider to be.

Let the Reader go on, and hear what this august person promised Zechariah to instruct him in; concerning those that ministered unto him. And lastly, and above all, let him not fail to behold and remark the intercession of this glorious person, speaking to Jehovah in behalf of Jerusalem.

When the Reader hath brought all these considerations into one mass of particulars, let him determine for himself, whether this person could be any other than the God-man Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Reader! recollect in how many instances we meet with such gracious manifestations as these, in the Old Testament. Call to mind that instance to Joshua. See Joshua 5:13-15. Look at another shown to Gideon at Ophrah. Judges 6:11-22. Manoah and his wife. Judges 13:3-20. And were not all these so many plain and incontestable evidences of the earnest longings Jesus had to appear to his people, and to tabernacle openly with them, when the time appointed should come for the accomplishing of redemption. See Revelation 6:2. and Revelation 19:11.

And Reader, do not overlook in this most beautiful and interesting vision, the gracious part in which God the Father is represented. The Lord answered the angel that talked with the Prophet with comfortable words; that is, confirming the covenant engagements we may suppose. And do not also overlook the commission, which this angel of the covenant gave to *Zechariah*, in consequence of all this. He was to inform the Church of it, and to do as another Prophet had been commanded to do, both to show his people their transgressions, and to set forth the Lord's comforts in pardoning. Compare Isaiah 68:1, &c. with Isaiah 40. and 1, &c. Now, Reader, from the whole, if you have any doubts upon your mind concerning this vision referring to the God-man Christ Jesus, do as *Zechariah* did, ask the Lord himself, and he will be still the same Jesus in grace to you as to him!

ZECHARIAH 1:18-19

Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. (19)
And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these?
And he answered me, These *are* the horns which have scattered
Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Probably (but I do not determine) by these four horns as they are said to have scattered, Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, may be meant those four kingdoms which did indeed sadly afflict the Lord's Church; that is the *Chaldean*, the *Persian*, the *Grecian*, and the *Roman*; thus extending to the time of Christ's coming.

ZECHARIAH 1:20-21

And the LORD showed me four carpenters. (21) Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

It is possible, (though here again I only venture to enquire, not to decide,) by these four carpenters, may be intended, in a special allusion, the four Evangelists, whose doctrines of the person, work, and ministry, of the Lord Jesus, might in this figurative way, be said to hew down the enemies of the Church. But, as we are certainly not taught to consider any specific number in the literal sense of the word, but only as a certain quantity mentioned to imply the certainty of the thing itself; no more than in the parable of the virgins, because five were wise, and five foolish, we are to conclude the happy and the miserable will be equal in the great day of account; so I humbly conceive, that the vision is here intended to show, by four horns, the enemies of Christ, and by the four carpenters, the friends of Christ. Of what number soever each are, be they many, or be they few, the Lord showed the Prophet the sure end of the blessings that must take place in his Church and kingdom. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and his servants are commissioned in the use of it for the comfort of his people, and the destruction of his foes. *I have hewed them by the Prophets, saith the Lord, and I have slain them by the words of my mouth.* Hosea 6:5.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 2

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 2:1

I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.

I do not presume to say as much, but I venture here, as in the former Chapter, to believe, that this man is the man Christ Jesus. For to whom belongs the right of numbering his people, and the city of his redeemed, but the owner of both. See Hebrews 3:3-4. Isaiah 40:12. Revelation 11:1.

ZECHARIAH 2:2

Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* the breadth thereof, and what *is* the length thereof.

Reader, observe the familiarity of the Prophet, and then turn to that scripture, Isaiah 45:11.

ZECHARIAH 2:3-5

And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, (4) And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: (5) For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

It should seem, that this other angel was a servant of the former. Hebrews 1:14. But, observe the earnest solicitude of our Lord Jesus to inform his redeemed of all things suitable for them to know, and especially of his promises. Read what he himself saith, John 15:1. The promise that is made concerning Jerusalem, plainly proves that it was not *literally* Jerusalem, the city, for this Jerusalem had walls then built by *Nehemiah*. See Nehemiah 6:15. But it is *spiritually* to be considered as God's people Jerusalem, to whom he is himself their security, and for whom God hath provided *salvation for walls and bulwarks*. Isaiah 26:1. Ezekiel 38:11. And do not forget, Reader, to mark down with peculiar strength of expression, the Lord's gracious promise, that he himself will be *both a wall of fire round about, and a glory in the midst of his people*. Alluding perhaps to travelers, when traversing the desert, and places infested by beasts of prey, who make fires around them at night, which intimidate those creatures from approaching. It is a sweet and beautiful figure this, to represent Christ as the defense of his people, whose presence alone restrains the great enemy of souls, that roaring lion, from seizing the flock of Jesus. And, observe the greater beauty still of this emblem. Christ is not only a fence to secure, but a fulness of blessings to supply. He is both a *sun and a shield*. Jesus, that is their strength, is also their glory. See Isaiah 40:19 Revelation 21:23. Psalm 125:2. Reader! I do not think it needful to remind you of Israel's history in the wilderness, how the Lord went before them in a pillar of cloud

by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. Sweet type also of Jesus in his constant presence and favour to his redeemed for ever. Matthew 28: 20.

ZECHARIAH 2:6-9

Ho, ho, *come forth*, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. (7) Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest *with* the daughter of Babylon. (8) For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. (9) For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.

This proclamation and call to the Church respecting *Babylon*, of coming out of her, cannot mean the *temporal* deliverance of the Church, for this was after the people had returned from *Babylon*. Besides, the discourse is prophetic, and refers to some future period of the Church. I am inclined to think that it is the call of Christ to his redeemed, directing them to himself, and his all-sufficiency. And I am the more inclined to think so, from the tenderness of the expression with which this call is accompanied. *Whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*. Whose eye but Christ's? Who was it led the Church about in the wilderness; instructed Israel, and kept him as the apple of his eye? Deuteronomy 32:10 Think, Reader, what a proof this is of the Church's union *with* Christ! Think what a testimony of the oneness and interest *in* Christ.

ZECHARIAH 2:10-11

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. (11) And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

The Prophet *Zephaniah* had called upon *Zion* to rejoice in nearly the same words, and from the same cause. *Zephaniah* 3:14-17. Yea, all the Prophets had been directed to bless the Church, in those glorious prospects of Christ's coming, and indwelling residence among them. *Isaiah* 12:6. *Jeremiah* 31:7-9. But what I particularly beg the Reader to remark with me, in reading those verses, is, that this joy of *Zion* is called forth, not only at the prospect of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, but to the character of the Lord Jesus; together with all the auspicious events of his advent. Observe, it is *the Lord that saith Lo, I come*; and mark what he saith, *it is the Lord of hosts that sends him*; and observe further, *his people shall know that it is so!* Were there ever events of so glorious a nature, so many, and so dignified and distinguished, within so short a compass as is here? See, Reader what a testimony is given to the Godhead of Christ! See what authority to his mission as God-man. Mediator! Behold what glorious things are included in his coming; not only the Jewish Church, but the Gentile shall rejoice; for *many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day*; yea, as in the verse before, *the Lord will shake his hand upon all his enemies*; and every foe shall be destroyed. So that here are plain and palpable declarations, that the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus shall be set up in the hearts of his people And if these things are not subjects of rejoicing, I know not what are. Yea, I think I should not stretch this precious scripture beyond what it reacheth to, if I were to say, that according to my view of it, there is a yet a further direction from it to the latter day glory, when it is said, *his feet shall stand again upon the Mount Olives*. And when is that? Surely, when *he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe*. I beg the Reader to turn to these several scriptures in confirmation of the whole. *Zechariah* 9:9-10. *Isaiah* 35: 3 to the end. *Jeremiah* 50:4-5.

Ezekiel 37:24, to the end. Zechariah 14:4. Revelation 18:20 to the end. 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

ZECHARIAH 2:12-13

And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. (13) Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

These blessed things come in as the consequence of what was said before. I do not presume to say as much, but I venture to think, they will have a full confirmation only in the latter day glory. *Judah* here stands for the whole Church of Jesus, if I mistake not, made up both of Jew and Gentile; and which are eminently so, the Lord Christ's portion. See Isaiah 49:6. And let the imagination of the Reader conceive, if he can, for all description sinks beneath the subject, what universal silence will pervade the earth, in adoration, love, and praise, when the Lord is raised up, or riseth himself out of his holy habitation in heaven, and comes openly and visibly, as in the days of his flesh, but not now in weakness, but in power and glory; to fill the earth with wonder in the calling home all his redeemed, among his ancient people the Jews, and all the Father hath given him among the Gentiles; and to destroy all his enemies before his face, with the brightness of his coming? Reader! consult those scriptures, and may the Lord be your Teacher, on this, and every other blessed prophecy concerning our Lord Jesus, If the Lord be raised up out of his holy place, that place is heaven. See Isaiah 47:15 and Isaiah 63:15. And when Jesus comes, he comes no more in the likeness of *sinful* flesh, but in glory and power. Compare Romans 8:3. 2 Corinthians 5:16. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

REFLECTIONS

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

Chapter 3

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 3:1

And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

This is a most blessed and highly instructive vision, for the doctrine of it is very plain, and like the vision of another Prophet, he that runs may read it. Habakkuk 2:2. Joshua, the high priest, was probably one of the captives that returned with the Church from Babylon. Now there can be no doubt but that he was personally known to *Zechariah*; yet, to know him as he stood before the Lord, when ministering in his priestly office, he must be shown to him by the Lord himself. Hence we learn, that when the servants of the Lord stand before the Lord, and minister in his name, Satan will also come to resist their persons, and their services.

But we are not informed what the accusations of Satan were. Some have thought (but this can only be conjecture,) that this Joshua is the same mentioned Ezra 10:18. whose sons had taken strange wives, and therefore the Father in permitting it, gave Satan an handle to accuse. But, I rather think, Joshua here is not to be considered in his person, but rather as a type of the whole Church.

Yet, by the way, we may draw a short improvement from hence. With what earnestness ought believers to pray for

their ministers, who have such a law adversary as Satan always accusing them, and whose infirmities give but too much occasion for that cursed foe to raise but too just charges against them when considered as they are in themselves, Hebrews 7:28. James 5:17. Acts 14:14-15. Oh! precious, precious Lord Jesus! how truly blessed is it to recollect, that thou art the righteousness of thy people, and their sanctification is in thee. 2 Corinthians 5:21. 1 Corinthians 1:30.

There is one thing more to be observed in this account, Satan stood at the *right* hand. It is the custom in all courts of justice, for the person accused to stand on the *left* hand of the advocate, and the accuser on the *right*. Hence it is so said of Satan. Psalm 140:6. Reader! think how Satan opposeth and resisteth the Church, and even before God. Hence he is properly styled the Accuser of the Brethren; and hence the joy in heaven when he was cast out. Revelation 12:10-11. Do not overlook the principal part in these sweet verses, how they overcame him.

ZECHARIAH 3:2

And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

Who is the Speaker here but Christ? Surely he that is called in the first verse the angel of the Lord, before whom Joshua stood, is the same person here called the Lord. And so he was, who is the angel of the covenant. And do observe the graciousness of the expressions. Satan is not only rebuked, but reasoned with. Jerusalem is the chosen of the Lord. And did not the Lord know what Jerusalem is, and would be? Moreover, coming out of the fire, and smoke, and furnace,

could she appear otherwise than as a smoking brand, saved by sovereign grace?

Reader! do not fail to observe whose province it is to rebuke Satan, and to counteract all his devices. And do not overlook also, how the Lord Jesus is unceasingly engaged to do so. What, though Satan stand day and night to accuse, Jesus is always on the throne to justify. No accusation of Satan can escape his knowledge, or be unanswered by Christ's advocacy. Sweet thought!

ZECHARIAH 3:3

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

This is a most striking verse. It was the command, under the Levitical dispensation, that the high priests should appear before the Lord in holy garments, for glory and for beauty, see Exodus 28:2. And so to human observation they did appear. Had the Prophet *Zechariah* not seen these things in vision, by which the Lord gave him a spirit of discernment, he would not have beheld the filthiness of Joshua.

Reader! I beseech you to attend to the doctrine contained in this view of things. Here we see what the law, and what the priesthood was, in their best dress. No doubt *Joshua*, like all the other priests under the law were what the world would call good men, set apart to the sacred office. Yet, when looked at under the spirit of prophecy, behold, amidst the ephod, and breast-plate, what filthiness they appeared in. Well might the Prophet *Isaiah*, under a sense of it, when he had once seen the vision of God, cry out, *all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*. Isaiah 64:6. Reader! and do all the ministrations of fallen sinful men, as they are in themselves, and without an eye to Christ, thus appear? Do

the most upright of men, like this Joshua, come before God polluted and defiled? Oh! then think of the preciousness of Him, who taketh away the iniquity of our holy things, and whose blood, and righteousness, and everlasting priesthood, become the only safety for our persons, and for the acceptation of both persons and offerings before God!

ZECHARIAH 3:4

And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

Who is this that answered and spake? Surely the Lord Jesus Christ, for none but Jesus could be said to have taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and he alone could use this language. He, who hath washed the Church from all her sins in his blood, might say, *behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee*. And He who hath clothed his redeemed with the white robes of his own righteousness, might also say, *I will clothe thee with change of raiment*. Sweet is that song of the Church, in the contemplation of it. Revelation 1:5-6. Reader! what saith the soundings of your heart, in the review of these things? I would say, Lord! take away all the filthy garments of our own fancied goodness, both of priest, and people; yea, the iniquity of all priests and people; that the person, work, and righteousness of that One High Priest, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, may be the everlasting covering of thy people!

ZECHARIAH 3:5

And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

In the first reading of this verse, one might be led to suppose that *Zechariah* is the speaker. And I said, *let them set a fair mitre upon his head*. But *Zechariah* is a spectator, not an actor, in this wonderful vision. The command here given when Joshua was made clean, and fitted by Christ himself for the priestly office, must have been the Lord. And this is most agreeable to the general sense of the covenant. It is Jesus who makes his people *Kings and Priests unto God and the Father*. *Revelation 1:6*.

ZECHARIAH 3:6-7

And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, (7) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

We have here Joshua in his office as priest, and solemnly ordained in it by the Lord himself. Oh! that such blessed ordinations were more frequent in the Church in the present hour. The protestation of the angel of the covenant is striking. But, I beg to make one observation upon the manner in which the Lord declares himself upon the occasion. *If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge*. I apprehend that these words are not made use of as a *condition*, or as a *procuring cause* of the blessedness promised, but as the evidences of the things themselves. The filthy garments of Joshua *were* taken away, and the fair mitre *was* actually put upon his head. Where Jesus hath taken away sin, *that sin* can be no more charged. It is similar to what the Apostle saith in the Hebrews. For we are made partakers of Christ, *if* we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. Hebrews 3:14. Surely our being made partakers of Christ doth not depend upon *our holding*; for this would be to make the grace of God to rest in its efficacy upon the merit of man. In

both instances, the blessing spoken of, is a blessing already obtained, and the effect therefore becomes an *evidence*, and not the *cause*.

ZECHARIAH 3:8

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

The first part of this verse we must attend to, before we enter upon the consideration of the latter. And here we must forget the Joshua we have been looking at in the former part of the Chapter, to consider One infinitely higher, concerning whom we may truly say, a greater than Joshua is here. If the Reader will turn to the eighth Chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, verse 18, he will find Christ spoken of by the Spirit of prophecy, under this significance of character. And the Apostle Paul expressly refers the same to Christ. Hebrews 2:13. Hence, therefore, Christ and his people are one. See Psalm 45:7. Hebrews 1:9. 1 John 1:8.

But how, on what account are Christ and his fellows wondered at? Oh! what a mystery of mysteries is that, which opens to our view the Son of God taking our nature, and becoming man for us, to make us sons of God in him! His people are also men wondered at; for angels are astonished at the love of the holy Jesus towards unholy sinners. The world is astonished, that they should forego all the pleasures of life, and bear afflictions, persecutions, yea, death itself, in its most frightful form, out of love to One whom they have never seen, and for whom they cheerfully endure the loss of all things. And they are the greatest wonder to themselves, that God the Father should have loved them, and chosen them in Christ Jesus before the world began; that God the Son should have loved them, and given himself for them, an

offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor; that God the Holy Ghost should have loved them, called them with an holy calling, regenerated, illuminated, convinced them of sin, and of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus; and brought them to the love of that which their own nature once abhorred. So that they are a world of wonders in themselves, and to themselves; and what yet tends more to heighten the wonderful mystery, is, that they live so unthankful, so unworthy, and so little to his glory, who by his distinguishing grace, hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light, while thousands all around are left to the blindness and ignorance of their hearts.

Reader! think of these things, and if so be the Lord hath, by his grace, made you one of the world's wonder, you will enter much further into the meditation of this miracle of grace, than all the writing of men or angels can furnish you with matter for the subject. But this verse records a promise also of God the Father, who saith, *for behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch*. Many of the Prophets were directed to speak of this glorious person. Isaiah 4:2. And the same Prophet calls him elsewhere, *the Branch of the Lord*. Isaiah 11:1. Jeremiah also had the same commission. Jeremiah 23:5. and Chapter 33:15.

But the most eminent is Zechariah 6:12. because the Prophet there adds, and *he shall grow up out of his place*. Now the place was Nazareth, from *Netzar*, a plant. This defines Christ. This is the plant of renown. Ezekiel 34:29. This is the Branch which God's right hand planted. Isaiah 60:1-2. A man of Nazareth. Hence the Evangelist had it in commission to say, that he came and dwelt in *Nazareth*, that he might be called *a Nazarene*. So that never was there a more direct reference to one identical person, than by all these prophecies. I beg the

Reader to consult them. Matthew 2:23. Judges 13:5. 1 Sam. 1:11. Numbers 6:5.

ZECHARIAH 3:9

For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

The glorious stone which Jehovah laid, we read of, Isaiah 28:16. Paul tells us, that this is the foundation on which the Apostles and Prophets are built, and that other foundation can no man lay. Ephesians 2:20. 1 Corinthians 3:11. And Peter confirms the same, when quoting Isaiah's words, he adds, Christ is precious to those that come to this living Stone, and are built upon it. 1 Peter 2:4-8. And well might the Prophet say, that on this one stone should be seven eyes; for all eyes are fixed on Him, and He is the one glorious object of eternity. The eyes of God the Father are centered on Him. The eyes of God the Holy Ghost are fixed on Him. Angels eternally feast their raptured souls in looking on him. The Church in heaven, of the spirits of just men made perfect, are fixed on him. Old Testament Saints, New Testament believers, Jesus is the one glorious object of all. And even devils, enemies, and the ungodly, are compelled to look, and tremble while they look on him. Yea, every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him, and all nations shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen. Revelation 1:7.

But what engraving is this? Perhaps in allusion to the High Priest, who had the stones of his breast-plate to represent the twelve tribes of Israel; so Christ shall have engraven on his hands, and on his heart, the names of all his redeemed. Compare Exodus 28:9-12. Isaiah 49:16. Hence the Church cries out, *Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon*

thine arm. Song 8:6. And what can more fully and satisfactorily prove the whole as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, as in that blessed promise of Jehovah, to remove the iniquity of that land *in one day*. Who could remove this but Christ? And what day could this have been done in, but in that glorious, awful day, when on the cross Jesus finished transgression, made an end of sin, and by one offering of himself, once offered, perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 1 John 1:7. Daniel 9:24. Hebrews 10:14. Revelation 5:9.

ZECHARIAH 3:10

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.

Here are the blessed consequences, and the gracious and glorious effects of the whole. Believers in Christ brought into a state of grace, mercy, and peace, sit down as under their own vine, and their fig-tree, for none can make them afraid. Sin cannot, for it is done away. Hell cannot, for Christ hath conquered hell, death, and the grave. And corruption cannot, for Christ's holiness is the holiness of his redeemed. What he is, he is for his people; and is made of God to them, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. 1 Corinthians 1:30. And as the people of God thus sit down to a constant feast of love, and joy, and peace, in believing, abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; so they gladly invite their fellows to join in their triumphs in Jesus. Every follower of the Lord is anxious to promote the Lord's glory, and to proclaim the blessedness of that grace he himself hath found. So that these are the blessed fruits of salvation. Reader! the Lord gives us daily sweet testimonies of the same in our own hearts. Amen. Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah 4:4.

REFLECTIONS

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

And oh, thou blessed Lord! Do I not behold in thee the Branch Jehovah hath brought forth, raised up, and made blessed to all thy people? How fragrant, how everlastingly filled with verdure! How fruitful in all redemption blessings to thy redeemed! Under thee, Lord, and thy shadow, would my soul for ever sit with delight, and *thy fruit will be sweet to my taste*. On thee, O Lord, as the Stone Jehovah hath laid in Zion, would my soul for ever gaze, and feast my ravished eyes! Blessed, and Almighty Jehovah! On this signet, this High Priest of my soul, grave my poor name, and give me to see my soul's interest, and everlasting security in that unspeakable mercy, since thou hast removed the iniquity of that land in one day; so that; now if the iniquity of Israel be sought for, there shall be none; and the sons of Judah, and they shall not be found. Blessed! blessed for ever be God, for

Jesus Christ! *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Amen.

Chapter 4

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 4:1

And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

There is a great beauty in the manner in which this vision was opened to the Prophet. He tells us, that, the angel who talked with him, came again and awakened him, as from sleep. The Reader will perhaps recollect, without my reminding him, that Isaiah, prophesying of the Lord Jesus, speaks of the same awakenings. See Isaiah 50:4. It should seem, that the faculties of the Prophet had been so exercised by the former visions, as to have occasioned their suspension. Thus the disciples were drenched with sleep at Christ's transfiguration, and at his agony. Luke 9:32. Matthew 26:40. Reader! it is blessed to have the renewings of the Holy Ghost. Titus 3:5. It must be the work of the Spirit to kindle afresh the grace of his own giving. Daniel experienced this. Daniel 10:9.

ZECHARIAH 4:2-10

And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all *of* gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof: (3) And two olive trees by

it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof. (4) So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord? (5) Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. (6) Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. (7) Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it. (8) Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (9) The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. (10) For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Under the similitude of a candlestick, perhaps is meant the Church of Christ, and being all gold shows the value of it in the Lord's sight. Indeed, what can be more valuable, than what Christ purchased with his blood? The seven lamps, and seven pipes, may perhaps have an allusion to the several gifts of the Holy Ghost. In the account John gives of the glorious vision of heaven, he tells us, that there were seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. By which I apprehend is meant, the various influences of God the Holy Ghost, in his diversity of operations. Revelation 4:5.

And the two olive trees, perhaps, had this further allusion, that as they supplied all that was needed to the candlestick, so it needed no aid, nor help, from man. And the words of the angel, that talked with the Prophet, appear to be a full explanation of the vision to this amount. As the candlestick contained the candle of the Lord, and was wholly lighted, fed, and kept up, *not by might nor power, but by the Spirit of the*

Lord; so the Church of Christ hath no aid, nor help, from itself, or foreign assistance. Christ is the life, and light of his Church, and the glory of his people for ever.

The mountain here spoken of, seems to be one general figure for all the mountains, and hills of difficulty, which oppose the Church of Jesus. And Zerubbabel is not the son of Shealtiel, spoken of by *Haggai, Chapter 2:2*. but evidently the Lord Jesus Christ; at whose very presence all the enemies of the Gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction. 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

There is a great beauty in the reiteration of the word grace; intimating, if I mistake not, that as grace begins the work in the heart, so grace alone concludes it. Indeed, it can be nothing but grace all the way; daily grace, hourly grace, and all from the Lord. Reader! by the way, do let us remark from hence, what is continually taught in the word of God, not only in this scripture, but in all scripture, but which takes the whole life to learn; namely, that the progress of grace is to know more our own nothingness, and Christ's all-sufficiency. Those who talk of inherent holiness in themselves, talk of what they never feel. They may amuse themselves on those points, by bell, book, and candle; but in real attainments, it were to contradict scripture, to say they know any such thing. Reader! depend upon it, as this blessed passage in the Prophet saith, the same Almighty hands of our glorious *Zerubbabel*, who laid the foundation of his spiritual house in the heart, the same can alone finish it. And this becomes the sure, indisputable testimony, both of his own divine person, and the finished glory of his work and offices, and the authority of the Father in him. Oh! precious truths of a precious Saviour! Hebrews 12:2. Revelation 22:13.

ZECHARIAH 4:11-14

Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof? (12) And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be* these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves? (13) And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my lord. (14) Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

These verses seem to be but a continuation of one and the same vision. Perhaps, in allusion more particularly to the great and continued work of God the Holy Ghost in the Church, without whose blessed influence, to use the figure of this vision, it may be said, the candlestick cannot continue to burn, nor give her light. All the provision made by God our Father, purchased and secured to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, depends still for efficacy in the heart of every individual believer, from the sweet and gracious influences of God the Holy Ghost. Oh! blessed Spirit, grant to both Writer and Reader, those gracious, sweet anointings of thine, that having an unction from thee, we may know all things. 1 John 2:20.

REFLECTIONS

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

the Spirit of the Lord. And do thou, blessed *Lord*, so reign in us, and over us, and guide and direct through all, that at length the head-stone may be brought forth *with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it*. Even so. Amen.

Chapter 5

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 5:1-4

Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. (2) And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof *is* twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. (3) Then said he unto me, This *is* the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off *as* on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off *as* on that side according to it. (4) I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

Observe in the opening of this vision, the Prophet is turned from beholding blessed visions, to look at solemn ones. The roll here described must have been very large indeed. And it should seem, that it was intended the Prophet should notice the size of it, for he was able to behold the measure of it.

Twenty cubits by ten, is at least ten yards by five. *If*, as it may be supposed, the design was to impress upon the Prophet's mind the greatness and extent of the law, and the awful denunciation of it, to every one out of Christ, in order to show the grace of the gospel, nothing could be more striking. The explanation of the angel is in point. *This is the curse.* Reader! is not the law *the ministration of death*? Doth it not pronounce a curse upon every soul of man that doeth evil; *to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile*? *Romans 2:9.* In this view, the whole code of the law is like the roll of *Ezekiel*, when opened; *written within and without, and full of lamentations, and mourning, and woe.* *Ezekiel 2:10.* Hence the law is described, *Deuteronomy 27:15-26.* and *Deuteronomy 28:15-45.* Hence Peter's account of it, *Acts 15:10.* Hence Paul's, *Galatians 3:10-11.* Oh! Reader, think what a blessed thing it is, to be able to hear, and enter into the full enjoyment of those sweet scriptures: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* And again, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself...For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* *Galatians 3:13.* *2 Corinthians 5:19-21.*

ZECHARIAH 5:5-11

Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what *is* this that goeth forth. (6) And I said, What *is* it? And he said, This *is* an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This *is* their resemblance through all the earth. (7) And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this *is* a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. (8) And he said, This *is* wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. (9) Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind *was* in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. (10) Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? (11) And

he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

We have here another vision. The Prophet is let to see an *Ephah*, a Jewish measure, and he is told that this is the resemblance of all the earth; meaning, it should seem that what the Prophet was about to learn from this figure, suited all mankind. The Prophet is next led in vision, to behold a talent of lead, and a woman sitting in the midst of the *epah*, and is told that this is wickedness. Probably to denote, that as in the instance of our first parents' transgression, the woman was first in it, sin is now become universal, and pervades the whole race. And it is possible, that the talent of lead, from its ponderous quality, might be meant to show the total impossibility of our fallen and oppressed nature, ever of itself to arise from under the pressure. By the image of two women, like storks, carrying away the *Ephah* to the land of *Shinar*, might be supposed to teach the thorough removal of wickedness into a land not inhabited; as the iniquity of Israel, on the day of atonement, was taken away. Leviticus 16:22. I do not presume to account for the figure of *two* women, which had wings like storks. But if by the former woman, was meant that Eve was the first in the transgression; this might equally apply to the honor of the woman, in that the promise was, she should be saved in the child-bearing of the Redeemer, as that scripture by the Apostle hath it. 1 Timothy 2:13-15. And in this sense the agreement is just; for *as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead*. 1 Corinthians 15:21. So also in respect of sin. See Romans 5:15-19. In respect to the land of *Shinar*, all we know of it is, that it was a province of *Babylon*, where the Tower of *Babel* was built; and *Amraphel* was king of it in the days of *Abraham*. See Genesis 11:2. and Genesis 14:1. The Prophet *Daniel* saith, that here was the temple of Nebuchadnezzar's

idol, where he put the sacred vessels he took from *Jerusalem*. *Daniel* 1:2.

REFLECTIONS

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

Chapter 6

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 6:1-8

And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains *were* mountains of brass. (2) In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; (3) And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. (4) Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these, my lord? (5) And the angel answered and said unto me, These *are* the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. (6) The black horses which *are* therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. (7) And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. (8) Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.

It is worthy observation, that in all these visions, as they arise in succession, the Prophet doth not behold them in one view, but he is turned from one to the other. Some have concluded, that those four chariots with different coloured horses, represent the four monarchies, which were to succeed one another, until Christ should come. But, however ingenious this may seem, I am inclined rather to believe the vision hath a full respect to the Church. Indeed, I do not hesitate to consider all monarchies, and all empires, together with their rise, progress, and fall, as designed for no other purpose, but to minister to the Church of Jesus. And we need not go further for the explanation of this vision, than to scripture, to discover, in a spiritual sense, the scope and meaning of it. Angels are spoken of as God's chariots; and as the vision is

explained to the Prophet, the four spirits seem to express the services of angels as ministering spirits, *to minister unto them, that are heirs of salvation*. See Hebrews 1:14. Psalm 68:17. And by their passing between two mountains of brass, perhaps this may be intended to signify, that what they execute are the decrees and purposes of God, which are more sure and certain than the immoveable mountains. Psalm 36:6. And yet more especially with an eye to the covenant righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, these mountains may have respect, inasmuch as the Lord's spirit is said thereby to have quiet. Isaiah 54:10.

ZECHARIAH 6:9-15

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, *(10)* Take of *them* of the captivity, *even* of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; *(11)* Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; *(12)* And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: *(13)* Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. *(14)* And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD. *(15)* And they *that are* far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And *this* shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

Here is a ceremony appointed, by way of prefiguring the coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those persons mentioned, were of them that returned from the captivity. Those two crowns, one of silver, denoting perhaps the priestly office, and the other of gold, meaning the kingly office of the Lord Jesus Christ, *Joshua*, as high priest, was to be crowned

with, typical of Christ. And to point more emphatically, and personally to Christ, in the moment that *Joshua*, his type, was thus crowned, the declaration was to be made as from Jehovah, saying, *Behold the man whose name is the Branch*. Then follows the description of his person, and glory, and character, all which we know fully belong to Christ, and to no other; and have had their accomplishment in him. Reader! I beg of you to mark them down, one by one, and compare the whole with the Lord Jesus, as you pass over them. *First*, his name, the Man. Oh! sweet thought ! Yes, the man truly, and properly man, as well as truly and properly God. Else would he never have suited for the purposes of salvation, God and man, forming one Christ, could only be suited for a Mediator, and to accomplish redemption by his blood. *Next*, the Branch, a well known title of the Redeemer, and applicable to no other. He, and He alone, was the *Netzer*, the *Nazarite* devoted to God from the womb; yea, before he was conceived in the womb, his name was called Jesus. Yea, from the womb of eternity, mention was made of him. Isaiah 49:1-2. Matthew 1:21. Luke 2:21. *Thirdly*, his growth, and place is also mentioned, which may imply *Bethlehem*, the land of bread, as Christ is the Bread of life. But, I rather think by *growing up out of his place*, is meant the miraculous nature of his birth, being without the intervention of a human father, and as such, out of his own place, *whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting*. Micah 5:2. The *next* point refers to his office, work, and character. He shall *build the temple of the Lord*. And this is repeated a second time, to show the vast importance of the work, and the dignity of his person, by whom it is done. Christ is not only the Foundation Stone of this spiritual temple, which are his redeemed, but the Builder. So Paul speaks of him. Hebrews 3:1-6. And how blessedly both the Apostles, Peter and Paul, speak on this subject. 1 Peter 2:5. Ephesians 2:20-22. And yet *further*; He

that builds the temple of the Lord, shall bear the glory of the Lord, and have all the glory of the temple. Yea, they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house. Isaiah 22. And here, Reader, we must include in this view, the whole glory of redemption. There is, and ever will be, glory in his cross, glory in his crown; yea, on his head were seen many crowns. Revelation 19:12. Precious Jesus! doth not every poor sinner put a new crown upon thy glorious, sacred head, when ascribing to thee all the glory of his own personal salvation? And if so, have I not crowned thee, yea, do I not every day crown thee, my only rightful Lord, my God and Saviour? And are not all these ascriptions of praise *to the glory of God the Father*? Philip. 2:11. *Moreover*, it is said, that, *he shall sit and rule upon his throne*. Sweet thought to every poor believer! The Lamb is still in *the midst of the throne*. Revelation 7:17. And he hath said, that *to him that overcometh will he give to sit upon his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down with his Father in his throne*. Revelation 3:21. On this spiritual throne Jesus sits, to feed, to comfort, to help, to strengthen all his redeemed upon earth, as well as to give glory and happiness to all his redeemed in heaven. He shall both rule as a King, and intercede as a Priest, upon his throne. Blessed thought! the throne we go to is a throne of power, as well as a throne of grace; and Jesus rules and reigns in both, for *the counsel of peace is between them both*. In every sense this is blessed. For whether this counsel of peace refers to the everlasting covenant, between the Father and the Son, or between Christ's kingly office and his priestly, yet in this way, and in every way, peace with God is secured through the glorious undertaking and accomplishment of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ. And to these great events shall *Helem*, and *Tobijah*, and *Jedaiah*, and *Hen*, yea, all and every one shall become as memorials, and as instruments to minister in building in the temple of the Lord. For such shall be the

blessed end of those blessed things, referring to the gospel Church, that all the redeemed shall know that Christ is the sent of God. 1 John 4:14. Such among a thousand other precious things contained in this vision, are read to us in this sweet scripture, for which may both Writer and Reader bless God the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

Chapter 7

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 7:1-2

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, *that* the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth *day* of the ninth month, *even* in Chisleu; (2) When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men, to pray before the LORD,

If the Reader will calculate the different dates of the Prophet's account concerning his ministry, he will find that nearly two years had elapsed from his former preaching. See Chapter 1:7. The month *Chisleu* corresponds to our October and November in part.

ZECHARIAH 7:3-7

And to speak unto the priests which *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? 4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, 5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, *even* to me? 6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat *for yourselves*, and drink *for yourselves*? 7 *Should ye not hear* the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when *men* inhabited the south and the plain?

It appears from this enquiry, that the people were of the same complexion in those days as all days, willing to substitute any thing for real godliness. The leaven of self-righteousness mingles up in all men's minds, more or less. The great enemy of souls, infused this deadly poison unto our nature at the fall, and it runs like blood through the veins of the whole race. Fasting, and the squalid face, sackcloth, and the like, are in the preference of all men by nature, because these are offerings to our own shrine. But faith in Christ is such a self-emptying, self-loathing principle, that none but those taught of God the Holy Ghost ever can, or ever will be able to practice. Reader! do observe in what terms the Lord speaks of those humiliations which are of man's creating, and came not from the Lord. What communion had I with you in all these things, saith the Lord? It is plain from the manner of the Lord's speaking, there had been none. And unless this great object had been the main object; intended from such observances, surely they are so far from being acceptable, that they become offensive in the sight of God. Reader! the doctrine is the same in the Christian Church, as in the Jewish. If Christ, *who is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins*, doth not give them; evidently there can be no real repentance in the soul. Acts 5:31. And if our days of fasting and humiliation, be not with an eye to the blood and righteousness of Christ; they are but so much mockery before the Lord. Isaiah 65:5. It is plain from what the Lord saith in the close of this paragraph, concerning the inattention of the people to the Prophets, that in the midst of all their pretended sanctity of fasting, there was a total disregard to the word of the Lord. What an awful delusion are men under that set up the *form*, while denying the *power* of godliness.

ZECHARIAH 7:8-14

And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, (9) Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: (10) And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. (11) But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. (12) Yea, they made their hearts *as* an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. (13) Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: (14) But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

Here is a confirmation of the subject, that the people had totally neglected God's word, by the Prophet, for if the Reader will consult the scriptures of the Prophets on those points, he will find that the Lord here commands *Zechariah* to repeat to the same purport, as those servants of the Lord had done. See Isaiah 58, throughout. Jeremiah 5. throughout. Hosea 4. throughout. Micah 6. throughout.

REFLECTIONS.

Reader! it is among the most important of all subjects to have a right apprehension of the method, whereby poor fallen man in every age of the Church, can rightly approach to God. Mankind have been always fond of commuting with God for sin, and when the Lord in grace saith return to me, and I will return to you, with the same boldness as those of old, we are apt to cry out, *wherein shall we return?* And then fastings, and almsgivings, and a few forms of prayer are set up, by way of atonement for the sin of the soul. Alas, alas! here is more spiritual pride in all this, than any real repentance, or

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

Chapter 8

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 8:1-8

Again the word of the LORD of hosts came *to me*, saying, (2) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. (3) Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. (4) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. (5) And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. (6) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts. (7) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; (8) And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

In offering my Commentary on this Chapter, I am very ready to allow all that former commentators have advanced in their referring what is here said of the prosperous state of Jerusalem, to the old Jerusalem, in the literal sense, as being very different after the people returned from the *Babylonish captivity* to what it was before. But I still think that far other, and far greater blessings are intended to be set forth, by the different things mentioned in this string of rich promises, than a mere respect to *temporal* enjoyments can justify. I shall take the freedom therefore with the Reader, while I look up for grace from the Lord to keep me from error, to observe, with great humbleness of spirit, that this Chapter will be very sweet, and very precious, if we read it *spiritually*, and read it with an eye to the days of the gospel. In this view, I beg the

Reader to remark with me, how blessedly it opens. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts.* I admire the frequency of this expression. Surely it conveys, in the most blessed manner, the graciousness of the Lord. And when the Lord adds, that *he was jealous for Zion with great jealousy;* may we not, after considering for how long a period He, *whose goings forth had been of old from everlasting,* had been longing for the time of his manifesting himself to Israel; may we not, I say, without violence to the expression, figure to ourselves the Lord Jesus Christ looking now with holy earnestness to the time as approaching? The Prophet *Joel* expresseth somewhat of the same kind. *Then will the Lord (saith he) be jealous for his land, and pity his people.* Joel 2:18. And observe what follows. *Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.* And how is the Lord returned, but by tabernacling in our flesh? Surely this is the only return that could now fully delight the heart of Jesus, or satisfy the wants of the Church? This would be indeed to make Jerusalem's name *the city of truth;* when Jesus, the husband of his Church and people, gave his spouse his own name, who is himself *the way, and the truth, and the life!* John 14:6. This would be to make the Lord's house indeed the holy mountain, which the Prophets with one voice had said, should be *exalted in the last days upon the tops of the mountains, and all nations should flow to it.* Isaiah 2:2-4. Micah 4:1-4. Revelation 14:1. And this would be, under the presence of the Lord Jesus, to make the aged resting on their staffs from the blessed influence of grace, long known, and long enjoyed, from the Spirit of their Lord; and the young rejoicing in the streets of the Lord's holy mountain, under the awakenings of his love, when betimes brought into a saving acquaintance with the Lord God of their salvation. But, if we read those scriptures without an eye to gospel days, and the presence of Jesus, I cannot conceive that no real joy could be proposed

from beholding aged sinners dwelling in the streets of the old Jerusalem, unawakened, unregenerated, and hastening to their graves in the same state as when they were born; nor boys and girls playing in the mere pastimes of thoughtlessness and childhood, without God, and without Christ in the world! If the Reader will turn to the 31st Chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah, verses 11-17. he will find a parallel passage, and *proved* to refer to the days of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, by a portion of it so explained. Matthew 2:17-18. I will not detain the Reader by enlarging on the many blessed things of a like nature contained in these verses, for the subject itself is endless. And indeed I hope, from the mere hints here given of explaining the subject *spiritually*, his own mind, under divine teaching, will be led to make many similar observations to those I have offered. Let me only add a thought on the graciousness of expression, in the Lord's taking off the thoughts of the people from the marvellous nature of those mercies, to the consideration of the greatness of his power, by whom these events were to be accomplished. His ability, and his love, and his covenant promises, become the full security of his people. It is this which brings his redeemed both from East and West, not *Babylon*, for this lay north, and the greater part of the people were returned. And in the days of *Zechariah* the western world had none of the children of Israel in it; and as for the Gentile Church, it was as yet unknown. So that every part of this blessed scripture concurs to point to the gospel days of the Lord Jesus, as the time spoken, and the blessings in it *spiritually*. For then it was the promise was to be fulfilled, when *from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the Lord said his name should be great among the Gentiles*. Malachi 1:11. Hosea 2:23. Luke 13:29.

ZECHARIAH 8:9-17

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which *were* in the day *that* the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. (10) For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither *was there any* peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour. (11) But now I *will not be* unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. (12) For the seed *shall be* prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these *things*. (13) And it shall come to pass, *that* as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, *but* let your hands be strong. (14) For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: (15) So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. (16) These *are* the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: (17) And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the LORD.

The Lord is going on through these verses, as in the former, in the same strain of grace and love, to encourage the people with his assurances of favour. I beg the Reader to attend to what is here said by a gracious Lord, with an eye to the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and sure I am he will find abundant blessedness in the view. The peace here promised, is, *peace in the blood of the cross*. Before the soul is brought savingly acquainted with this, there can be no real peace to him that goes out, or to him that cometh in. But, when the curse of the fall is taken away by the redemption in Christ Jesus, then is the believer blessed, both in basket and in store. Then, to use the figurative language of this scripture in a spiritual sense, the vine of ordinances, and the increase of bread, even the

bread of life, and the dew of heaven, in all the covenant blessings of the promises, will be poured out. And then all the fruits of the Spirit will be manifest in the life and conversation of the redeemed; and all the blessed effects here spoken of, speaking truth to his neighbour, and executing judgment, will follow. Oh! the glorious consequences of the coming of the Lord Jesus, in the hearts of those who live under his gracious influences!

ZECHARIAH 8:18-19

And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying, (19) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth *month*, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

Here is another testimony to the spiritual sense of this sweet Chapter. It was one of the uniform characters of Christ's reign upon earth, that his Church should hold a perpetual feast. Isaiah 25:6-9. And spiritually considered, it is always so. For when the believer is most exercised with difficulties, then it is the consolations of Jesus most abound. Yea, the very tear of grace is a tear of holy joy. Reader, do not forget what the Apostle saith. Romans 14:17.

ZECHARIAH 8:20-23

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; *It shall yet come to pass*, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: (21) And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. (22) Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. (23) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard *that God is with you*.

There never was a period, but in the days of the Lord Jesus Christ, when those events took place. But during our Lord's continuance in the flesh, we find numberless instances of many, who like the Greeks which came up to the feast, desired to see Jesus. John 12:20-21. And immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, how general then the enquiry. But, I cannot but think, that what is said in the last verse of this Chapter, yet remains to be fulfilled. And I as humbly conceive, that the call and conversion of God's ancient people the Jews, will be, as is here said, brought about by a wonderful power in one and the same time. Reader! do observe, that the great event here spoken of, and promised, is to be *out of all languages of the nations*. Now it is more than probable, that the dispersed of Israel are among nations with whom the natives of *Europe* have no knowledge or communion. And how then by human means, as instruments in the Lord's hands, will the gospel be conveyed to them? Besides, the promise is, that the Lord will set his hand again the *second* time, to recover the remnant of his people. What is meant by the *second* time, but in allusion to Egypt as the *first* wonderful deliverance the Lord wrought, in a public, open display of his sovereign power. See Isaiah 11:11. with Isaiah 19:18, to the end. While therefore it becomes a duty, and a privilege, in the instance of all that love the prosperity of Zion, to adopt every proper means, as instruments in the Lord's hands, for calling home our elder brother, the Jews, to the knowledge and enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his salvation; it should seem very clear, that the Lord himself will accomplish this great work before the latter day glory, by stirring up in the minds of his redeemed the awakening cry here expressed, by the sweet influences of His Holy Spirit. For if out of all the languages of the nations, ten men shall thus express themselves, certain it is, that none but the Lord himself can bring such a wonderful event to pass in one and

the same hour. Lord! I would say, hasten the blessed promise, and in thine own good time *do good unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem!* Psalm 51:18:

REFLECTIONS

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

Chapter 9

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

ZECHARIAH 9:1

The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus *shall be* the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, *shall be* toward the LORD.

If we connect the last verse of the preceding Chapter with the first verse of this, (and certainly though we divide the prophecy in Chapters the subject is but one,) the sense will be, that the word of the Lord shall *rest* in Damascus, as it was there said, *we will go with you*. I conceive the true sense of the word *burden* is to this amount; not a burden, or source of sorrow, but of joy. And what follows seems to confirm it; when *the eyes of man*, that is, the eyes of all the redeemed in *Damascus*, and elsewhere, shall be as much as Israel toward the Lord. Reader! pause over this verse, for according to my view, it is most blessed. In any way, and in every way, if we read the words with an eye to the rich mercies of God in Christ, we find them so. If we consider these expressions, *the eyes of man*, as in the first and highest sense of the words, the eyes of the God-man Christ Jesus toward Jehovah, as the glorious Head of his body the Church, beholding Him while carrying on the purposes and work of salvation, they are most blessed. And so in like manner all the redeemed looking to Christ, in this glorious work the Father gave him to do; and the Church, in the whole mass of believers, beholding Christ with such complacency and delight, as God the Father beholds his dear Son; think, Reader! what a blessed subject is here opened also in the view of Christ in this manner?

ZECHARIAH 9:2-8

And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise. (3) And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. (4) Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire. (5) Ashkelon shall see *it*, and fear; Gaza also *shall see it*, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. (6) And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. (7) And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he, *shall be* for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite. (8) And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

Hadrach lay near to *Hameth*, which some have thought to be the same with *Antioch*; and *Tyrus and Zidon*, we are well acquainted with in the Gospel. So that when we consider that Christ's followers were called Christians first in *Antioch*, doth it not seem to imply very plainly, that this *burden* spoken of to those nations, was intended for a joyful one, and not to groan under. See that sweet, prophecy of Isaiah concerning gospel mercies, to this effect. Isaiah 9:1-7. Acts 11:26. With respect to what is said about *Tyrus* laying up silver as the dust, and the Lord casting her out; if read spiritually, and with an eye to the Lord's rich mercies in Christ, these self-confidences we know must be all removed to make way for the humble reception of Jesus. Before Christ is revealed to the heart, it is the conduct of every one *to weary himself for very vanity*. Habakkuk 2:13. Isaiah 19:18. to the end.

ZECHARIAH 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and

having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Had we any doubt to whom these words refer, the Evangelists would at once remove it. Never surely was there ever a description more pointed, or one more circumstantially fulfilled. See Matthew 21:5, &c. and John 12:15, &c. But taking the fact itself as a thing unquestioned, what I beg the Reader more immediately to notice in the passage is, the sweet and glorious features of character, by which this king was to be known; and then for the Reader to ask his own heart, whether he hath gone forth, and is going forth, to meet Christ with welcomes and hosannas, as the Jewish children did, when Christ thus entered triumphantly into Jerusalem? Is Christ your King? Do you know Him, as the Just One, and the Holy One? And is He *all your salvation, and all your desire?* 2 Sam. 23:5.

ZECHARIAH 9:10

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth.

Here is another blessed description of character belonging to our Jesus. His kingdom is not set up with sword or battle bow; but yet *of the extent of his government and kingdom there shall be no end.* Malachi 1:11. Psalm 72:8 to the end.

ZECHARIAH 9:11

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein *is* no water.

How sweetly, and blessedly, is God the Father here speaking to God the Son, in his Almighty character, as Mediator. And how fully is this promise answered, in the instance of every

poor sinner whom the Lord makes willing in the day of his power. Jehovah then remembers his everlasting covenant, and Jesus then receives the reward of his services, as Jehovah's servant in that covenant. See Isaiah 42:6-7. Luke 4:16-19. Some have thought however, that these words are not directly spoken to Christ, but to the Church, because the word is feminine. But in either sense, the thing is the same. For although the Church hath no prisoners, yet till Christ brings out his Church, in every individual instance of it, every child of God is by nature a prisoner to sin and Satan. And this is a pit indeed, wherein there is no water of salvation.

ZECHARIAH 9:12-17

Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare *that* I will render double unto thee; (13) When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. (14) And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. (15) The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, *and* make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, *and* as the corners of the altar. (16) And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they *shall be as* the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land. (17) For how great *is* his goodness, and how great *is* his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

What is this strong hold, but the hold of salvation in Jesus? And who can turn in this, but the souls made willing? But observe the promise to this purport. *I will render double unto thee.* Who promiseth this, but Jehovah? *Greece* shall bend to *Zion*, because the Lord's hand shall be seen in the dispensation. The trumpet of the everlasting Gospel shall be heard. The whole work, the whole glory is the Lord's. And the beauty and loveliness of Christ shall be known, felt, and

adored in that day; and the wine of the Gospel shall be drank, and the love of Christ be sought after as the chief good. Remarkable to this purpose was the pouring out the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and from that period to the present, and so on as long as the Church continues on the earth, in the glorifying Christ to his people's view, and forming him in their heart, *the hope of glory*.

REFLECTIONS

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

Chapter 10

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

ZECHARIAH 10:1-4

Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; *so* the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. (2) For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because *there was* no shepherd. (3) Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle. (4) Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.

Under the figurative language of rain, the blessings of the Holy Spirit, in his gracious influences, are directed to be sought for from the Lord. Reader! pray notice the similarity in this injunction to that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke 11:9-13. And do observe further, that in those precepts there is implied the accompanying grace to enable the petitioner to ask. The *Corner-stone* is well known to be an emblem of Christ. Psalm 118:22. with Matthew 21:42. Acts 4:11. And the *nail* fastened in a sure place, equally typical of Christ. Isaiah 22:23. Ecclesiastes 12:11. And the *battle-bow*, which implies the holy war of the Lord Jesus. Isaiah 63:1. And the *oppressor* together, means that all agents must have their commission from him. Hence Peter, when charging the Jews with crucifying the Lord of life and glory, declared, that it was only

accomplishing, what before, the Lord had determined to be done. Acts 2:23.

ZECHARIAH 10:5-7

And they shall be as mighty *men*, which tread down *their enemies* in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD *is* with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded. (6) And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I *am* the LORD their God, and will hear them. (7) And *they of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty *man*, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see *it*, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

Souls truly converted to Jesus are always mighty in the Lord, because the Lord puts their enemies under the soles of their feet. Malachi 4:3. But what wonderful blessings are here said to be in store for Judah? Well was it said by the dying Patriarch, such glorious events would take place in this tribe. Genesis 49:8-12. And *Moses* reiterated the same. Deut, 33:7. And Reader, do observe the foundation of all this mercy; because of God's covenant engagements. And *Ephraim* also shall come in for a portion of the same grace, for there is enough in Christ for everyone, and for all. The house of Joseph, as well as the house of Judah, shall be thus blessed. The dying Jacob spake of this tribe also. And Moses, ages after, was commissioned to confirm it. Genesis 49:22-26. Deuteronomy 33:13-17. Now, in the prospect of the gospel, all these promises come to be fulfilled. And how strong and expressive the words are, *their hearts shall rejoice as through wine; yea, their children shall see it and be glad*. Both fathers and children shall join in the blessings; and all their rejoicing shall be, not in themselves, not in their attainments, but in the Lord. Isaiah 51:21-22.

ZECHARIAH 10:8-12

I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. (9) And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. (10) I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and *place* shall not be found for them. (11) And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away. (12) And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.

I have made a division in the view of those rich promises, because I wish the Reader not to pass over them too hastily; but I beg of him to mark their number, their greatness, their value. And I hope the Reader in going over them, will consider who it is that undertakes all, engageth for all, and will assuredly accomplish and fulfil all. Jesus will *hiss* for them, the original word is *whistle* for them, meaning the affectionate familiar call of a friend. And why will he do it; because he saith, *I have redeemed them*. Sweet thought! The redemption of Christ is a finished salvation. In the same strain runs the whole of the promises. I only add, that the last verse seems to be spoken in the person of God the Father, and the promises are in Jesus. And I beg the Reader here also to observe, that Jehovah undertakes both for himself and them. I *will*, the Lord saith, and they *shall*. Precious promise! And all *yea and Amen in Christ*, 1 Corinthians 1:20, Jeremiah 32:40.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Jesus! thou hast promised to be as the dew to Israel, and here thou commandest thy people to ask those blessings of thee. Lord! when thou art coming forth in grace, thou

inclinedst thy redeemed to meet thee at the mercy seat, and then preventest them with thy goodness. We beseech thee, Lord, to fulfil thy promises to thy redeemed. Let the souls of thy people know thee, under all thy gracious characters. Thou art the Chief Corner Stone in thy spiritual building. On thee would I rest all my hopes, for life, for death, for time, and for eternity. Thou art the nail in a sure place; for on thee is firmly fixed the whole hopes of the Church, not only in respect of the life that now is, but for that which is to come. Oh! do thou strengthen thy Judah, and bless thine Israel. Save the house of Joseph, as thou hast said; yea, save all thy redeemed, both of Jew and Gentile, and bring the whole as one fold into the land of spiritual *Gilead*; and into the everlasting mountain of *Lebanon*, thy glorious kingdom. To thee the whole Church are looking, and on thee, they are resting for those blessings. Do, Lord, as thou hast said. And, oh! that the Lord may hasten his blessed purpose for his people, when righteousness shall cover the earth, as the waters do the channel of the great deep; and when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and incense shall be offered to the Lord, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same. Amen.

Chapter 11

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 11:1-3

Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. (2) Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down. (3) *There is* a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

The thirty pieces of silver, mentioned in this Chapter as the price given for the Almighty Speaker in this Chapter, serves for a key to open and explain the rest. And as the passage is expressly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Evangelist, we cannot err, if we accept the whole Chapter as principally referring to him. Opening the doors of Lebanon, meaning the Church, serves to show that the hand of the Lord was in the judgments of Jerusalem. Those gates, which were forever shut against receiving the truths of Jesus, shall now be opened to destruction. But, though this may be, and no doubt is, in relation to temporal things, suited to the description of that event, yet an higher spiritual sense is the first and great object; intended to be conveyed. The heart is to be opened by grace, or broken by judgment. *A spirit of judgment, and a spirit of burning*, are the great means the Lord makes use of, to melt the hard heart of sinners, and to consume the lusts and affections. Howling, distress, and anguish of soul, will always attend these divine operations, Isaiah 4:4.

ZECHARIAH 11:4-11

Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter; (5) Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed *be* the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not. (6) For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver *them*. (7) And I will feed the flock of slaughter, *even* you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

(8) Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. (9) Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another. (10) And I took my staff, *even* Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. (11) And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it *was* the word of the LORD.

The flock of the slaughter, plainly means the Lord's people. And as the great ones of the earth oppress them, they are very properly so called. But how sweet and gracious are the expressions of the Lord Jesus. Though their own shepherds regard them not, yet Jesus will. Every oppressed child of God should remember this! Various have been the opinions of learned men, concerning what is meant by the two staves; Beauty and Bands. It hath struck me since I began these observations upon the passage, that by *Beauty* is meant the Gospel, and by *Bands*, is meant the Law. For surely a Gospel that proclaims mercy, pardon, and peace, through another's righteousness, and not our own, must be beautiful and engaging to a soul truly convinced of sin, and conscious that he hath no righteousness in him. While, on the other hand, the law, which is the ministration of death, may always be called bands, for we are by nature, and by practice, bound in the chains of it all our lives long, until Christ hath made us free. Reader! can you truly say, and say it with full assurance of faith: *Truly, Lord, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds*. Psalm 116:16. By breaking the staff Beauty, is not meant the Lord's breaking off connection with his people, or lessening the sweet effects of the blessed gospel; but it may mean with-drawings, hidings, corrections, and the like. Psalm 89:30-35.

ZECHARIAH 11:12-13

And I said unto them, If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver. (13) And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

Nothing can be clearer, than that this prophecy referred to the person of Christ. See Matthew 27:9. It is worthy the Reader's remark, that the price a Jewish servant paid, in the case of an ox goring him, or her, was the same. Exodus 21:32.

ZECHARIAH 11:14

Then I cut asunder mine other staff, *even* Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

The cutting asunder of the other staff Bands, may serve perhaps to show, that there can be no lasting amity in the mere obligations of the law. Judah will vex Ephraim, and Ephraim Judah, No union but in Christ and his Gospel.

ZECHARIAH 11:15-17

And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. (16) For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. (17) Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

Foolish shepherds, and idle shepherds, mean one and the same. Unfaithful pastors; ministers for hire and filthy lucre, who are described by *Ezekiel* at large; Ezekiel 34, from beginning to end. The Lord deliver his people from all such! Amen.

Reflections.

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

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

Chapter 12

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 12:1

The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

The Chapter opens with a solemn preface of the Lord's distinguishing mercy over Israel; and the Lord, in confirming this love and favour to his people, takes to himself his glorious name in creation, and forming the spirit of man within him. There seems to be somewhat particularly striking in this assumption of character by Jehovah, for we find him more than once introducing himself to his Church and people under it. See Isaiah 63:5. Psalm 104:1-9. Jeremiah 10:12-13. Psalm 136:5-8. By the burden of the word of the Lord is not meant any thing oppressive, but on the contrary weighty blessings.

ZECHARIAH 12:2-9

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem. (3) And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. (4) In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. (5) And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in the LORD of hosts their God. (6) In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again

in her own place, *even* in Jerusalem. (7) The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify *themselves* against Judah. (8) In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David *shall be* as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. (9) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

I do not think it necessary to enter into an explanation of the many blessed promises contained in these verses. It is sufficient to say, that every thing that is gracious is promised to Judah and Jerusalem; and every thing of evil to their enemies. The Lord will fight for them, and woe to them that oppose his people. But, Reader! do not fail to spiritualize the whole of what is here said, and see how far, in the instance of Israel now, the same is verified. Is not Jesus both a sun and a shield to his redeemed in all ages? Will he not give grace and give glory? Psalm 84:11. Doth he not feed them in ordinances, support them in all their exercises, visit them, sup with them, and they with him? And, Reader, do observe the sure effects of those gracious acts of Christ. It is not enough to destroy their enemies, he will be as to Abraham, both their shield, and their exceeding great reward. Genesis 15:1. Hence the feeblest and humblest among them shall be as *David*, who though a stripling, subdued *Goliath*; and the house of *David*, that is, our spiritual David, even Christ, shall be as God; from union *with* Christ, and interest *in* Christ, his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption shall be theirs, who is the angel of the covenant. Sweet, precious, and refreshing consideration, to every poor feeble child of God! It is not what we are in ourselves, but what we are in him; not our attainments, or strength, or state, but Christ's all-sufficiency, all fulness, and perfection!

ZECHARIAH 12:10-14

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn. (11) In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. (12) And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; (13) The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; (14) All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

Here is the great Gospel promise of the New Testament dispensation; as Christ, with all his fulness, was the promise of the Old. And had the Prophet *Zechariah* been raised up by God the Holy Ghost, to have brought the Church of Jesus this one promise only, every true believer in Christ would have found cause to bless the Lord for the ministry of this man, through every period of the Church. This was, and is the great blessing in the charter of grace, which Jehovah promised Christ as God-man-Mediator in that covenant, as the result of his great undertaking. The Father engaged to give it to the seed of Christ, and to his offspring. And to this the Lord Jesus had an eye in all he told the Church concerning the Holy Ghost, and his seven-fold gifts, which should take place after his departure and return to glory, when he had finished redemption. See Isaiah 44:1-5. and Isaiah 49:21. Hence all those blessed assurances of Christ we meet with in his farewell Sermons. John 14, 15 and 16. Chapters in which the blessed Jesus hath so particularly described both the person and offices of God the Holy Ghost. I would beg the Reader to look at those scriptures I have referred to, and then read the account of the first outpouring of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, in confirmation of the same. Acts 2. throughout.

And as an antidote and preservative against the infidelity of the present adulterous and sinful generation, look at those scriptures also which tend to confirm the same, in assuring the Church, that the indwelling residence of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of believers, was promised in all ages of the Church, from the first descent of the Spirit, after Christ's ascension, until Christ shall again return in glory. See Ephesians 4:8-13. 1 Corinthians 12. throughout. Acts 19: 2. Romans 8:9-17. When the Reader hath paid all due attention to those several portions of the word of God, let him look attentively to this blessed verse of *Zechariah*. Let the Reader observe upon whom the effusions of the Holy Ghost is promised to be poured out; namely, *the house of David*, even our Almighty David, Christ; and the whole *inhabitants of his Church, Jerusalem*; that is, both Jew and Gentile, agreeably to the Father's promise. Isaiah 49:6. I beg the Reader next, to observe the characters marked of those blessed outpourings; namely, the *spirit of grace, and of supplications*. By the *spirit of grace*, we may include the whole gifts of God the Holy Ghost, teaching, illuminating, comforting, directing, and blessing the seed and offspring of Christ, in the knowledge and love of all the persons of the Godhead, for their merciful manifestations in the covenant of redemption. And by the *spirit of supplications*, must comprise the whole of prayer and praise, if the exercise of all those goings forth of the soul of a believer upon the person, work, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Psalm 43:3-4. Romans 8:26-27. The verse then goes on to describe the result of the Spirit's work in the heart; *and they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him*. Here we have not only a sure and unerring prophecy of Christ's being pierced, but also a blessed prophecy of a work to be wrought by the Holy Ghost in the heart of all his redeemed. The believer is led by that grace poured out, so to look to Christ, as One whom *we* have

pierced; that is, to see that our sins became the cause of Christ's death. And the soul on whom the Holy Ghost pours out of his gracious influences, so beholds Christ, and so regards the cross. Not the Jews, not Herod, *not* Pontius Pilate, but my sins (the soul will then say) that crucified the Lord of life and glory. Hence will follow *the mourning as for an only son, a bitterness as for a first born*; that is, sincere heartfelt sorrow; nothing feigned, but real, deep, and lasting. The mourning is so great as to be compared to that in the sorrow of *Hadadrimmon*, in the valley of *Megiddo*. Some have thought that two seasons of Israel's mourning are here referred to, The *first* in the destruction of the *Benjamites*, at the rock *Rimmon*. See Judges 20:45-47. And the *other*, in the instance of *Josiah*, killed at *Megiddo*. 2 Kings 23:29-30. But the Reader should further observe, that this mourning under the Spirit's operations, is described, not only as a general mourning, in which the whole land, that is, the whole family of Christ, both Jew and Gentile, mourn; *but special, and personal* mourning. Sin is a personal thing, and therefore every individual child of God, groaning under sin, will feel that true sorrow, which a view of Christ on the cross, dying for sin, must and will occasion. *The families apart, and their wives apart*, seems to intimate; that these gracious impressions are to themselves secret and retired. *The heart knoweth its own bitterness*. Proverbs 14:10. The ministers, the house of *Levi* are said to weep *between the porch and the altar*. Joel 2:17. Such is the spirit of grace and supplication, and such are the gracious effects!

REFLECTIONS

Almighty Lord! we desire to praise thee, for thy tender mercies to Jerusalem. Do, Lord, as thou hast said. May the Church of Jesus be a cup of trembling to all that dare oppose

her great salvation in her Lord. Smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness that would trample on thy peaceable followers; and may all the inhabitants of thy Jerusalem, thine holy city, bare their strength in the Lord of hosts, their God!

Reader! see, I pray you, whether the Lord's strength is made perfect in your weakness; and as you know where, and in whom your confidence can alone be found, enquire whether the sweet promises in this Chapter be in your experience. If he that is feeble among the *Lord's* people, be as David; and the house of David as God; are these testimonies made personal with *you*? If it be among the gracious promises to the seed of Christ, that the Lord will pour out upon them both a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplications; do you know that you are Christ's seed by these sure marks and characters? Doth the Holy Ghost lead you, teach you, guide you, and help you, in your approaches to the mercy seat? Doth He glorify to your view the Lord Jesus? Doth He take of the things of Christ, and shew to you? Doth He shew Christ's fulness to your soul, and your want of him, in such a way as to make it appear, that Christ is exactly suited to you, and you to Christ? This is to take of Christ, and shew to the people. And this is to glorify Christ, and comfort a poor believer. It is in this way the Holy Ghost confirms those sweet and blessed promises, in becoming, both a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplication; a spirit of truth, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter. May the Lord give both to Writer and Reader, daily testimonies both to this scripture, and to all the promises, which in Christ Jesus are yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us.

Chapter 13

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 13:1

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

If by faith, as the Prophet wrote, the Reader is led now to contemplate the mercy here promised, he must take his stand at the foot of the cross, and behold the soldier's spear, as the instrument opening the fountain in the heart of Christ, as Jehovah appointed, for sin and for uncleanness. I need not again repeat what hath been so often observed through all the writings of the Prophets; namely, that the day here alluded to, is the day of the Gospel, Christ's day and glory. Looking at Jesus on the cross, we do indeed behold the Lamb of God, as John the Baptist cried out in his ministry, taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself. John 1:29. And, Reader! do not fail to observe, that this sacred laver for cleansing, is a fountain, not a stream, but a fountain, springing from itself. So the Church sung. Song of Solomon 4:15. And observe yet further, for whom it is opened, namely, the same as in the following Chapter, the spirit of grace and supplications were to be opened upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jesus' whole family, both Jew and Gentile, for all are alike unclean, and all need cleansing. Hence the Church in heaven are represented as having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:14. Reader! sit down by faith around this crimson fountain, and contemplate the whole Church as made clean only by the washing in this one laver; and when you have duly pondered

the vast and momentous subject, look up, and bless Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, for this unequalled gift, whereby alone all our uncleanness, filthiness, and sin, could be done away. 1 John 1:7. 1 Corinthians 6:11. Ezekiel 36:24-32.

ZECHARIAH 13:2-6

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. (3) And it shall come to pass, *that* when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. (4) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: (5) But he shall say, I *am* no prophet, I *am* an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. (6) And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends.

Under the figurative language of scripture, by various ways, in these verses, are described the blessed consequences of being cleansed in this fountain of Christ's blood. Idolatry, false prophecy, and unclean spirits, are promised to be removed. And such will be the attachment to Christ, and his interest in a love to his Church and people, that the enemies of the Gospel, wheresoever, or in whomsoever they are found, however near or dear in nature, will be disowned. Deuteronomy 13:6-10.

ZECHARIAH 13:7

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

That what is here said refers to the person of Christ, we can need no other authority than Christ himself, See Matthew 26:31. And when we enter into the several things contained in it, nothing can be more decisive in proof, that none but God himself could have dictated this scripture, and none but God himself could have brought about the accomplishment of it. Here is a solemn call for a sword to awake; as if it had been long sleeping and inactive. And if we consider the flaming sword, placed after the fall at the east of the garden of Eden, as here called upon, we must allow it had been long in that state. For as none could enter there but Christ, and he only by blood, so now in its execution, it might well be called an awakening. I humbly conceive, that this might be the sword spoken of. For though I am inclined to believe, that the cherubim and flaming sword, placed at the entrance of Eden, were placed there to point *to* Christ, the Tree of Life, and not to keep *sinner*s from Christ; yet I am equally persuaded, that Christ only could enter as our forerunner. It was his province, and his only, to open this new and living way by his blood, Genesis 3:24. Hebrews 10:19-20. The next striking passage in this verse, is the glorious person against whom this sword was called upon to awake; namely, my *Shepherd*: not the sheep, but the Shepherd; and not simply any one Shepherd, but one particular Shepherd, even Jehovah's Shepherd. Sweet thought by the way, and I beg the Reader not to overlook it; Jehovah's Shepherd is also the believer's Shepherd! David called Christ so; *the Lord*, said he, *is my Shepherd*. And, Reader! is he not yours, and mine also? Then learn to say as David did. See Psalm 23, every word of it. But to go on. This Shepherd is also said to be the Man; not a Man, simply as such, or any Man, but one identical Man; *the Man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts*. Reader! pause over the wonderful expressions, and mark them well. This Shepherd is a true, real, and proper Man, in his human nature. And he is

no less in his divine nature, fellow to the Lord of Hosts. Can any thing be more plain? Can any thing be more blessed. *Oh! my soul*, I would say, (as Deborah did in her holy triumphs, and as I feel my whole soul fully grounded in the eternal truth;) *O, my soul, thou hast trodden down strength*; for so doth every faithful believer, whom God the Spirit hath given to believe, amidst the infidelity of the awful day in which we live, Judges 5:21. Here then is Jehovah the Father calling upon the sword to awake against Christ. For if Christ will be a surety, a sacrifice, then must this glorious Messiah be cut off; though not for himself. Daniel 9:26. And this being done, Jehovah promiseth, that though when the Shepherd is smitten, the sheep shall be scattered, yet he wilt turn his hand upon the little ones; that is, Jehovah undertakes that all the blessed consequences of his redemption shall follow to his Church and people. God the Father engageth so to do. Sweet thought to the poor, weak, and feeble little ones of Christ's fold. See those sweet promises to that amount, Ezekiel 34:11-16. John 10:15, 28, 29.

ZECHARIAH 13:8-9

And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die; but the third shall be left therein. (9) And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It *is* my people: and they shall say, The LORD *is* my God.

There will be a sifting time in the Church, not for the terror or trial of the *real* Church of Christ, for the Lord knoweth them that are his. But this trial is for the discovery of nominal Christians from true believers. All the scriptures declare concerning this time, And Jesus himself left it in testimony with the beloved Apostle John. Revelation 2:8-10; 3:7-13. The Lord will also try and exercise the graces of his Holy Spirit he hath given them, with afflictions and various trials. And this is

what is meant by bringing them through the fire. But then let the Reader be careful to observe, (for it is an important, observation,) that these trials of God's faithful people are never made by way of discovery, whether they are or are not his people, for *known unto God are all his works from the beginning*; but purely that they may be conformed to the image of their glorious head. See those two striking scriptures to the point. Romans 8:29. and Isaiah 48:10. Reader! it is a grand point in Gospel truth, to stand confirmed in this glorious doctrine, that in Christ the Church is beheld and accepted; and therefore God brings his redeemed into exercises for furtherance in grace, and not to prove what is already known, whose they are; for this would be to rest the final consequence of grace upon man's obedience, and render uncertain Christ's merit and death. Blessed be God! salvation hath more sure ground to rest upon. The Prophet expresses the blessed covenant, in the full terms of it, when running it up to the fountain head: *I will say, saith God, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God.*

REFLECTIONS

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

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

redeemed, that they might be made the righteousness of God in thee!

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

Chapter 14

CONTENTS

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

ZECHARIAH 14:1-5

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. (2) For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. (3) Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. (4) And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the

mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. (5) And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, *and* all the saints with thee.

The wonderful events spoken of in this Chapter require great grace and the divine teachings of God the Holy Ghost to understand. Whether the things promised refer to the first coming of Christ *only*, or whether they respect in part his *second* coming; it would be presumption in me to speak positively. Those circumstances which plainly respect the days of Christ's flesh, we cannot hesitate to decide upon; since we who live in the present hour of Gospel truth, have seen the fulfillment of them in Christ and his Apostles. But we may humbly express our apprehensions concerning such also as have their tendencies to the event of Christ's *second* coming, when we merely send them forth as enquiries, and not as so many determinations. In the opening of this Chapter, the promise is of the Lord's coming in the flesh. This hath been fulfilled. The miseries of Jerusalem follow in the second verse. And the events here recorded, we may very safely refer to the memorable destruction which took place after Christ's return to glory; and which Christ himself foretold. Matthew 24:2-21. A ruin so great, as (according to the great historian of the Jews,) was never equalled in all the annals of mankind. The third and fourth verses of *the Lord's going forth to battle, and his fast standing upon Mount Olives*, must refer to a subsequent history. For though he often visited this Mount in the days of his flesh, yet certain it is, he did not stand there openly and personally to the view of his people, at the siege of Jerusalem; neither indeed did he give the least reason to his disciples to expect he would. It is therefore probable, that the Prophet in these verses, might be looking so far forward

as to our Lord's *second* coming; and if so, there is a correspondence between this scripture and what the angels said to the astonished disciples at our Lord's ascension. See Acts 1:11-12. See Jude 14-15. Job 19:25. In respect to what is said about the days of *Uzziah*, *Amos*, the Prophet, gives some account of it, Chapter 1:1. And *Isaiah* talks of the fleeing of the people from the glory of his majesty, *when the Lord ariseth to shake terribly the earth*. See Isaiah 2:10-22.

ZECHARIAH 14:6-7

And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the light shall not be clear, *nor* dark: (7) But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, *that* at evening time it shall be light.

By these verses, it should seem is intended to shew that this great day of the Lord will be ushered in, with a season remarkable neither for brightness nor darkness. The divine manifestations to the Church, and to individuals, will not be so clear as the Church might wish; neither so dark as to induce fear that Christ's Spirit had left the earth. Such as it is, in the experience of God's people, a mingled state of grace and corruption. But, as it is well known to the Lord, he will brighten up the dark shades, and when the season is at the worst, and most unpromising, the Lord will turn our darkness into light. Observe, Reader! the thing itself is miraculous, and therefore it must be the Lord's own work. And this is the character of grace, from beginning to end.

ZECHARIAH 14:8

And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

The living waters, flowing from the Lord giving life, comes in here, to the relief of the dark and dying frames of his people.

The Gospel, with all its influence, will flow in all directions, as the Lord shall appoint, both in winter and in summer. *Ezekiel's* vision was to the same amount. Ezekiel 47:1, &c. So was the beloved Apostle's. Revelation 22:1. But, both these have a reference, as hath been generally supposed, to the latter day glory. Hence therefore, this seems to be a confirmation to what was said before, in the opening of this Chapter. The Reader will not forget the Lord's conversation with the woman of *Samaria*. John 4:10-14.

ZECHARIAH 14:9

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Here again surely the spiritual kingdom of the Lord Jesus is plainly marked. In the present hour, what endless varieties of sects, even among Christians, do we meet with. But, when this blessed period shall arrive, Jesus will be the one Universal Monarch, and his dominion *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*. Psalm 72:8. And what is beautifully connected with this view of Christ's universal kingdom, is, the glorious doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead, existing in the threefold character of persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, will be the religion of the whole earth. For it is said, *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*. Isaiah 11:9.

ZECHARIAH 14:10-15

All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and *from* the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. (11) And *men* shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. (12) And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes

shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. (13) And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. (14) And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. (15) And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

The beloved Apostle John, when in a vision he saw the new heaven and the new earth and the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, tells us, that the first heaven, and the first earth, were passed away, and that there was no more sea. Revelation 21:1-2. Whether this hath a spiritual meaning, that the old world's corruptions are removed, or whether this be a literal truth, I dare not, indeed I cannot determine. But one thing at least is certain, there will be a wonderful change in the circumstances of mankind. The expression is very strong to imply a literal sense of the passage, for it is said, that *all the land*, south of Jerusalem, *shall be lifted up and inhabited*. The blessings to the Lord's people, and the awful judgments on the enemies of Christ, are strongly marked.

ZECHARIAH 14:16-18

And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. (17) And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. (18) And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that *have* no *rain*; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

I beg the Reader to remark, somewhat more particularly, the honor put upon the feast of tabernacles. This feast, if the Reader will consult Leviticus 23:34. he will discover, that it was intended evidently to typify the human nature of Christ. For as Israel then abode in a tabernacle, so God in our nature, in the person of Christ, would substantially dwell with us. Hebrews 8:2. Now, wherefore was this feast to be so eminently distinguished in this latter day dispensation, but in honor of Christ's tabernacling in our nature? Is not this a further confirmation, how much this concluding Chapter of the Prophet was looking into more distant times, than the first open manifestation of Christ? Revelation 21:3. And the contempt of it, having no influence of the Spirit, of which rain was a type and emblem, is very striking also.

ZECHARIAH 14:20-21

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. (21) Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

As in the kingdom of grace, the glorious King and High Priest of Zion, hath made all his redeemed Kings and Priests to God and the Father; holiness unto the Lord shall be even upon the bells of the horses, as well as upon the mitre of his people. Christ is the holiness of his people, and therefore all and every thing in his kingdom is made holy in him. By the *Canaanite* being destroyed out of the land, is meant every thing that is unclean, or that loveth, or maketh a lie. Revelation 21:27. The term *Canaanite* is evidently made use of to imply this, for the kingdom of *Canaan* itself hath been destroyed time immemorial; so that it would be nothing new to say, there should be no more the *Canaanite* in the house of

the Lord, for that hath long since ceased. But, the sense is, every thing shall be holy, in the holiness of Jesus, and the Church of Christ in the earth is delivered from all corruption. Oh! blessed period! Oh! dearly to be longed for hour! Lord, hasten it! Thy kingdom come!

REFLECTIONS

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

be completed, and thy kingdom of glory be fully come. Then, O Lord, will the whole choir of angels cry aloud, the heavens, and all the powers therein. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets, Apostles, and all the ransomed sons of Zion, in one hymn of praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Israel's Jehovah ascribe praise for ever! Amen.

THE PROPHET

MALACHI

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are arrived to the last of the minor Prophet's writings, with which the Sacred Canon of the Old Testament closeth; and a very sweet portion of the inspired work this forms. *Malachi* signifies angel or messenger; and it should seem from that passage we have in the first Chapter, and 13th verse of *Haggai's* prophecy, that in that period of the Church, the servants and messengers of the LORD were called *Malachi-JEHOVAH*, Angels or Messengers of the LORD. We have not the smallest account in scripture concerning *Malachi*, who he was, or from what tribe he sprung; and hence some, have conjectured, that he was in reality what his name signifies, an angel. But this must be wholly conjectural, and very improbable. The time of his ministry appears to have been somewhat more than three hundred and fifty years before the coming of CHRIST. The scope of his prophecy is to prepare the Church for the LORD'S appearing; and this is done in pointing expressly to the person and office of John the Baptist, as CHRIST'S forerunner. And as GOD the HOLY GHOST was now with

this servant's ministry, about to close the whole tenor of prophecy, and a long dark night was to take place, until that harbinger of day should come as CHRIST'S herald; we have sketched some more striking features of the LORD JESUS ministry, in addition to what the other Prophets had been commissioned to give, concerning our LORD'S person and character. And the several quotations made from this prophecy of *Malachi* in the New Testament, not only serves to confirm the authority of it, but to recommend it more strongly to the heart. See Matthew 11:10. Mark 1:2. Luke 1:17. Matthew 17:12. Mark 9:11, 12. Luke 7:27. Romans 9:13. I only add a prayer to GOD the HOLY GHOST, that both on our entrance on this blessed prophecy, progress through it, and in our closing of it, as the scripture with which the Almighty LORD hath sealed up the visions to his servants the Prophets, the minds both of Writer and Reader of this Commentary, may be graciously guided by the SPIRIT of truth, into all truth, to his glory and our happiness in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

MALACHI 1:1

The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

The title of this prophecy as a *burden*, is not meant to express a matter grievous in its weight, but blessed in its importance.

It is the LORD'S burden, and brings with it the LORD'S blessing. Burdensome indeed to sinners, but refreshing to saints.

MALACHI 1:2

I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? *Was not Esau Jacob's brother*, saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob,

Every word in this address of the LORD is weighty, and deserves the closest attention. Reader, pray observe how the LORD opens his discourse, with referring to his love. Yes! this is the source, the fountain, and cause of all Israel's mercies; and the subject begins in eternity, in the gift of CHRIST, GOD'S dear SON, and reaches through time to eternity, forever. And observe further, the insensibility of GOD'S people here pointed out by the question, *wherein hast thou loved us?* Reader! do not in considering the Israel of old, as spoken of in this Chapter, overlook the Israel now. The LORD'S Israel are all the same in every age in themselves; ignorant, ungrateful, and for the most part lost to a sense of distinguishing mercies. Romans 3:9. I beg the Reader, before he goeth further, to turn back to Jeremiah 31. the four first verses. And when he hath duly pondered the wonderful subject. I would have him particularly to attend to this doctrine of distinguishing grace, here preached to the Church by the LORD himself The LORD demands concerning the fact, *Was not Esau Jacob's brother?* Yes! he was, yea, his *elder* brother, and therefore as such, concerning the right of inheritance, was *legally* intitled, and by the LORD'S own appointment, to the birth-right. But gospelly considered, he was set aside, and by the LORD himself from it, and *Jacob* preferred. And what tended to confirm this doctrine yet more, and to make it; unanswerably conclusive, was, that

this choice of the younger, and rejection of the elder, was in the decree of the LORD, before that either was born. *Paul*, the Apostle, was commissioned by the HOLY GHOST, in the after ages of the Church, to preach on this Sermon of the LORD, and to make this comment upon it; and certainly by that authority, the doctrine is laid down with a firmness of divine decision none can safely dispute. I beg the Reader to turn to the Apostle's subject. Romans 9 from 6 verse to the end, and then see the history of this memorable transaction. Genesis 25:20 to the end, and Genesis 27, throughout. And I beg further to call the Reader's attention to this doctrine, from the same scriptural authority, that all these tokens of distinguishing grace, personally to Jacob, was not limited to Jacob, but included all the seed of Jacob. In confirmation, see Genesis 28:1-14. Hence therefore, the burden of *Malachi's* prophecy you see is a blessed burden indeed; for it contains CHRIST in his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. The blessings given to Jacob, it is plain, were not temporal, for he no sooner had it, than he was compelled to flee for his life; and few and evil, as he told Pharaoh at the close of his pilgrimage, had been his days. Genesis 47:9. But the whole of this distinguishing grace and love the LORD had to Jacob and to his seed, as beheld in CHRIST, and accepted in CHRIST, was in respect to the blessings of redemption. Reader! what a vast thought is here, in proof of the love of GOD in CHRIST, being set forth altogether free, without all motives of good or evil, in the happy receivers of this unspeakable mercy; not only before they have done good or evil, but before they were born! Reader! do not turn hastily away from this subject. Pause over it. How many are there the distinguishing objects of this rich, free mercy in CHRIST, who through the weakness

of their faith, and their inattention to divine things, even after partaking of the sweet effects of it, in regenerating, converting, renewing grace, are frequently without full and clear views of their happy and unspeakably blessed state in CHRIST, in the enjoyment of it?

MALACHI 1:3-5

And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness. (4) Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. (5) And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.

The Apostle to the Hebrews explains this account of *Esau*, who is said to be *a fornicator, and a profane person*. Hebrews 12:16. left to a dissolute mind, being rejected, or as this scripture speaks, *hated* of God. And so all his race. For, when it is said, as in this scripture, that his mountains and heritages were laid waste, it is meant spiritually so. As the mountain of the LORD'S house is put for the Church, Micah 4:1, 2. so here is meant by the mountain of *Esau*, the state of reprobation. *Esau*, and the seed *of Esau*, void of grace here, and no part in the glory of CHRIST hereafter. Mount *Seir* was a type of desolation inhabited, by Esau and his seed. Genesis 36:8.

MALACHI 1:6-8

A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? (7) Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible. (8) And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not

evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

These are very strong expressions of expostulation. GOD appeals to the common principles and laws of nature. Children and servants do reverence to them that have the rule over them. How much more is due to the LORD, as the common Father of his people. Reader! how heightened is this principle to believers, who are adopted in and through CHRIST, into the family and household of faith, and are permitted, yea, commanded to cry, Abba, FATHER! Galatians 4:6. Holy aggravated the sin to the priests of GOD; and all believers in CHRIST are made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. Revelation 1:6. I humbly conceive, that there is an eye in this expostulation to the Pharisaical pride and self-righteousness of men, which in after ages manifested itself in opposition to the righteousness of CHRIST. Everything offered without an eye to CHRIST is polluted. It is, in the language of the Prophet, *a lame and blind sacrifice*. And as under the law, whatever was blemished was rejected, so in the Gospel, all offerings but the one perfect offering of the LORD JESUS CHRIST is blemished and rejected.

MALACHI 1:9

And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.

This verse comes in as a very affectionate advice after the strong expostulation going before, and which proves what all the other parts of GOD'S holy word declare, that *the LORD is very pitiful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great mercy*.

Isaiah 30:18.

MALACHI 1:10

Who *is there* even among you that would shut the doors *for nought?* neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

Here again, the LORD showeth the unworthiness and ungraciousness of man, and his unprofitableness to GOD. All which, if I mistake not, is introduced with a view to heighten the abundant grace and goodness of GOD. It is as if the LORD had said, though none of you will so much as open the doors of my house without a reward, yet my love, and the blessings I give are all free, and without restraint, yea, against all undeservings.

MALACHI 1:11

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

This is a most blessed verse, which comes in amidst the charges the LORD had brought against Israel, like some sweet stream, in a dry and barren land, and it is full of grace from beginning to end. I beg the Reader to remark with me, how blessedly it speaks of that glorious kingdom of grace, in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which was to be so extensive, and including both Jew and Gentile; evidently therefore alluding to the days of the Gospel. And I beg him further to remark, that the incense here promised to be offered in every place, is expressly said to be a pure offering. Here again, as plainly

pointing to JESUS, whose one offering, once offered, perfected for ever them that are sanctified. No offering but his could be pure; for even the prayers of the saints can only come up pure before GOD, in, and through Him, and the censer of his offering. See Revelation 8:4, 5. Hebrews 10:14. And I beg to offer one observation more on this delightful verse, which is to remind the Reader, that as a confirmation of the whole, JEHOVAH twice in it points to his great name, as the cause of all our mercies. So then, from east to west, in the great revolution of the sun's power, through all the varieties of the earth, this blessing is absolutely promised. The North and South are not spoken of indeed, probably because the extremities of both are not habitable; but in every place where the people are, this blessing, and from free sovereign grace alone, shall be given in and through the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Blessed, blessed forever be JEHOVAH, for JESUS CHRIST! LORD! hasten thy kingdom, and fulfil this promise! Amen.

MALACHI 1:12-14

But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible. (13) Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is* it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. (14) But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I *am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.

It should seem, from the solemn expressions with which the Chapter concludes, and connected with what was said in a preceding part, at the sixth verse, concerning the priests that despised the LORD'S name; that the threatenings were

particularly and personally directed to them. And how truly awful they are! They are charged with despising the LORD's name; polluting the Altar; profaning the table of the LORD; offering the torn, and the lame for sacrifice, and begrudging their labor, yea, counting it a weary service. And are we the priests of the LORD, who minister in holy things, now free from these solemn charges? It is an awful enquiry! If our services, which we declare with our lips, to be *perfect freedom*, become irksome and unpleasant to the heart; if we count our attendance a weariness, and wish to avoid it; if we offer ourselves the torn and the lame; I mean *our offerings*, which are all torn indeed, and lame, instead of the one pure and perfect offering of CHRIST, as the sole cause of acceptance, or teach our people so;—what shall I say? If we enter upon our ministry for filthy lucre, and when entered, consider the service as a drudgery, and follow it no further than as it brings worldly gain; in either case, or in all these instances, wherein doth the christian priest, of every rank and character, escape the awful sentence pronounced in these solemn charges on the Jewish? Blessed LORD, manifest the greatness of thy grace, as thou hast here proclaimed thy great name, and put thy fear in our hearts; for indeed thy name is dreadful, even among the heathen, however lightly, regarded by thy people.

REFLECTIONS

Almighty LORD! grant both to Writer and Reader grace, in receiving the message of this prophecy, from thy servant the Prophet, that we may indeed accept the whole of it as the burden of the LORD, bringing to us the great things of thy

blessed word. We pray to mark the distinguishing grace of our GOD, in his choice of *Jacob*, and rejection of *Esau*. And we humbly beg the LORD to help our solemn meditations on this subject, with his divine teaching, that under the HOLY GHOST'S influence, we may give diligence *to make our calling and election sure*. Oh! for grace, to know thee as our FATHER; yea, our GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS; and to offer thee that honor, and to worship thee and love thee with that holy fear, as becometh the redeemed of the LORD!

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

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

This Chapter is not unlike the former in the opening of it; but

the Prophet is soon led to speak in JEHOVAH'S name of the LORD JESUS, under the character of Levi. The after part is in reproof for the people's infidelity.

MALACHI 2:1-4

And now, O ye priests, this commandment *is* for you. (2) If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart. (3) Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts; and *one* shall take you away with it. (4) And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

We have an authority in the opening of this message, to refer it to the priests of the Jewish dispensation. But, I think, without violence, though the priests, as leaders in the temple service, are first in order, yet the doctrine contained in what is here said may be supposed to have respect to all that attended their service, since dung was to be spread upon their solemn feasts. And was it not (I do not say as much, only ask the question,) thus to show the total inability of all services, and all offerings, to bring glory to God? What otherwise could be the meaning of the punishment, *to curse their blessings*? Is not the curse of the fall upon every person, and every act, until taken away by CHRIST? And was not these things as shadows ministering to CHRIST? Oh! that men would now hear, and lay it to heart, both priests and people, that they might arrive at the Prophet's conclusion. Isaiah 64:6, 7.

MALACHI 2:5-6

My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him *for* the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. (6) The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was

not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

All that is here said of *Levi*, must be understood only as typical of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; for never could it be said of any other but CHRIST, that *iniquity was not found in his lips*. And though it be spoken as of a thing passed, yet that is no uncommon thing respecting the LORD JESUS. Isaiah spake of him by the spirit of prophecy, as a man despised and rejected of men, ages before he was openly manifested. He is despised, said Isaiah, Chapter 53:3. And John declared him to have been *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Revelation 13:8. And if we read this blessed account of our Great Levi, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and connect with what is here said our relationship to him, what can be equally lovely or blessed? It is with Him, JEHOVAH declares his covenant was made of peace. And indeed, He is the whole of it. And what endears it to our view under this most delightful character, is, that He, with whom the covenant was and is made, is the Fulfiller of it; the Messenger of it; the Administrator of it; and the Preserver of all the blessings of it. So truly blessed therefore, is this declaration of our GOD and FATHER, that we never can be sufficiently thankful for thus revealing his gracious mind and will concerning it. And those two verses come in, in this place, like a parenthesis, to relieve our souls from what was said before, and what follows, concerning the profaneness and impiety of the priests.

MALACHI 2:7-10

For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts. (8) But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of

Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. (9) Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. (10) Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

The Prophet is commissioned again in these verses, to follow up his former reproofs. The low and impoverished state of the Church, in the ordinances, which rightly used to lead to CHRIST, are real blessings; but if abused, to keep from CHRIST, become curses; these effects are said to be induced by their perversion. Then persons also are made contemptible. And it should seem also, from what is here said of their partial administration of the law, that they had forgotten their common relationship in Abraham. Hence the expostulation, *have we not all one Father?* Alas! how many evils spring out of one, even a departure from GOD!

MALACHI 2:11-17

Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. (12) The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. (13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth *it* with good will at your hand. (14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. (15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. (16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away:

for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously. (17) Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him*? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment?

These are all so many striking expostulations to the same amount; showing the people, that both in their conduct towards each other in relative and social duties, as well as in their reverence to the LORD, they had shamefully gone back, and committed transgressions. But in the midst of all, as if to show man his total unworthiness, and the LORD'S own glory, JEHOVAH describeth himself under that endeared character, the LORD the GOD of Israel; that is, GOD in covenant; and therefore as such, *he hateth putting away*. This is the grand cause for which Israel indeed is not put away, after all his rebellions, and all his departures. See similar passages, Isaiah 42. the last verses with the first verses of Isaiah 43. So again the close of Isaiah 43. with the opening verses of Isaiah 44. Ezekiel 16:58. to the end. Ezekiel 36:31. to end.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! while we take part in the just reproaches of Israel, in their kingdom of priests, in beholding their transgression, and feeling our own; let us seek relief from the distressing contemplation, by directing our view unto the LORD JESUS, our covenant of peace, and our all-sufficient righteousness. Hear what JEHOVAH, in this blessed portion of the Chapter, saith of Him. *First*, the LORD GOD bears testimony to Him, that He is the LORD'S covenant. *Secondly*, that the LORD gave the people, with all the blessings of the covenant to Him. *Thirdly*, observe

the high testimony of JEHOVAH to his personal holiness and purity, *the law of truth was in his mouth*. And, *lastly*, the success of his undertaking; for he is said to have *turned away many from iniquity*. Pause, Reader! and think with holy rapture and joy, of those glorious credentials to thy precious Redeemer and Mediator. Then turn once more to thy JESUS, and behold Him as JEHOVAH hath presented him to thee, thy peace through the blood of his cross; and in his righteousness contemplate thy righteousness in Him. Yes! thou blessed, gracious, holy Redeemer! thou art indeed all this, and more to thy people! The covenant, in all its sum and substance, thou art. Thou wert present in its contrivance: the foundation, hope, and end of it, in its fulfillment; the Messenger of it to thy people in the delivery of it; the Administrator of all its blessings in its accomplishment; and the fountain and Keeper of all the grace of it here in this life, and the glory of the whole of it in the life to come. Hail! thou glorious Covenant-Head of thy body the Church! *the fulness that filleth all in all*.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

MALACHI 3:1

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

The Prophet in the name of the LORD, opens with a blessed proclamation to the Church. The LORD JESUS had said by one of his servants, behold me! behold me! Isaiah 65:1. And now, by another, the Church is called upon to say, he is at the door. It is a blessed confirmation to this scripture, that when the LORD JESUS CHRIST was come, one of the Evangelists begins his gospel with saying, that this was to fulfil this very writing of this Prophet, as well as Isaiah's prophecy. See Mark 1:2. See also Isaiah 11:8. There can be no doubt to whom both Prophets, *Isaiah* and *Malachi* referred. John the Baptist was the herald, and forerunner of CHRIST. I beg, the Reader to be very particular in marking the characters here given of CHRIST, and as he looks upon the account, to keep his eye stedfastly fixed on the person and offices of the LORD JESUS, and he will discover their beautiful correspondence. He is said to be *the LORD whom they seek*. Now we are told in the Gospel, that when John the Baptist came, all men mused in their heart, whether he was the CHRIST or not, until John totally disclaimed it. See Luke 3:15. John 1:19-27. And so great was the expectation of the people for CHRIST'S coming, at the time he did, (because by the calculation of the books of the Prophets, the time was arrived,) that we are told, Simeon was waiting constantly for the consolation of Israel. And Anna, an aged woman, departed not night and day from the temple on this account. See Luke 2:25-38. By suddenly

coming to his temple, implies the certainty and swiftness of his approach. And when it is expressly called *his* temple, nothing surely could more decidedly prove his GODHEAD. For who but the LORD of Hosts can be the LORD of the temple? To ascribe a temple to any but GOD, would be the highest blasphemy. The word LORD, in this place, is *ADONAI*; meaning the bottom and foundation of it. See Isaiah 28:16. And it is no diminution of this glory of the GODHEAD, to call CHRIST both the messenger or angel of the covenant, as well as the covenant itself; for the LORD JESUS sustains all characters, as Mediator; and is both LORD of all, and Servant of all. Philippians 2:5-11. One feature more must be attended to, in this sweet verse. He is said not only to be the LORD whom his people *seek*, but whom his people *delight in*. Yes! he was truly described by the Prophet to be the *desire of all nations*. And so he is indeed, in the hearts of all his redeemed, in all kingdoms, nations, and climates of the earth. Every poor sinner, once made sensible of his own wants and miseries, and CHRIST'S ability to deliver from them, will have his whole affections centre in JESUS, and JESUS only. Such then was the Prophet's account of CHRIST; and such the correspondence of CHRIST to his prediction. JESUS proved his right to the Temple by the power he exercised there, when making a scourge of cords, and driving the buyers and sellers out of it. John 2:14-17. Some have thought, and justly thought, that this act of CHRIST in the Temple, was as striking a miracle as any he performed.

MALACHI 3:2-4

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: (3) And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

(4) Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

The question is solemn, *who may abide the day of his coming*, whether we consider the LORD'S *first* coming to a sinner in a way of grace, or hereafter in a day of judgment. Who can describe the soul exercises of the former? And none among the living can know the awfulness of the latter. But, among the faithful, we know that GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his first awakening the soul, becomes the Comforter. And the same Almighty SPIRIT, by a voice from heaven declared, those dead *blessed that die in the LORD*. This is a striking character of CHRIST, a Refiner and Purifier of Silver. And so JESUS is, when by his word and fire he breaks the hardened heart of sinners, and melts the soul into softness and love. Oh! the blessedness, when that Almighty Refiner hath fulfilled his promise in purging away all the dross of his people, and taking away all their sin. Isaiah 1:25. Sweet is then the offering of a regenerated, renewed soul, when in JESUS, and through JESUS the offering is made! It will be pleasant to JEHOVAH, because it is wholly of himself; and to himself in CHRIST.

MALACHI 3:5

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his wages*, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

This verse seems to stand by itself, and is indeed most awful to all the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST!

MALACHI 3:6

For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Here we have the confirmation of that glorious truth, which is the distinguishing character of JEHOVAH, his unchangeableness. And, Reader! amidst the perpetual fluctuating, dying, and perishing circumstances of ourselves, and all things around, what a grand bottom this is to rest upon, for time and eternity! Unchangeable in his nature, unchangeable in his purposes, unchangeable in all his covenant promises in CHRIST, to a thousand generations. Oh! for grace to keep it ever in remembrance, and to call to mind that this and this alone is the cause, why the seed of Jacob are not consumed.

MALACHI 3:7

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

Oh! what a charge is here, after contemplating the unchangeable nature of our covenant GOD in CHRIST, as in the preceding verse to consider our sad departure from the LORD. Reader! do not confine this view to Israel of old, but look at Israel now. How are we gone away from the LORD, as a nation, as a people? Time was, when the blessed and holy doctrines of our holy faith were cherished in this nation, by all ranks and orders of the people. When the distinguishing truths of the Gospel, such as the everlasting covenant love of GOD the FATHER, the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of GOD the SON; and the quickening,

converting, comforting influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST, were heard, preached on, and received with joy and thankfulness, both by ministers and people. But how are we gone away? We may now take up the language of the Prophet, and say, *how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!* Lamentations 4:1. Oh! that He, who saith return unto me, would graciously accompany the invitation with his power, and cause the hearts of the people, as the heart of one man, to return to the LORD, that our land might again be called *Hephzibah*, and *Beulah*. Isaiah 62:4.

MALACHI 3:8-9

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. (9) Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

Reader! look at those charges spiritually, and then ask, in what doth the robbery of GOD now consist? Is it not in denying, or disbelieving his covenant relations, and word, and oath, and promises? Is it not in slighting GOD'S dear SON, and setting up idols of self-righteousness in our own hearts? Is it not in thinking light of the HOLY GHOST'S work in the soul, as the sole means of conversion, and bringing the heart to GOD? Ponder over these things.

MALACHI 3:10-12

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*. (11) And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. (12) And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Read these verses also spiritually, and ask what are the tithes the LORD hath respect to in what is here said? What can the LORD be requiring of his creatures, when we know that the earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof? What is it then? I humbly conceive the souls of the truly awakened, regenerated believers, bring in revenues of praise to the bountiful giver of all, when GOD'S CHRIST is our CHRIST, and the LORD'S Holy One, is our Holy One. When the poor sinner thus, comes, and thus looks to the LORD, with an eye of faith to GOD'S rich covenant mercy in CHRIST, there is then meat in GOD'S house, for CHRIST himself is the living bread, and in Him, and by Him, the windows of heaven are opened, and blessings so profusely are poured out, that the gladdened heart finds more than his full bosom can hold. Then also the enemy is restrained; Satan is rebuked; ordinances are blessed; and the barrenness of the land is taken away! Oh! for such blessings as these on the nation, and ministers, and people!

MALACHI 3:13-18

Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee? (14) Ye have said, It *is* vain to serve God: and what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? (15) And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, *they that* tempt God are even delivered. (16) Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. (17) And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. (18) Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

I include the whole of these verses under one reading, in order to observe in them what the last verse expresseth, the discerning between the righteous and the wicked. And what can more strikingly set these things forth than what is here said. Here is the LORD'S charge against all ungodly, carnal, careless, and Christless persons. What is their conduct, their language, their manners, their behavior? The whole may be summed up in Job's account, *they say unto GOD, that is, if not in word, yet what is the same thing indeed, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Reader! look into common life, and take with you the words of the man of *Uz*, as set forth in his book; compare the one with the other, and say how exact a representation he hath made. I beg the Reader to look at the whole passage. Job 21 from 7-15.—Now mark the contrast in the LORD'S people, as set forth in this beautiful passage. *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another.* Of what do they speak? Of what do they think? for they are said also both to fear the LORD, and to think upon his name. Mark, I pray you, the several features by which they are here distinguished. And, oh! that the Reader and Writer, through grace, while marking the LORD'S account of his people by such distinguishing tokens, may find they are our own. And *first*, they are said *to fear the LORD.* Yes! the HOLY GHOST, by David, long since observed, that *the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.* Psalm 111:10. Such a fear, I apprehend, as includes the whole of vital godliness. And the effects that follow are then marked. *They thought upon his name*, that is, no doubt, GOD in his covenant love and faithfulness, as manifested in the person of his dear SON. For the name of GOD in scripture language, means the person, work, and offices of GOD, particularly as revealed in

redemption. And thus being full in *thought* of the LORD in his grace, and love to his people; they *spake* of those things to one another; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. And thus love was kindled, and communicated from one to another, by this heart-refreshing, soul-comforting conversation. They spake not now and then only, but *often* one to another. They helped each his fellow, when the glorious topics of redeeming love, in GOD the FATHER'S covenant mercy in CHRIST, the person, grace, and loveliness of JESUS, his blood and righteousness, and the SPIRIT'S work in the heart became the sweet subjects of discourse. And we are told, so pleasing are such things to the LORD, that, speaking after the manner of men, *he hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him*. Not that the LORD needs records, or makes any; or is listening to the words or actions of his creatures, by way of gaining information: *for all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*. Hebrews 4:13. But what is here said of the LORD'S hearkening, means his approbation of his redeemed, thus speaking together of the great things of GOD. He draweth nigh to all such, in a way of grace, and manifests himself to them, otherwise than he doth to the world. See a beautiful proof of this, Luke 24:13-32. John 14:22, 23. Psalm 145:18, 19. But we must not stop here, in our review of this blessed passage. The LORD adds a promise, and a most comprehensive one it is. *And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels*. The figure here made use of concerning the great day of GOD, is that of the world on fire, and CHRIST gathers his *Segullah*, his chosen ones, as jewels from the flame, as men would do by saving their valuables in such a time of destruction. And I

pray the Reader to observe, how the LORD speaks of them. *They shall be mine.* The people of GOD are so from everlasting, in the gift of the FATHER, the purchase of CHRIST'S blood, and the regenerating testimony in their hearts of the work of GOD the HOLY GHOST. But in that day he publicly owns them before a congregated world of men and angels, and takes them to himself forever. Oh! how eternally safe are all souls, in such securities! Oh! how gracious is the LORD, in the giving by the way such promises! LORD! give both Writer and Reader grace, to know our present interest in these sweet promises, and to live now in the enjoyment of them by faith, until we enter upon the everlasting possession of our inheritance by thy blood and righteousness in glory. Amen.

REFLECTIONS

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

offence of the cross ceased? Is not JESUS still *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence?* Oh! for the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to make known among the people the glories of CHRIST!

But, Reader! whatever others do, may it be your happiness and mine, to welcome the LORD CHRIST to his temple. Come, thou Almighty Refiner and Purifier! come and melt down all the dross and spots of our corrupt nature. Do thou as with fuller's sope, by the gracious influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, take out the uncleanness within, and purify all thy kingdom of priests, as the sons of Levi. Keep my poor heart, dearest JESUS, by thy restraining and preventing grace, from going away from thine ordinances, that in thee, and thy perfect righteousness, my offering may go up, and find acceptance in the beloved. And, oh! thou blessed bountiful LORD of all, and Giver of all; open the windows of heaven upon thy Churches, thy Ministers, and thy People; and pour out such a plentiful effusion of blessings in grace, that every heart may be made glad, and refreshed in thine house of prayer. Let the public ministration of thy word be accompanied with such a visible display of thy presence, that all nations may know, that where thy Church is, there is a delightsome land, and all shall call it blessed. And let the private communions of they that fear thee, be so sanctified with the holy conversation concerning Him that is always in their midst, that nothing but the name and sweet savor of JESUS may be known or heard among them. And do thou, dearest LORD, who art now hearkening, and hearing, and knowing all that passeth among thy people, and dost regard with peculiar tokens of thy favor, the affection of thy chosen; do thou remember all in that day,

when thou comest to make up thy jewels; yea, Almighty JESUS! manifest then in full open display, as thou dost now in private testify by thy SPIRIT, whose are thine, and how dear they are to thee. Say of every one, in that solemn hour, when thou drawest the everlasting distinction between the righteous and the wicked, *these are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto them a kingdom, as my FATHER hath appointed unto me. They shall eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

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

MALACHI 4:1

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

I cannot think with many, that this day spoken of, is the day of CHRIST'S first coming in the flesh. Neither do I conceive, that all the event's which took place in Jerusalem, after our LORD'S return to glory, can be said to have had their fulfillment of this prophecy. I am much more inclined to refer this day, that is said *to burn as an oven*, to the same day the Apostles speak of. See 2 Peter 3:7-12. Revelation 20:11 to the

end. Revelation 21:8.

MALACHI 4:2-3

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. (3) And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.

What a blessed account is here given of the LORD JESUS! under the figurative language of the sun, and the sun of righteousness, as the sole fountain of light, and life, and heat, and vivifying influence; CHRIST is described. And in how many ways, and by what a vast variety of means, the LORD JESUS becomes so to his people, it is impossible fully to describe. JESUS is all this, and infinitely more, from the first moment of conversion, through all the intermediate stages, until grace is consummated in glory. So that they all go forth under his blessed influence, and advance in the divine life with strength, and an assurance of firmness, as calves of the stall fattened and fed with constant attendance.

MALACHI 4:4

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.

I humbly conceive, that this verse of reminding the people of the law of Moses, was to bring them under the condemning sentence of Moses's law. As the law was the ministration of death, for so the Apostle, commissioned by the HOLY GHOST, was directed to call it, 2 Corinthians 3:7. this remembrance of it became very proper, and well timed, when CHRIST was approaching; intimating, that as the knowledge of sin came by the law, this might be made the schoolmaster unto CHRIST.

Romans 7:7. Galatians 3:24.

MALACHI 4:5-6

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: (6) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

I cannot but suppose that *Elijah*, and not John the Baptist, is intended here. I do not presume to say so much, but I venture to think it. *Malachi* had already declared the coming of John the Baptist, as the LORD'S forerunner, in the days of his flesh; and therefore there needed no note of admiration, saying, behold! in speaking of him again. Moreover, the awful day of GOD here spoken of, as burning like an oven, should seem to refer more to the day of judgment than to the first coming of CHRIST, which is always called glad tidings of good and great joy to all people. And as at the resurrection of CHRIST many saints arose from the grave: Why may not CHRIST'S second coming be so commemorated? Add to these, that as Elijah did not die the natural death of all men, but was carried up to heaven in a whirlwind, is it not possible, that when CHRIST returns to reign on earth, *Elijah* may be among those that shall reign with him? What the events of that reign upon earth may be, I presume not to say; but from the book of the Revelations, which describes in some measure the wonderful history, I can see no objection to the idea, that *Elijah* is here meant, and not John the Baptist. See Revelation 20 throughout. However, I beg the Reader to ponder well the subject, and look to GOD the SPIRIT for instruction in it. I only add on this Chapter, and indeed on the whole volume of the Old Testament together, that it is somewhat remarkable the close of it should be with the word *curse*, as the New

Testament, in the word Gospel, implies in its very title at the opening, *blessing*. If, however, Reader, it meant to say, that out of CHRIST everything is a curse, it is certainly as true as it is significant. And then it will equally follow, that in CHRIST everything is a blessing, which is a glorious and incontestable truth. The LORD hath united both Testaments, that while in one we read our condemnation, in the other we may, through grace, discover our deliverance; and *as in Adam all die, in CHRIST all shall be made alive*. Amen and Amen.

REFLECTIONS

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

Reader! what can I ask for you, or for myself, as a boon from a bountiful GOD in CHRIST, but that now, even now, while the day of grace continue, JESUS may arise as the sun of righteousness on our benighted souls, with healing in his wings. Be thou, dearest LORD, our light, our life, our righteousness, now, and forever. Oh! be thou the one great source of our peace, who hast been the confidence and hope of thine Israel; and as thou hast been made a curse for thy people, so may they be made the righteousness of GOD in

thee. Farewell *Malachi!* farewell till meeting together at this great day of GOD. May it be the portion of both Writer and Reader to meet all the *Malachis'* and *Elijahs'* of our covenant GOD in that day, when JESUS shall come to make up his jewels, and amidst the host of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, to praise GOD and the LAMB forever and ever.

And now, Reader, as with this Part of my *Commentary*, I close the sacred volume of the Old Testament scripture, I beg once for all, and finally, and fully, that you will bend the knee in prayer as the author hath done before you, that the LORD will bless all that it contains, as far as it is agreeable to his holy and eternal truths, and pardon all that is amiss, which human weakness, ignorance, and infirmity, have given birth to, in this feeble endeavour to be helpful to the LORD'S household. May that sin-bearing LAMB of GOD, that taketh away the iniquities of our most holy things, cleanse all that is here unholy and unclean. It is my intention, if the LORD favors such a design, to prosecute in the same plain and humble manner, the several Books of the New Testament, by way of Commentary. But this I leave, as I do all other events, bounded as they are within the limits of a life hastening now fast to a close, to Him who fixeth both the time and place of His people's habitation. In the mean season, I here set up my *Ebenezer* afresh. *Hitherto hath the LORD helped!* And concerning my further wishes to write the Commentary for the *New Testament*, as the LORD hath permitted me to finish one on the *Old*; if the gracious Master should say concerning this, as David remarked upon another occasion, *I have no delight in it*; with him I would submissively say, *Behold! here I am, let him do to me as seemeth him good Amen.*

PLYMOUTH, *CHARLES VICARAGE,*

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