

lay. Yes! I would answer. My soul desires to take the wing of faith, and light down at the memorable sepulchre, and see the sacred spot! Yes! I would flee there, but not stay there, but hasten to look upwards after a risen and ascended SAVIOR! Yea! I would seek grace to pursue my researches after JESUS, until I beheld him in that bosom of JEHOVAH, where he hath lain from all eternity!

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

Farewel *Matthew*, faithful recorder of my LORD's history! Thanks to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for thy services in his Church in those written memorials of the conception, incarnation, birth, baptism, fastings, temptations, ministry, miracles, parables, prophecies, agonies, conflicts, sufferings, death, resurrection, and return to glory, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Blessed be my GOD and SAVIOR, in calling thee from the receipt of custom to be an Evangelist! Oh! may the ministry of thy word be made blessed to my soul, and to the souls of thousands. And then as thou broughtest home the LORD JESUS to thine house, and then madest him a feast with publicans and sinners; so ere long JESUS will take thee and me, and all his redeemed home, to *the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven;* and feast our ravished souls, with the enjoyment of himself; and in him and through him, the whole persons of the GODHEAD in one unceasing banquet of holy joy for evermore. Amen and Amen.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. MARK.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

WE would enter upon this blessed Gospel, written by *Mark*, as we did that of *Matthew*, both, evidently, having been indicated by the Spirit of the living GOD, and with the same earnest waitings upon GOD the HOLY GHOST, to make it blessed, both to the Writer and to the Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*. And when we call to mind what are the blessed contents of it, every feeling of the soul

is called forth, in beholding the interesting records of the LORD of life and glory. Oh! who can go over the wonderful relation unmoved, which sets before us the life, ministry, miracles, discourses, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Oh! LORD the Spirit, be mercifully pleased to write the blessed contents in my heart!

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

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

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

THE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

It is remarkable, that in the opening of the Gospel according to *Mark*, he passeth over the wonderful event of CHRIST'S miraculous incarnation and birth. Probably the HOLY GHOST so appointed, as *Matthew* and *Luke* had been so circumstantial in the relation of the mystery of GOD *manifest in the flesh*. But the Reader will do well to turn to those scriptures, and connect them with what the Evangelist hath here related. Matt. i. ii. chapters. Luke i. and ii. John i. throughout. 1 Tim. iii. 16. When the Reader hath accomplished this service, I would refer him to the 3d chapter of *Matthew's* Gospel, with the observations of the *Poor Man's Commentary* upon it, in relation to what is here said of *John the Baptist*. And also, in what follows in that chapter, in reference to the baptism of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; both subjects being there so largely dwelt upon as to render any enlargement here unnecessary. But I beg to detain the reader one moment longer, just to observe, that both in the beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST'S, and the preaching of the *Baptist* as the forerunner of the LORD JESUS, the great and leading point of all John's ministry, in holding forth JESUS, was to shew the necessity of CHRIST'S baptism of his redeemed with the HOLY GHOST. Reader! do not forget, that this vast and momentous principle in the gospel of salvation, as it concerns every individual heir of CHRIST'S kingdom, is, after all, the great and distinguishing feature in the child of GOD. Paul put the question to the Church at *Ephesus*; and let you and I put it closely to our own consciences in the sight of GOD: *have you received the HOLY GHOST since ye believed?* Acts xix. 1—6 Oh! for the precious testimony of that *spirit of judgment, and spirit of burning*, whereby every truly regenerated believer is savingly witnessed to, in his own heart and conscience, that he is *born of God*! Isaiah iv. 2, 3, 4. Rom. viii. 14, 15, 16. Gal. iv. 6. John i. 12.

12 ¶ And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

I refer the Reader to the observations made on CHRIST'S temptations in Matt. iv. 3—11. And in addition to what is there offered, I would just beg to say, that very sweet are the consolations every child of GOD may draw, and indeed ought to draw, from those exercises of JESUS, when, at any time, brought under peculiar trials of his own. If the SON of GOD, when dwelling upon earth in substance of our flesh, was with the wild beasts, as well as tempted forty days of Satan, surely none of the members of his mystical body can wonder at their habitation and their exercises. And what can console a member of CHRIST'S mystical body, under the sharpest conflicts, equal to the assurance, that JESUS, in our flesh, was all this, and more; purposely that he might be the better suited to administer relief to all the trials of his people. And while as GOD, his divine nature enabled him both to know and provide a largeness equal to all that might be needed for their relief, as man, his human nature gave him a fellow-feeling, that the mercies he imparted should be so loving and similar as one man is to another. The HOLY GHOST hath said as much, and infinitely more, when by his servant we are told; *for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* Heb. ii. 18.

14 ¶ Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16 ¶ Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and they

left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath-day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

These verses are almost the same as was noticed, Matt. iv. 17—22. It appears from both accounts, that the LORD JESUS entered upon his preaching with only those four Apostles at the first; and there should seem to have been some interval between their call and the others. But what a surprising call must it have been to those men; how unlooked for; and yet how powerful: instantly to leave all their earthly concerns and connections to follow JESUS. Reader! it is still the same in every instance where the claims of nature would thwart the calls of grace. Painful to flesh and blood, as numberless circumstances are sometimes found, the plucking out an eye, or cutting off an arm, are needful to be done if they stand in the way of CHRIST. See that scripture, Luke xiv. 26, 27.

23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

We have here the first miracle CHRIST manifested in the relation of *Mark's* Gospel. *The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.* And here he begins to overthrow both his

person and empire. This poor man, we are told, had an *unclean spirit*. Every man, by the fall, is under the dominion of sin and Satan. The children of GOD, as well as the whole race of men in the Adam-nature, in which they are born, are equally vassals and subjects to Satan. *For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.* 2 Pet. ii. 19. Hence therefore, we have all by nature an unclean spirit. Oh! for grace to be made sensible of this! Titus iii. 3—7. The next thing we meet with in this poor man's history is, that he was in the synagogue on the sabbath-day. Reader do not fail to remark, that notwithstanding this dreadful malady, he attended the worship of God. It is blessed to be found waiting at ordinances, whatever state the mind is in. Who would have thought, when he went into the synagogue under such a state of captivity to Satan, that he should come out so blessedly delivered by the Almighty power of God. Had he not been there, humanly speaking, he would have lost this opportunity of being healed. How sweet was that scripture fulfilled in this instance. Isaiah xlix. 24—28. The loud cry from the evil spirit, which had, at that time, the mastery over him, is worthy our closest observation in confirmation of the GODHEAD of CHRIST. Reader! do not fail to remark this! While thousands, who saw JESUS daily going about the streets of Jerusalem, knew not who he was, devils were compelled to give their unwilling testimony to his person and authority, and publickly to own him as the HOLY ONE of GOD! Oh! what will modern infidels to the GODHEAD of CHRIST have to say in the great day of his power; when devils themselves confessed their knowledge of him, even in the day of his flesh! Reader! remark with me also, the great awfulness of the blinded state of man by reason of sin, that even devils are not blinded, as sinners in nature are, to the knowledge of CHRIST. But let every child of GOD who reads my *Poor Man's Commentary*, and whose eyes the LORD hath opened, take sweet comfort in this; that while devils, in *head* knowledge, exceed in nature those whom, by their temptations, they have made blind at the fall, they never can receive in *heart*-influence what poor sinners recovered by sovereign grace, attain unto, both in an apprehension of, and interest in, the person, work, and glory of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. When the Reader hath duly pondered over these precious views of the case before us, I would request him to attend to another circumstance presented to us in it, namely, the acknowledgement the evil spirit made of CHRIST's power, and the dreadful alarm expressed in the apprehension that JESUS was come (as was indeed the case) to their destruction. Let every child of GOD here learn, what frights and fears devils are in, even in the midst of their cruel tyranny over our poor nature, which Satan, the Old Serpent, ruined at the Fall. Behold! in this instance, how, at the very approach of JESUS, they tremble. Oh! what confidence ought every child of GOD to feel in the consciousness of an interest in CHRIST. *No weapon formed against them can prosper. No temptation can take them, but under it the LORD will make a way for them to escape. And the GOD of peace is engaged to bruise Satan under their feet shortly.* See Isaiah liv. 17. 1 Cor. x. 13. Rom. xvi. 20. The victory of CHRIST in dispossessing the evil spirit, the recovery of the poor man, the astonishment of the whole congregation, and the rumour of such a miracle

circulating through the neighbourhood, these would furnish large subjects for our meditation. But I must study shortness, and therefore refer the Reader to similar records of our LORD, where the improvements may be found to the same amount. See Mark v. And I particularly request the Reader, if he hath the little penny number by him of my *Poor Man's Concordance*, under the article *Nazarene*, to consult it in this place.

29 And forthwith when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth.

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

I refer the Reader for a comment on this passage, to what was said on the same, Matt. viii. 14, &c.

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will: be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straightly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

The case of this leper is so fully considered, Matt. viii. 1—4. that it were unnecessary, in this place, to add any thing upon the subject.

REFLECTIONS.

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

Here LORD I behold thy herald, the *Baptist,* preparing thy way before thee! Come, LORD, and bring my soul under the baptism of thy HOLY SPIRIT. Prepare me, by His enlightnings, to stand against the temptations of the devil. Oh! for the distinguishing calls of my LORD, as to his disciples. LORD! dispossess every unclean affection from my heart; and do thou reign there, and rule there, the

LORD of life and glory! So will my soul, by thy grace, be made clean, though, in myself, polluted as the leper; and JESUS will be my LORD and my GOD, and my portion for ever!

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

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

AND again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

It is very blessed to behold the earnestness of the people in following JESUS. *Luke saith, they pressed upon him to hear the word of God.* Luke v. 1. Reader! are we as earnest to follow JESUS? Are the public offices, and the gates of great men crowded with persons, and shall not you and I delight to be found waiting at the pardon office of JESUS?

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts.

7 Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*: or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

I stay not to remark, what might otherwise be very profitably attended to in the several circumstances of this man's case, the disease of his body; but I have so much to say in relation to the state of his soul, and the souls of God's people, who are all so highly concerned in what is here said, that I fear I shall trespass, and exceed the limits I ought to observe, before that I have said all I wish to say on a subject so abundantly interesting. But otherwise, here would be ample opportunity to enlarge upon such a subject, as a misery of nature, in the painful crippled state of a poor Paralytic, and the mercy of JESUS in healing him. But it is the palsy of the soul, which this of the body became a lively emblem of, that demands our special notice; and may the LORD render our contemplation of it profitable to our hearts. Think, Reader! what a crippled, benumbed, and helpless state our whole nature is reduced to by the fall! And behold, as in the instance of this man, he had no power of himself to come to CHRIST; so neither have we. See, in proof, John vi. 44. But what a beautiful lesson is read to us in the friends of this poor creature, in the earnestness with which they brought him to CHRIST. No throng, no obstructions, will they allow to stop them. Even the house-top shall be opened, but CHRIST shall have him brought before him. Oh! that the LORD's people, who know, in their own cases, the blessedness of JESUS's grace, would feel somewhat of the same earnestness for the salvation of others. Methinks I would bring to ordinances, and also in private approaches, to the mercy seat, the whole of my carnal, graceless relations; and do as they did by this man, lay them down before the presence of JESUS. More than this I am not able to do; but thus far I am encouraged to do. And that compassionate LORD, who hath healed my crippled soul, can cure theirs.

And I pray the Reader to observe, how infinitely JESUS's love outran their desires of favour. They brought the poor man to be healed only in his *body*, whereas JESUS extended his mercy also to the cure of the *soul*. And do not overlook the gracious manner in which the lord of mercy did it. *Son* (said JESUS) *thy sins are forgiven thee*. Did not JESUS mean, by the tender appellation, that he was, indeed, one of those children which the FATHER gave him in the everlasting

covenant? One of those concerning whom JESUS hath already said, he will, at the last day, when presenting his Church to himself and Father, say; *behold I and the children whom thou hast given me.* Isaiah viii. 18. Heb. ii. 13. Reader! do not forget, in this view to remark, that a Son of JESUS may be, and frequently will be, deeply afflicted in body, while blessed in soul. Sickness, and the thousand other ailments of life, are not tokens of being out of the covenant, but rather of being in it. *Whom the LORD loveth, it is said, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.* Heb. xii. 6—8. And what I particularly beg the Reader to remark is, the unconsciousness of this relationship, in the poor man, until JESUS told him of it. So that though one of CHRIST's own, a son by adoption, and given to CHRIST, in an everlasting covenant, yet he himself knew it not, but was crippled with disease, and borne down with affliction. Let the sons and daughters of the LORD GOD Almighty, who, by regeneration, know themselves to be such, by adoption and grace, think of this, as they review this man's history. *If ye endure affliction, saith the HOLY GHOST, GOD dealeth with you as with Sons.* The reasoning of the Scribes and Pharisees, though resulting from malice to CHRIST, was founded in what is right, concerning the thing itself. None but GOD can forgive sins. But here JESUS manifested that he was truly GOD, as well as man, by exercising this divine prerogative. And in confirmation that he was GOD who possessed this sovereign power, he instantly wrought a miracle, in nature, to cure the body, as he had wrought a miracle of grace in pardoning the soul. Look at this, ye people of GOD, and rejoice. Your JESUS is GOD; *One with the FATHER over all, GOD blessed for ever, Amen.* Look at this, ye that deny the GODHEAD of my LORD, and be ashamed. Oh! that the LORD may carry conviction to the unbeliever, in such a striking testimony of CHRIST's eternal power and GODHEAD, and cause the knee of the heart to bend before JESUS, crying out with the Prophet. *Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin!* Micah vii. 18. For other observations on this miracle, See Matt. ix. 2—8.

13 And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 ¶ And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his

disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick : I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

We had the relation of the call of *Levi*, or *Matthew*, in the preceding Gospel, See Matt. ix. 9. to which I refer for the observations also. I only again beg the Reader to remark, the wonderful properties of distinguishing grace. Say what men will concerning it, the truth itself stands where it always did, and always will. *For*, saith the HOLY GHOST, by his servant Paul, in the case of *Jacob* and *Esau*, *the children being not yet born, and neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* Rom. ix. 11—13. Malachi i. 2, 3. Hence *Matthew*, *Mary Magdalene*, the *Thief* on the cross, and multitudes have found CHRIST who sought him not; while *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for.* Rom. xi. 7. What decided testimonies to the doctrine of distinguishing grace?

18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

In addition to what was offered on this scripture, Matt. ix. 14, &c. it may be further remarked, that in cases where the outward ministry of the word is heard and received into the old unrenewed heart of the Adam-nature, as the fermentation of new wine will burst the old dried skins into which it is put, so men, unrenewed by the HOLY GHOST, will burst with hatred, both against CHRIST and his people. Perhaps no hatred is equal to that which the carnal mind fosters against the people of God. And not simply the carnal, but the professor, in whose heart no saving work of grace hath been wrought. It is painful to flesh and blood, sometimes, to meet the malice of the ungodly and openly avowed profane. But the persecution of professors of godliness, in the Pharisees and Self-righteous, under the cover of sanctity, comes with a deeper malignity. The LORD JESUS himself noticeth this in *Judas*. Psalm lv. 12, &c.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, that he went through the corn-fields on the sabbath-day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath-day that which is not lawful?

25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he went into the house of God, in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

There is somewhat uncommonly beautiful and interesting in this view of JESUS and his disciples passing through the corn-fields; and the discourse which arose out of it, from the disciples plucking the ears of corn and eating them. The allusion which JESUS makes to the hunger of *David* and his companions, in eating the shewbread, gives a blessed spiritual application to the subject. On the LORD'S day, and every day, when hungry souls seek for CHRIST, the true shewbread, and the bread of life, where, but to the house of God, shall they go for this spiritual sustenance? It is now indeed the most blessed days of our High Priest, of which those of *Abiathar* were but a shadow. And the LORD JESUS hath made all his redeemed, both kings

and priests, to the Father. So that, when our spiritual *David*, and they that are with him, go into the house of GOD, the LORD sets a feast of fat things before them, in the enjoyment of his person, blood and righteousness, and saith, *Eat, O friends! drink, yea drink abundantly, Oh beloved!* Song v. 1. And I pray the Reader to observe, what our dear LORD saith in relation to the Sabbath, of which he himself is the LORD, that it was made for man. What man? Not only as a mere rest for the whole race of men, but for the LORD's people, as a sacramental ordinance of the LORD's rest from the works of creation. The rest is in CHRIST. Yea CHRIST himself is the rest wherewith he causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing. Isaiah xxviii. 12. And hence the Psalmist saith, *return to thy rest* (thy Noah, thy Ark, the type of CHRIST). Psalm cxvi. 7. And hence the HOLY GHOST declares, *there is a rest* (JESUS himself) *which remaineth for the people of GOD.* Heb. iv. 9. So that the Sabbath was made for man, the renewed man, for the special persons of those interested in the LORD of the Sabbath, and to whom He is, peculiarly and personally, both the LORD of the Sabbath, and the Sabbath itself, in whom they rest, and who is their soul-refreshing. It is precious thus to eye CHRIST as the sum and substance of all; the ordinance, the shewbread, the Sabbath, and the LORD of it; in whose house, yea in himself, it is lawful, and lawful only to his priests to eat of Him, the bread of life, and live for ever. John vi. 48—58.

REFLECTIONS.

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

And let it please thee, my gracious GOD, to bless all thou receivest

with thy favor, as thou didst *Levi*. Never, never, may any poor sinner fast, while JESUS is with them, and in his fulness they have enough for the supply of all their poverty. Never take a part of JESU'S robe of righteousness, to mend their tattered rags, but receive a whole CHRIST as suited for a wholly ruined sinner; and be completely covered with CHRIST'S garment of salvation. Never receive the new wine of the Gospel, into the old skin of a withered nature: but may the LORD, who sitteth on the throne, making all things new, give the new heart, and the new nature together, and make all his redeemed new creatures in CHRIST JESUS! And be thou, dearest LORD, both the corn and the wine, and the oil, yea, the very sabbath of all thy people, till thou shalt bring them all home, to thyself, in glory!

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

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

AND he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? but they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand, and he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him how they might destroy him.

In relation to the miracle here recorded, I refer the Reader for my observations upon it, to Matt. xii. 9, &c. When the Reader hath consulted what is there said, I beg his attention to behold the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees upon the occasion. We are told, that

they watched JESUS; not to adore him for his grace and mercy, but that *they might accuse him*. And as soon as the LORD had manifested his tender compassion to this poor man, they went forth, and *took counsel to kill him*. Now, Reader, do not overlook these things: for very awful as they are, they become precious testimonies to *the truth as it is in JESUS*. The LORD himself hath explained the cause. For while he saith, *My sheep hear my voice; and I know them and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life*. John x. 27, 28. he saith to those that are not his sheep: *Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*. John viii. 43—47.

No wonder JESUS *looked round about upon them with anger*. The seed of the woman, and the children of the wicked one, can never agree. And let it be remembered, that the destruction of the enemies of CHRIST, forms a part of CHRIST'S mission as much as the salvation of his chosen. The hour of decision will come, when JESUS will *gather out of his kingdom all things that offend; and while the redeemed shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father, the LORD will cast them that do iniquity into the furnace of fire, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth*. Isaiah lxiii. 4. Matt. xiii. 36—43. Matt. xxv. 31 to the end.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea,

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan: and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

12 And he straightly charged them that they should not make him known.

I pray the Reader to remark with me, of the LORD'S over-ruling the mind, even of devils, to give their testimony, however unwillingly, to the GODHEAD of CHRIST. Let the Reader notice this, and observe their behavior upon the occasion, and the words they uttered. *When they saw him they fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art*

the SON of GOD. Did ever devils acknowledge any authority less than GOD? Had they considered CHRIST (as many who affect to call themselves Christians do) as man only; would they have fallen down before him, and acknowledged him GOD? Reader do not forget this. Devils confess CHRIST to be GOD; while many, who would wish to be thought Christians, but can be so only in name, and because born in a Christian country, deny his GODHEAD, and are therefore more ignorant than devils. Oh! the blindness of the human mind! Reader! look to that blessed Scripture, and if so be, the LORD in mercy hath given you to know CHRIST, there read and discover the cause. Matt. xvi. 13—17. See also John xvii. 25, 26.

13 ¶ And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would: and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite.

19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

See Matt. x. 1. See also *my Poor Man's Concordance*, on the subject of the *Apostles*.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Reader! what a lovely sight it must have been, to have beheld the crowded audiences of JESUS, when on earth. But you and I, may now throng his courts every day, and all the day. And very sure we shall be of welcome. JESUS will not look upon the humblest of his redeemed, with shyness. Sweetly the Psalmist sings of this: and so may you and I. See Psm. c. 4, 5.

22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

See Matt. xii. 24—30.

28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

I beg the Reader's most earnest attention to this scripture. And I yet more earnestly beg that GOD the HOLY GHOST, will be both his teacher and mine. Would you wish to know, in what the particular blasphemy against the HOLY GHOST consisted? it should most evidently seem to have been in ascribing the merciful works of GOD the SPIRIT, to the agency of the devil. The Scribes and Pharisees, did not deny, but that CHRIST had cast out devils. And they could not but know, that no power but the power of GOD, could accomplish such acts. And yet, in the face of this very conviction, they blasphemously ascribed the gracious deeds, which so palpably proved the finger of GOD, to the agency of the devil. Here was blasphemy in the extreme. And what made it wholly unpardonable was this: that as a recovery from so malicious and obdurate a state, could never be accomplished but by the HOLY GHOST's awakening true repentance in the soul; and there could be no hopes of such mercy; the sin continuing unlamented, must remain for ever unpardoned: and hence, eternal damnation could not but follow. The LORD pardon me if I err, but I humbly conceive that this is the sin of blasphemy, against the HOLY GHOST, which is the SON of GOD, whose name is

Mercy, (Luke i. 72.) declared to be without forgiveness, both *in this world, and in the world to come.* Matt. xii. 32.

But as many a child of GOD, partly from the unbelief of his own heart, and partly from the temptations of Satan, hath been much distressed on this subject, lest he should have committed this unpardonable sin: and very many of the LORD's tried ones have I seen, sharply exercised on this account, during my poor feeble ministry; I hope the Reader will indulge me, if I enlarge somewhat more particularly on the subject. Perhaps the LORD may give me grace to write, and some poor buffeted soul to read, what I shall offer, and commission it to his or her comfort, and the LORD's glory.

I begin with observing, that I humbly conceive, this blasphemy against GOD the HOLY GHOST, which the men of this generation in the days of CHRIST's flesh committed, was peculiarly and personally chargeable on *them*. Not that I would be understood as supposing, or in the least intimating as if I supposed, that the sin itself, was so peculiar to that age only, as not capable of being committed in any other. Indeed, I rather think the contrary. When we meet with men in the present day, as well as hear of numbers in the intermediate time from CHRIST's days to ours, who from the same cause as those Scribes and Pharisees, in the presumptuous reasonings of their own hearts, have dared to condemn the most sacred truths of our holy faith; I cannot hesitate to conclude, that there is the same capability of committing this unpardonable sin *now*, as much as then. But while I say this, in order to guard against all unwarrantable misapprehensions on this point, I am inclined to think, that the sin itself, is peculiar, and that men of their complexion only, are liable to fall into it. And I beg to state the grounds, on which I have been led to form this conclusion.

The LORD JESUS, hath exempted no other species of blasphemy from forgiveness. He hath mercifully said, that *all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto men.* Yea, as if to denote, in yet more endearing characters, the love of his heart to his people, JESUS hath added, that *whosoever speaketh a word, against the SON of man it shall be forgiven him.* Not, that it is to be supposed, that the LORD intended thereby to intimate in the least, as if GOD the HOLY GHOST, was greater than GOD the SON: or that blasphemy against one person in the GODHEAD, was less sinful, than against the person of another. Not so. But to shew, that multitudes of sins, and blasphemies, against his person, had been, and should be, pardoned, while this one of blasphemy against the HOLY GHOST was for ever excluded from the possibility of pardon.

And the special nature of this blasphemy, which is declared to be unpardonable, will appear in yet more striking characters, if we consider, how every other hath been pardoned, and is uniformly represented, as pardonable through the whole word of GOD. Against the person of GOD the FATHER, in how many scriptures are his people said to have blasphemed his name, and yet mercy proclaimed to them. Ezek. xx. throughout, and Ezek. xxxvi. throughout. Against the person of GOD the SON, what blasphemies were uttered by numbers, who, like *Paul*, when in ignorance, were persecutors and blasphemers, and yet whose hearts were pricked at the day of Pentecost, and obtained mercy? And no less against the person, work, and glory,

of GOD the HOLY GHOST; what proofs are there of multitudes, having long opposed, and resisted, the ministry of his holy word, and slighted the means of grace, and yet, have at length, been overcome by the LORD, in the day of his power? Hence it should seem, that the blasphemy against the HOLY GHOST, to which our LORD referred, and which he declared to be unpardonable, was a blasphemy, peculiar and personal: and had a special reference, to the Scribes, and Pharisees, with whom our LORD was conversing: and indeed the words imply as much: *Because they said, he hath an unclean spirit.*

And I cannot but venture to believe, that the thing itself, receives yet a further, and more decisive conclusion, to this point, when we consider the character of those, by whom this sin was committed. The LORD JESUS calls them, *a generation of vipers*, in the parallel passage, Matthew xii. 24—34, and intimates that it is impossible for them being evil to speak good things. And elsewhere, the LORD expresseth it more strongly: *ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it.* John viii. 44, 45. Now from hence, the conclusion is undeniable; that the generation and seed of the serpent, are in their very nature, not only liable to this sin, but *ordained to this condemnation.* Whereas *John* was commissioned by the HOLY GHOST to tell the Church; that *Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin* (unpardonable sin); *for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.* 1 John iii. 9, 10.

Now after all this statement, I cannot for my own part hesitate to conclude, that the unpardonable sin, in this peculiar species of blasphemy, here spoken of against the person and glory of GOD the HOLY GHOST, consists, in ascribing to the LORD JESUS, the being under the influence of an unclean spirit, when working miracles by the spirit of GOD. And though I do not presume to speak at all decidedly upon a point of such infinite importance, but would rather humbly ask, to be informed, than determine for others, yet I would venture to believe, that none of the children of GOD are permitted to fall into it, but are kept from it *by the power of GOD, through faith, unto salvation.* And in proof of it, we find those fearful, timid souls, who tremble, lest, in the days of their unregeneracy, they should have fallen into it, are the most unlikely persons in the world to have committed it. Your fears more than half testify you have not. Those Scribes and Pharisees who had committed it, were hardened in the commission of it, and neither felt, nor regarded their sin and danger. Whereas your apprehensions flow from the humblings of grace, and manifest the truth of that scripture; *He keepeth the feet of his saints.* The LORD bless, as far as his truth is in it, what is here said, to every child of GOD.

31 ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him, and they

said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

For the Comment on this passage. See Matt. xii. 46, &c.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! do thou come by thy blessed Spirit into thy Church, and among thy people, now in the day of thy power, as thou didst in the days of thy flesh, into the synagogue; and there manifest, that thou art LORD of the Sabbath, by thine acts of grace and mercy, to the souls of thy redeemed. Many a withered hand and an unawakened heart, is there, of thy people for JESUS to heal. Oh! do thou speak, in the word, and by the word; and very sure will it be at thy bidding, the withered and the halt, yea the dead in trespasses and sins will come forth to life and health, and new creatures. And oh! blessed LORD! what read we here in this chapter? Do the very devils and unclean spirits proclaim thy power and GOD-HEAD? Oh then for grace, that all thy redeemed may know thee, from the least to the greatest. And do thou, dearest, and most compassionate LORD JESUS, give thy poor, fearful, and deeply exercised trembling ones, grace to see, that thou hast undertaken to keep them, from the unpardonable sin, in their union with thyself. Thy beloved Apostle hath said, under the authority of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that *whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not.* Oh! let the sweet consolation of this, be made blessed to thy people; that while the malice of hell, is breaking out, in the minds of the children of darkness; all thy dear redeemed ones may know and rejoice, in the assurance, that they are *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* Oh! the precious thought! CHRIST is not ashamed to call his people brethren. And as he condescends to own his poor relations in this life; so will he own them in the world to come. Never may my soul forget those sweet words of my LORD. *Whosoever (saith JESUS) shall do the will of God, (and this is the will and work of God, to believe on him whom he hath sent,) the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

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

AND he began again to teach by the sea side : and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea ; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken : Behold, there went out a sower to sow :

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth ; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth :

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched ; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased ; and brought forth some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God : but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables :

12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this

parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

14 The sower soweth the word.

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown: but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground: such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

I refer the Reader to the observations made on this Parable of the Sower, and our LORD's own explanation of it. Matt. xiii. 3—23. Every thing in it is so plain and obvious, as opened by CHRIST himself, as to supersede the necessity of remarks, by any Commentator. The devil, who is the prince of the power of the air, is strongly figured by the fowls devouring the seed sown; and the way-side and stoney-ground hearers, so strikingly represent hearts of stone, unrenewed by grace; that the persecution such sustain, from the laughter and ridicule of the carnal, may readily be supposed to render the word of God unprofitable. None can bring forth good fruit but the good ground made so by sovereign grace.

21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he saith unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Our LORD, according to the Eastern method of instruction, dwelt much in figures and parables. We have a cluster of them here. The Gospel is as a light not to be hidden. Even among men the small taper of the night is never put under a covering. So the LORD will manifest his truths to his people. To them there is nothing hidden; neither is there any thing in the covenant of grace necessary for them to know, but what shall be made known to them. And, therefore, if any man hath his ears spiritually opened to hear, he shall hear. But to the unawakened, every thing must appear a Parable. And, saith our LORD, even to those whose ears are spiritually opened, still it is necessary to take heed what ye hear. No doubt, alluding to what the LORD elsewhere cautioned his people against, false CHRIST'S, and false prophets, which should come so speciously, that, *if it were possible, they would deceive even the very elect.* See Mat. xxiv. 23—26.

I do not think with some Commentators, that these words, *with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you*, refer to our dealings with men in our concerns with one another: for the LORD is speaking of our *hearing the word*. Neither do I think with others, that it hath reference to our dealings with God. As we deal with God, so say such, will God deal with us. In answer to which I say, the LORD forbid; for it would be our ruin indeed if so! But I humbly conceive, the words which follow explain the meaning; when it is said, *And unto you that hear shall more be given*: that is, if I apprehend right, in our dealings with ourselves; if the measure we mete with, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST, of grace given to us, our spiritual understandings enable us to mete it in improvement; to you, that so hear, saith JESUS, more shall be given. *For to him that hath*; that is, that hath an awakened soul, by GOD the HOLY SPIRIT to measure it, *more shall be given*. His vessel, opened and enlarged by grace, shall be filled. *But to him that hath not*; that is, where there hath been no work of GOD wrought upon the soul, *from him shall be taken away even that which he hath*; that is, of the outward ministry of the word. I do not presume to speak decidedly on the passage. I only humbly give the above as my view of it.

26 ¶ And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground:

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

I consider this Parable, though short, yet as sweet, as either of our LORD'S Parables in the illustration of his grace to his people. So is the kingdom of God, which is known by grace here, and glory hereafter, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and sleep and rise, night and day, while the seed springeth and groweth he knoweth not how. We cannot err in considering this seed, as the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever: and that it is so, is evident from its growth and quality. But the man who is said to cast seed into the ground, cannot mean our LORD JESUS CHRIST, for he neither slumbereth nor sleepeth; neither can it be ever said of him, that his seed springeth, and groweth he knoweth not how. Psm. cxxi. 4. Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3. His servants are said to minister to the Churches of the Spirit. Gal. iii. 5. And of them it may be truly said, the seed groweth they know not how. And although, all faithful dispensers of the word, do watch over the spiritual plantation, and steep the word sown both in tears and prayers; yet, from their natural infirmity, they too often sleep, though not the sleep of spiritual death! The harvest however arrives not, to their consciousness, in the fields of their labors in numberless instances, until they themselves have fallen asleep in Jesus. Many a seed time, and many a day's labor, followed up with prayer, do faithful ministers of JESUS leave behind them, which are answered, when their poor bodies are mouldering in the grave.

And the latter part of the Parable, is not less beautiful than the former. *The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself*; that is, not the unrenewed heart of man, which the earth figuratively represents; but the renewed heart, now considered, as in the kingdom of grace, which this Parable is said to represent. It bringeth forth fruit void of the husbandman's care, who sleeps night and day, while the seed is growing he knoweth not how. A most precious and blessed proof of the SPIRIT'S work in the heart; and that the whole is according to that sweet scripture: *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD.* Zech. iv. 6. And the process of the whole proves the work wholly of the same. *First the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear.* As in nature, so in grace. The child, though perfect in all its parts, hath to grow from the *babe* to the *young man*, and at length to the *father in God*. And when grace is ripened for glory, like the fruit ripe for harvest, JESUS takes home his redeemed to him, to his harvest in heaven. Reader! do not overlook in the beauties of the Parable, the sweet enjoyment of a personal interest in it. The seed cast in the renewed heart, made so by grace, gives the sure earnest of the harvest. Though men sleep, and know not how the advance is made, JESUS both knows, gives the needed supply, and watches over the whole plantation. To you, to me,

things may at times appear, as in a wintry dispensation. But to JESUS the progress is advancing. The promise is absolute from GOD the FATHER. *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.* Isaiah xlv. 3. Isaiah lix. 21. And a soul renewed in CHRIST, must be separated from CHRIST, before those promises can fail. Rom. viii. 39. Blessedly, therefore, the Apostle sings, to the full assurance of faith, when he saith, *Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is GOD, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* 2 Cor. v. 5.

30 ¶ And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*.

34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

These verses are so many different similitudes, to illustrate the progressive work of grace in the soul. A child of God is apt to make false conclusions, in forming his view of such scriptures, by what passeth in his own experience. He feels at times such a deadness to divine things, that he is at a loss to ascertain any growth in the divine life. But the truth is, the growth he is looking for, is to be found in the reverse of what he expects to find. He supposes to find *himself* more holy: whereas, the holiness, the HOLY GHOST is ripening him in, is in CHRIST. He doth indeed make great progress, when, from making every day more discoveries of his own unholiness, he becomes more and more longing for the holiness in JESUS. When a sense of the remains of indwelling sin, makes him more out of love with himself, and more in love with CHRIST. This is indeed, from small beginnings, to arise to large attainments; because, as it begins in CHRIST, so it ends in CHRIST. And CHRIST is the tree of life, under whose branches, his people find both a banquet and a shadow. Song ii. 3, 4.

35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude,

they took him, even as he was in the ship, and there were also with him other little ships.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow, and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

I refer to Matt. viii. 23—27. for observations on those verses.

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

helping us. LORD! do thou speak peace to our troubled souls, as thou didst to the troubled sea, by speaking pardon to our sins. Both winds and storms, and guilt and fear, must all be still at thy command

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

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

AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs: and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always night and day he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

Notice hath been already taken of the country where this event took place. Matt. viii. 28. It will be unnecessary on that part to enlarge, but rather hasten to the consideration of the interesting case here recorded. Our Lord himself by the Evangelist, hath caused the several distressing circumstances of this poor *damoniac* to be related so particularly, as they refer to the sufferings of his *body*, that after mediating on the awful consequences of the fall, on that ground it will be profitable to attend to the more calamitous effects wrought by it on the *soul*. And here the description falls far short, of what it really is. Every man by nature, while in an unconverted state, is under the full sway and influence of an unclean spirit, as far as relates to himself. And was it not for restraining grace, of which the sinner is wholly unconscious, what tremendous evils, in ten thousand times ten thousand instances, would take place. We are by nature, and by the conquest Satan hath made over our nature, in bondage to sin with all its dreadful consequences. The flesh with its lusts, the world with its deceits, Satan with his devices, all govern with absolute sway. And add to these, we are justly exposed to the law of God, which we have all broken; the justice of God which every moment threatens punishment, the accusations of our own conscience, the fear of death, judgment, and eternity. This is the state and condition of every son and daughter of Adam, by the fall.

Moreover, as it is said of this poor creature, he had his dwelling among the tombs; no fetters could bind him, nor any man tame him; but he was always, night and day, in solitary places, crying, and cutting himself with stones; so is it with the unawakened, unregenerate sinner. Dead sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, dwell only with sinners, dead like themselves. The law of God loseth all its authority upon them. They acknowledge not its power; and as the law, however strong, cannot bind them, so neither can persuasions of men, or threats of God, have any influence upon them; but they are night and day, hastening on their own destruction, by a course of mad conduct, inevitably leading to it, except the grace of God interpose. Pause Reader! over the awful picture; and as you contemplate it, say, is it now your case; or was it once so? If you are now in grace, you will know that you was once unconscious of grace. And if you are not in grace, no doubt but that you are equally unconscious, of the bondage of sin and Satan, you are now in.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.

Before we prosecute this poor creature's history, I must beg the Reader to stop, and remark with me, the sovereignty of CHRIST owned by the devils themselves. Reader! it is worthy your closest observation, in how many instances, during our LORD's ministry upon earth, this was done. Mark i. 23, 24. Luke iv. 41. Mark i. 34. One might have been led to hope, that such a testimony, evidently constrained as it was by Almighty power, would have stopped the presumptuous reasoning of those, who call themselves Christians, but by a strange misnomer; and yet own not the GODHEAD of our Almighty LORD. But the cause is explained. See Isaiah vi. 9, 10. And the awful consequence in another scripture, as blended with the sin. Acts xiii. 41.

But to return to the case of this man possessed with an evil spirit. As soon as he saw JESUS afar off, *he ran and worshipped him*. What was there in the appearance of the LORD JESUS, to have induced this effect? Our LORD, to every eye of common sense, appeared only as a poor Jew, consorting with the poorest of the people. And yet this man, whom no fetters could bind, nor reasoning tame, on the first sight of him, ran and worshipped him. And observe the loud cries, and earnest supplications of the devils, to be spared from torment, while as loudly confessing CHRIST's GODHEAD and oneness with the FATHER. Reader! behold from hence with what horror devils tremble at the person of CHRIST, while bowing before him! And Reader! do observe further, how will any and every poor sinner, who hath long been led captive by Satan at his will, when he first

sees CHRIST, or hears of CHRIST, and taught who CHRIST is, by the HOLY GHOST, in spite of sin, and Satan, flee to JESUS, and seek deliverance by him, from all his sorrows?

I pray the Reader not to overlook what the devil said, *What have I to do with thee JESUS! thou SON of the most high God?* Devils wish not to have to do with *him*; but JESUS in our nature hath much to do with *them*; for his province it is to destroy them. Indeed, *the SON of GOD was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.* 1 John iii. 8. Well might they therefore dread his sovereign presence. But before this cry for forbearance, the word of the LORD had gone forth, for the destruction of Satan's empire over this poor man. JESUS had said, *Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.* Reader! do not overlook the LORD's mercy, and the LORD's power. Oh! that every poor sinner, whom GOD the FATHER hath given to his SON, and whose redemption CHRIST hath purchased with his blood, may be led by GOD the HOLY GHOST, as this poor captive was, to flee to JESUS, sure as he is, of a spiritual deliverance.

9 And he asked him, *What is thy name?* and he answered, saying, *My name is Legion*: for we are many.

CHRIST's question could not have been for himself, but it seems to have been intended for the information of his disciples then with him, and for all his disciples to the end of time. The enemy we have to do with is truly a *legion*; multitudes of his soldiers in the lust of our flesh, and his dominion by them over the fallen nature he hath ruined, are at his command; which like a *Roman legion*, consisting as it did in the smallest computation of at least *six thousand*, are a formidable host for keeping in captivity that nature the devil first ruined. But, Reader! think herefrom, the greatness of his power, and the greatness of his mercy, which hath subdued all, and brought his people out. Oh! the grace and sovereignty in CHRIST JESUS!

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea.

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it*

in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

Much hath been said by infidels, on those verses, by way of cavil; but it hath only terminated to their own confusion and the LORD's glory. Many very blessed truths are taught the Church by it, and these if they were all, are sufficient to account for the LORD's permission of the devils entring into the herd of swine. As first what a blessed evidence it afforded of CHRIST's GODHEAD. He who had power to dispossess devils from one part of his creation, had power no less to permit the possession of devils in another. Reader! think of this, and turn to those scriptures. Jerem. v. 22. Luke xii. 4, 5. Moreover, hereby the LORD confirmed the holiness of his law. The swine was unclean by the law; and by this permission, JESUS gave testimony to it. Levit. xi. 7. No method, according to our view of things, could be more decisive to teach this, and enforce it also. And as the Jews were very lax in their obedience to the law, in our LORD's days, in the keeping those animals for others, if they partook not of their flesh themselves; by this act of JESUS the law was strikingly revived, to shew uncleanness; and perhaps yet more with an eye to himself, who came to fulfil the law, and do away the whole shadow of it by the substance, in the sacrifice of himself.

In relation to the devils being permitted to possess the swine, this was not to gratify them; but to answer CHRIST's purpose, Satan obtained leave to tempt *Job*. But we know the sequel. The trial ended to *Job*'s joy, the LORD's glory, and Satan's confusion. See *Job* i. 8—12. And who shall say, what blessed consequences followed, in the after circumstances of the Church, from this transaction, both on Jew and Gentile, when CHRIST had finished redemption-work and was returned to glory; and GOD the HOLY GHOST came down? Reader! let you and I, learn not to be wise above what is written, but in all questionable cases; I mean, such as you and I cannot fully explain, or such as sceptics make so; let us resolve all into that soul-satisfying scripture, which forms at once both question and answer: *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* Gen. xviii. 25.

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befel to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

I stay not so much to remark the terrible consternation, which this demonstration of CHRIST's power must have induced on all beholders. Such; but in an infinitely greater degree, will be the display of the LORD's sovereignty, at the last day. But I would rather call the at-

tention of the Reader to the poor man, now no longer under *dæmoniac* influence, but sitting at the feet of JESUS, clothed, and in his right mind. A beautiful representation of all the redeemed of the LORD! For Reader! what is every truly converted child of God upon earth; yea, we may go further, and say what is every redeemed soul now in heaven, but once such as this man was, when under the dominion of sin and Satan? And now *washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the Spirit of our God.* 1 Cor. vi. 11. They of our brethren, now in heaven, gone before to glory; and they who are redeemed from among men still upon earth, in grace, are alike sitting at the feet of JESUS; clothed with the robe of his righteousness, and wearing the garment of his salvation. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of such a recovered state!

But let not the Reader overlook the awful conduct of the *Gadarenes*; in desiring JESUS to depart out of their coast. Is it possible, that any individual, when he saw the wonderful mercy shewn to this poor creature, could have wished the Great Author of such mercy to leave them? And yet *Matthew* in his relation of this miracle saith, that the *whole city* joined in the request, that JESUS would go out of their coasts. Matt. viii. 34. As long as this poor creature was under the possession of this evil spirit, he was a terror to the whole country, But yet it seems, they preferred the devil's raging among them, to that of the LORD JESUS manifesting his grace and mercy. But Reader! while you and I pity the poor deluded *Gadarenes*, let us look around among our own countrymen, and we shall discover equally distressing sights for pity. What daily manifestations are made of our fellow-creatures, living under the same awful influence, on whom the voice of JESUS's Gospel hath no controul? Multitudes like these *Gadarenes* do in effect, if not in words, say, to JESUS, *Depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways!* Yea, Reader! to come a little nearer home. Have not you and I, in times past, said the same? Yea, is it not so now? Are we both sitting daily at the feet of JESUS, clothed and in our right mind? Is it the language of your heart and mine, to JESUS? Do not LORD go away, neither suffer us to depart from thee, for *thou hast the words of eternal life!* These are solemn enquiries. Reader! do not dismiss them unanswered!

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

There is somewhat very affecting in this request of the poor man; and our LORD's refusal of his request merits our notice. What a wonderful change, grace had wrought upon him. He who but a few minutes before, was a terror to every body, is now so heavenly composed, that he desires never to leave JESUS. And is not this the case with every child of GOD, when savingly called *from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living GOD?* Surely, having once tasted that the LORD is gracious, we cannot but long to be *absent from the body, and present with the LORD.* But yet JESUS saith, this must not immediately be. Awakened sinners are to go home to their unawakened friends, and speak forth *the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.* They are to constitute a part of the LORD's Church upon earth, until the LORD's time shall come which he hath appointed to take them home to his Church above. JESUS must have a Church upon earth, as well as in heaven, as long as the earth remains. Neither can a redeemed soul live upon earth too long, while the LORD employs him to his glory and the Church's welfare. Reader! let this serve not merely to reconcile, but to make us happy in waiting *all the days of our appointed time, until our change come.* In the mean season, doing as JESUS commanded this poor man to do, if so be, like him, the LORD hath wrought a work of grace upon our hearts; tell our friends, yea tell all around, *what great things the LORD hath done for us, and hath had compassion on us.*

21 ¶ And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee,* come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment,

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came, and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

40 And they laughed him to scorn: but when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked: for she was *of the age* of twelve years, and they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Both those interesting cases have been largely considered. Matt. ix. 18—26. to which I therefore refer. See also Luke viii. 41, &c.

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

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

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

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

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judah, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

I detain the Reader on those verses to remark, that what became in the view of the enemies of CHRIST matter of reproach, is, to the friends and followers of the Lamb, subject of heartfelt joy. *Is not this the carpenter*, say they? Yes! say I; and blessed be my LORD, for his grace and condescension, in being so. For I would have the Reader understand, that in CHRIST becoming a curse for his redeemed, it behoved him to undergo that curse in all its branches. The tenor of the curse pronounced at the fall, ran in those words: *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*; meaning toil and labor. Had not Jesus therefore toiled and labored for his bread, this part of the curse would not have lighted upon him, neither could he then have been said to have borne it. But by laboring with his hands for his daily bread, he literally fulfilled that part of the curse. And though he might have fed himself as he fed others, by working a miracle; yet then could he not have come up, in this point, to the object intended. So far therefore is CHRIST's-labor in the employment of a

carpenter, from lessening the authority of his mission, that without it he would not have answered the character of our Redeemer, in redeeming us from *the curse of the law being made a curse for us.* Gal. iii. 13.

Reader! hath it pleased the LORD in his providence, to place you in a low estate. Look to him who when on earth had not where to lay his head; and though the LORD, Creator and proprietor of all things, lived and toiled, for his daily bread! See observations on Luke ii. 51, 52.

7 ¶ And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two: and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse:

9 But *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

We have here the confirmation of what was before noticed on Matt. x. 1, &c. the call and commission given to the Apostles. It were well if all, who go forth in the Apostolic office, carried with them such credentials of their authority.

14 And king Herod heard *of him*; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

15 Others said, That it is Elias, and others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded : he is risen from the dead.

17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison, for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife : for he had married her.

18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him ; but she could not :

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy, and observed him ; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee ;

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod, and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth and said unto her mother, What shall I ask ? and she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king was exceeding sorry ; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And immediately the king sent an execu-

tioner, and commanded his head to be brought. And he went, and beheaded him in the prison,

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corps, and laid it in a tomb.

In addition to what was remarked on the parallel passage, Matt. xiv. 1, &c. to which I refer the Reader, I would beg to observe, what an awful view is here held forth to us, of the horrors of a guilty conscience. There was not the smallest resemblance between the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and his servant and herald, *John* the Baptist. *John* did no miracles: and the LORD JESUS was continually manifesting his commission in this way. *John* came in a way of austerity and fasting; but JESUS most endearing, and as the friend of publicans and sinners; so that nothing could be more unlike each other. But *Herod* was too much alarmed to mark the difference. This is *John*, said he, whom I murdered. Reader! what must the everlasting horrors, and self-reproaches of the miserable be, when in this life only their consciences are so haunted before the time?

30 ¶ And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed:

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat, and they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes:

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 ¶ And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

I shall only hint at one or two improvements, as they arise from this passage before us, having already noticed some of the principal things which are found in our Lord's miracle of feeding the multitude in the wilderness, in the similar relation of it. Matt. xiv. 1, &c. And first, it will be profitable to observe, what is said here of the Apostles, whom JESUS had sent forth to preach, returning with an account of their ministry: not by way of informing CHRIST what he already knew, but by way of praising him for the success of their

labors. So should all ministers of JESUS. And what can be more engaging than the view of a faithful laborer in the Gospel, who hath gone forth in the LORD'S strength in the day, returning to the LORD'S praise in the night, and laying both himself and labors before the LORD for a blessing?

And let not the Reader overlook, as another interesting improvement, which ariseth from what is here said of CHRIST, compassion in beholding the fainting multitude. There is somewhat particularly striking in the manner in which it is related; JESUS was *moved with compassion toward them*. Reader! I know not what your feelings are, but I must confess that I receive a more than ordinary pleasure in such views of JESUS, as represent him *touched with our feelings*; for they certainly mean the feelings of JESUS in our nature, joined with the GODHEAD. Paul calls it *the bowels of JESUS CHRIST*. Phil. i. 8. Mercies and Compassions; not only GOD-mercies, but mercies in such a way, as are the mercies of the man also; and without the SON of GOD, having taken human nature into union with the GODHEAD, as GOD alone, he could not have felt. Reader! think what a view doth this apprehension of JESUS, in his two-fold nature, open to our everlasting joy, in a thousand instances which arise?

If I venture to hint at a *third* improvement from this passage, (many more might, but for swelling the pages,) it shall be only to observe, that if from a few loaves and fishes the LORD CHRIST made such a supply for so great a multitude, and left such an overplus, think, what infinite resources are with our GOD, for every occasion, to both the spiritual, and temporal necessities of his chosen? Very blessed is the Apostle's conclusion on this point, when he saith; *But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by CHRIST JESUS*. Philip. iv. 19. See Matt. xiv. 22, 23.

47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52 For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

In addition to what was observed on this display of CHRIST's power, on the parallel passage, Matt. xiv. 24, &c. I would just beg to remark, what unceasing demonstrations the LORD gave of his GODHEAD. It should seem to have been done with a view to put to the blush the Infidel of after ages, as well as to comfort, and give confidence to his poor and humble believing Ones. Did the LORD JESUS make this provision for the present day of infidelity? (I only ask the question.) As the LORD could not but know *the perilous times which in the last days should come*, when men, calling themselves Christians, would nevertheless *deny the LORD which bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*; did He mercifully furnish such testimonies of his GODHEAD, in the days of his flesh, as might afford peculiar strength to the faith of his people in the day of his power? Indeed, indeed, I cannot but think there was much of CHRIST's intention, in the numberless proofs we so continually meet with, in those records of our LORD. And, I am the more inclined to this judgment, because we are told, that the disciples then, when at the time JESUS displayed such wonderful acts, were *sore amazed, and wondered*; their *heart*, as it is said, being *hardened*: that is, I apprehend, they did not, for surely they could not for a moment doubt CHRIST's GODHEAD; but they stood amazed, like men overwhelmed with what they saw and heard; not knowing, as when in the Mount of Transfiguration, what to say. See Matt. xvii. 1, &c. See also my note on Matt. xxviii. 17.

53 And when they had passed over they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.

55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

I would appeal to the common sense and history of all mankind, whether the imagination can furnish a portrait so beautiful, so affectionate, and interesting, as is here drawn of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The Prophet, ages before had said, *behold, your GOD will come and save you! Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and*

the tongue of the dumb sing. Isaiah xxxv. 4, 5, 6. And here we behold God indeed in the person of his dear SON, surrounded by the sick and diseased of every description and character, while as many as touched him were made whole. Oh! for grace, to come to Him now by faith; for surely, none whom God the HOLY GHOST shall lead to JESUS, will the LORD send empty away.

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

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

THEN came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except

they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.*

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

It will be highly profitable to the Reader, to observe the awful character of those Scribes and Pharisees, and to attend to what the Lord hath said of them. In the midst of their hatred and malice to Jesus, who appears equal to them for professions of holiness? Washing of hands, and cups, and pots, were harmless things in themselves, if they had been led therefrom to see the necessity of washing the

heart. But, in the midst of this outside godliness, JESUS, who knew their inside corruption, represents it as most awful. The LORD hath indeed traced it to its source, and shewn, that they were of that seed which could not but sin. John viii. 44. Matt. xxiii. 15. It would have been well for the peace, yet not for the exercise of the LORD's people, if the Pharisee and Scribe generation had ceased with them. But though the Church hath been disturbed in all ages with such, yet it is to the profit of the LORD's household. For when at any time the LORD JESUS, and his great salvation, are by this Pharisaical generation, slightly regarded, (as in the present day) it tends the more, under grace, to endear CHRIST to the heart.

14 ¶ And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Harken unto me every one *of you*, and understand :

15 There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness :

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

I admire this discourse of the LORD JESUS to the people. And I cannot but admire it the more, because from the distinguishing manner

in which it is said *he called them*, and introduced what he said to them, in charging them to hear that there were many of them his people, in contradistinction to the Pharisees around. And I cannot from hence help requesting the Reader to remark with me, how uniformly this distinction hath been preserved in the Church of CHRIST, in reading or preaching the word, from that time to the present hour. When we see (as that we cannot but see) in every congregation, *some* receiving the word with holy joy of the HOLY GHOST, as *Paul* testified the Church of the *Thessalonians* did: whilst *others*, like those *Pharisees*, seeking only to find fault; what can be more decisive in testimony to the same. And though many, like those *Pharisees*, are, as far as outward appearances go, apparently decent and moral in their lives and conversation with men; and others, in the religion of nature, seem to act up to the principles of external godliness, as high as natural strength can reach; yea, some of them make a profession of the Gospel, and are ready to compliment CHRIST to make up their deficiency; yet, in all these there is not an atom of regenerating grace; it is the old tang of the old nature, neither are they any of them savingly acquainted with the person, work, grace, and glory, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. If the Reader wishes to have a true scriptural account of the real saving work of GOD the HOLY GHOST upon the heart, I refer him to the picture drawn by inspiration in the first Chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians. In verse the 4th, the Apostle states the knowledge of election. In the 5th, he shews how it was proved and made known. In verse the 6th, he shews the sure effects of it in themselves. And in the four verses which follow, he shews the evidences which were proved thereby to others.

24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid.

25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying, go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

This miracle is largely dwelt upon, Matt. xv. 21.

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Some copies read this passage, concerning our Lord's progress, that Jesus went through *Sidon*; but as *Sidon* was further off from *Galilee* than *Tyre*, it is more than probable Jesus went not through it. However, this deaf and dumb man which they brought to Jesus, was not of either place. The miracle the Lord manifested in healing him, excited great astonishment among the people; but the spiritual sense of it seems to have been wholly overlooked by them. Nothing becomes more striking, in proof of a spiritual deafness and dumbness, than a poor unawakened sinner. He is like *the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ears at the voice of the charmer; charm he never so wisely*; for all the melody of mercy in the Gospel of CHRIST, nor all the harsh sounds of condemnation in the law of God, can affect his mind. And as he hears of nothing, either to allure, or to alarm, so no cry for salvation ever passeth his lips. I pray the Reader to notice, however, the solicitude of his friends in bringing him to Jesus. Gracious souls, who know the Lord, do well to bring to Jesus those who know him not. He that hath unstopped your ears, and opened your lips, can do the same by others. And while we qualify our

prayers for the most graceless, by our LORD's standard, we cannot err. *Neither*, said JESUS, (while acting as the Great High Priest in interceding for his Apostles,) *pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* John xvii. 20. Precious prayer! including the thousands then unborn of the Redeemer's family. JESUS's followers have here a very plain direction how to qualify their prayers, when visiting a mercy seat for the unawakened.

I beg the Reader, not to overlook the circumstance, in the miracle, of the LORD's taking the poor man aside from the multitude. Yes! when JESUS works an act of sovereign grace upon his people, for the most part he calls them aside from the world, yea, from themselves, from what they were before; and manifests himself in secret, and gives them to eat of the *hidden manna.* Rev. ii. 17. Neither do I think the actions of our adorable LORD were without signification. JESUS may be said to put his fingers into the ears of his redeemed, when he opens them to hear *the joyful sound.* He truly toucheth our tongues with the spittle of his mouth, when he looseth our lips to speak his praise. And his looking up to heaven, in confirmation of what he saith, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* John v. 17. is a sweet testimony of the Oneness in the FATHER and the SON, in all the parts of his divine mission. The sigh of CHRIST, and the *Ephphatha* or *Ethphatha* he pronounced with it, are beautiful proofs of his GOD-Man, Person, and Character. His power to open, and his sigh in testimony of his fellow feeling, were here beautifully blended. Reader! do not overlook it! Oh! what everlasting effects of sovereign grace must follow, when JESUS visits the souls of his redeemed with his great salvation!

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

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

IN those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat :

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way : for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness ?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye ? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground : and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them* ; and they did set *them* before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes : and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8 So they did eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand : and he sent them away.

In addition to the observations made on those miracles of JESUS feeding the multitude, see Matt. xv. 32. Mark vi. 35. I would here only detain the Reader, to remark how unceasingly that compassion of JESUS is still exercised, now in the day of his power ; in feeding his redeemed spiritually here, in grace, and above, in glory. Let the Reader turn to the beautiful and interesting account which is given of his Church in glory, where CHRIST leads them to *fountains of living water*. Rev. vii. 17. And when he hath beheld, by faith, the Church above, let him look to the Church below, and see no less how JESUS still feeds them with his grace. He is himself the *living bread*, and the *living water*. John vi. 51. John iv. 14. and as he promiseth, so his redeemed find ; all who are fed by him, feel such fulness, that they hunger no more, neither thirst any more, after the empty, unsatisfying things, of time and sense ; but find CHRIST'S *flesh to be mea-*

indeed, and his blood to be drink indeed. Reader! shall we not both say, LORD! evermore give us this bread! LORD! evermore give us this water, that we thirst not, neither go elsewhere to draw. John vi. 34. John iv. 15.

10 ¶ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

Matthew calls this place *Magdala*. Matt. xv. 39. but it should seem that *Magdala* was the larger, of which *Dalmanutha* formed a less place, in the same coasts.

11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

The sighing of CHRIST, *deeply in spirit*, as it is said he did, is no doubt of great signification. I do not presume to explain. Yet I venture to differ from every Commentator on the passage, who speak of it, as if JESUS was grieved at the hardness of the Pharisees' hearts, in not believing on him. Surely this could never be the case. For as JESUS knew them, and spake openly of them as a generation of vipers, which *could not believe*; how could the LORD be supposed to sigh on this account? See Matt. xxiii. throughout. But though I do not presume to assign the cause of the LORD's sighing deeply in spirit, I would beg to call the Reader's attention to the act itself, as a sweet testimony of his human affections. Oh! how truly blessed is it to discover, ~~that~~ JESUS was, and is, *partaker of flesh and blood*; and that in all things *it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*. Heb. ii. 14—17.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again, departed to the other side.

14 Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them,

Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

If the whole body of the Apostles were with CHRIST, the one loaf was a scanty allowance. But yet, He who had wrought so great a miracle but just before, could soon supply. The disciples then were much of the same complexion as now, soon forgetful, to overlook and forget CHRIST's power. But the precept of CHRIST, to be careful of the leaven, both of the *Pharisees*, and of *Herod*, is very striking and important. The *Pharisee*-leaven hath been a deadly weed in the Church of CHRIST; that is, I mean the real Church of CHRIST, which hath produced much obstruction and entanglement to the pure seed. What leanness of soul it hath produced, and is now producing, in numbers of the hearts of God's people, who shall calculate? The leaven of *Herod*, and of the *Sadducees*, one should conceive, was like our *Free-thinkers*, despising all revelation. LORD! I would say, preserve thy Church from every false leaven.

22 ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought?

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25 After that, he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

This *Bethsaida* is the town concerning which the LORD pronounced woe. Matt. xi. 21. And yet from thence came *Peter* and *Andrew* and *Philip*. John i. 44. Reader! it is blessed to observe how the Church of CHRIST is gathered from various places. Even *Jericho* had a *Rahab*. Joshua ii. 1 Heb. xi. 31. And what is more wonderful, from *Rahab*, after the flesh, sprung CHRIST. Matt. i. 5. And in what numberless instances do we find the children of the kingdom spring after the flesh, out of the loins of the carnal, who are not heirs of the promise. And again, on the contrary, how frequently the children of the kingdom are the progenitors of the ungodly. All which proves that grace is not hereditary. Such are among the mysteries of GOD!

I only detain the Reader over this miracle of the blind, here recorded, to whom JESUS gave sight, to remark, how the LORD was pleased to work this miracle by a progressive cure. It is not said in what state of blindness he was; whether without eyes, or only the eyes he had were totally void of vision. But I beg the Reader, once for all, to observe, and it is, in my view, a very important observation, always to have in remembrance, as well in this instance as in all others, of JESUS giving sight to the blind, that in cases where the sockets of the blind were eyeless, the LORD JESUS, in every cure, must have *created eyes*, as well as given sight. And this, by the way, became, in every instance, a complete demonstration of his GODHEAD, and proved him to be the Creator. Let the faithful believer never lose sight of it. And let the infidel, who denies the GODHEAD of CHRIST, explain the possibility, upon any of his infidel principles, if he can, how JESUS could create eyes, and yet not be GOD. The LORD challengeth the blind to come forward as his witnesses that he is GOD. And indeed if creation be, as it unquestionably is, the proof of GODHEAD, nothing can be an higher proof. Isaiah xliii. 8, 9, 10. See John ix. throughout. In the progressive cure of this man, no doubt the LORD was pleased to shew how *the path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto a perfect day*. But we must not, from hence, conclude, that our being in CHRIST is obtained in a progressive manner, though our enjoyment of that being is increased by an increasing knowledge. Not so. The opening, or the creating of this man's eyes, became the consequence of a being in CHRIST, but the being itself was from all eternity. I am speaking upon the presumption of a *spiritual* sight, as well as a *bodily*, being given to this man.

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? and Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

We never can be sufficiently thankful to the LORD for putting this question to his disciples. Neither can we too highly prize that grace the LORD gave *Peter* in the answer. Oh! for the same divine teaching, whereby alone the knowledge he had is attainable. See Matt. xvi. 13, &c.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Although, on the similar passage recorded by *Matthew*, I have made similar observations, and to which I refer, Matt. xvi. 22, 23. yet, if it be only to repeat them, they cannot be too often brought before us. Behold, Reader! in the instance of *Peter*, what man is! Who could give a more blessed testimony than *Peter* had just given, concerning his GOD and SAVIOR. And from whom did he learn it, but from GOD the HOLY GHOST? But how plain it is, that when *Peter* took JESUS, and began to rebuke him here, he learnt not this from that Almighty Teacher! Reader! let you and I learn the vast importance of being always under his blessed teachings, who teacheth not as man teacheth. And let us learn, moreover, from the instance of this great Apostle, how evident it is, that the people of GOD may be blessed of the LORD the SPIRIT to make blessed confessions at times, and yet at others, have indistinct views of some sweet and precious things of GOD.

34 And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation: of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

I cannot suffer this blessed discourse of the LORD JESUS to pass unnoticed, though in the parallel passage, Matt. xvi. 24 to the end, (which see,) I have already remarked upon it. But it were a pity to let a single word of JESUS drop to the ground. A single soul is of more value than the whole world; and for this plain reason: The time is coming, when the whole world, and all that is in it will be destroyed; but the soul of every individual must live, either in happiness or misery, for ever. Reader! pause over the subject, and calculate, if possible, the value of a single soul. The creation of it called forth the council of the whole persons of the GODHEAD. The redemption of it cost CHRIST his blood. The regeneration of it was the work of God the HOLY GHOST. The everlasting happiness of it engageth the services of angels, and of men continually. Angels rejoice in heaven in the recovery of every sinner. Hell rageth in the event of their salvation. The soul hath a capability of grace here, and glory for ever. And therefore what a loss, incalculably great, must it be, that a being of such qualities, and so formed, should be exposed to everlasting destruction. Reader! Who is there, think you, capable of being ashamed of JESUS, and his words? *Never man spake like him!* Never any among the sons of men to be compared to JESUS! Ashamed of him! All nature might blush at the very thought. But yet, in fact, every son and daughter of men take shame at JESUS and his Gospel, who do not seek salvation in his name and righteousness only; and every one who wishes to add unto, or take from, the finished salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. LORD JESUS! grant that heaven and earth may now be able to witness for me, and JESUS himself will be my witness then; that in thee alone all my hopes, wishes, joys, expectations, are. And, like *Paul*, may I be able to say with the same assurance of faith; *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* Gal. vi. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

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

believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.

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

C H A P. IX.

CONTENTS.

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

AND he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

I do not presume to speak decidedly upon so grand a subject, as this verse contains; but I venture to believe, that when the LORD JESUS saith, as in this verse, that there were some then present, whose lives would not end, until they had seen the kingdom of God come (by which is meant a conviction of CHRIST'S person and character); the LORD JESUS meant, that there were some who now stood before him, that would live until CHRIST had fulfilled the whole purposes of his mission, and had returned unto glory, and the HOLY GHOST had come down, to establish the kingdom of God in grace upon the earth. See Acts ii. 36, 37.

2 ¶ And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three

tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say: for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

There doth not seem to be any connection in what went before, with what is here said of this wonderful scene of CHRIST'S Transfiguration, since there was an interval of *six days* from the one to the other. But, no doubt, the glory must have been abundantly overwhelming. I presume not to enter into a description of what is not describable. In addition to what hath been offered in Matt. xvii. 1, &c. I would only beg the Reader further to remark with me, how frequently the LORD was pleased, both before his open manifestation, in substance of our flesh, and after he had publicly tabernacled among his people in human form, to make some special revelation of himself. Who that reads the frequent visits the LORD made to his Old Testament saints, sometimes in an human appearance, and sometimes in that of an angel, can doubt it. And what were all these, but as so many evidences how much he longed for the time of his accomplishing redemption to arrive? And what is it now, when by the influences of his blessed

Spirit, he makes himself known to his people, as their Redeemer, Husband, and Surety; otherwise than he doth to the world? I beg the Reader not to overlook the special *personal* glory here manifested of CHRIST, as the GOD-MAN Mediator. It was not the glory of the essential GODHEAD, which the SON of GOD possesseth in common with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST; but it was the *personal* glory of the union of GOD-and-Man Mediator. And who shall describe this glory? No wonder the minds of the Apostles were overpowered, with the splendor of such a scene.

Though I cannot, because I dare not, attempt to enter far into the subject of CHRIST's Transfiguration, being above the present unripe faculties of the human mind to reach; yet I venture to suggest to the Reader, some few improving reflections, which arise out of the same.

And, *First*: I would have the Reader observe from it, the tenderness of JESUS in preparing the minds of his few faithful followers, for the humiliation which was shortly to follow. Yet but a little while, and he whom they saw encircled in glory, with a light, which dazzled their view, and overwhelmed their senses, would be nailed to a cross and die, like one forsaken of GOD and man. By this manifestation, the LORD prepared them for the wonderful change. Reader! do not fail to make your improvement of it also. Hath JESUS manifested himself to you otherwise than he doeth to the world; never lose sight of it. Blend the Transfiguration and the Cross; and behold CHRIST in both.

Secondly. Learn, like the Apostles, to make those special and glorious views of JESUS, the ground work of assurance, against these seasons which may be dark and discouraging. *Peter* never lost sight of this scene, to his dying day. 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. And *John* makes his knowledge of JESUS, the argument of comforting the whole Church. 1 John i. 1, 2, 3.

Thirdly. Learn to consider this manifestation, of the glory of the GOD-MAN in the Mount of Transfiguration, as a sample, of what shall be the glorified bodies of all the saints of GOD. If in JESUS dwelt all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily, surely we may safely conclude, that our bodies, which are now the temple of the HOLY GHOST, shall become glorious in JESUS: for it is said, *that he will change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself*. Philip. iii. 20.

Lastly, and above all. Let us never forget the preciousness and blessedness, of the testimony, given by JEHOVAH, in this transaction to the person, offices, and character of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Oh! what a confirmation is this, to all the great purposes of salvation, in the infinite dignity, worth, and excellency, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. LORD grant that JEHOVAH's good pleasure, may be my good pleasure; GOD's chosen, my chosen; GOD's delight, my delight.

14 ¶ And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they

beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26 And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead; inso-much that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

I hardly know among the miracles of JESUS, any, which opens more sweet, and precious instruction, and which under divine teaching may be rendered more profitable to the Church of CHRIST than this; and I hope therefore that the Reader will indulge me in enlarging upon it. Here is a tender father, with very slender faith, brings his child to CHRIST, to obtain a cure for him, under the possession of an evil spirit. The disciples who had in other instances, through the name, and by the authority of their divine Master wrought similar cures, here failed. It pleased the LORD, for the greater glory of CHRIST, the humbling of the Apostles, and the trying the faith of the father of the child, in his providence, so to order it. The poor man came, under great doubts and fears it is evident, by his manner of expression, probably tempted to fear that as the servants had failed, so might the Master. If (said he) *thou canst do any thing, have compassion upon us and help us.* To which our LORD made this remarkable answer; *If thou canst believe all things are possible to him that believeth.* No doubt the LORD JESUS accompanied his words with power; for immediately the man convinced of his little faith, and full of distress on account of his child, *cried out, with tears, LORD! I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* The event was as might be expected, JESUS healed the son and comforted the father.

The subject is too interesting not to follow it up, with suited observations: therefore the Reader will allow me to remark, what a sweet instruction it holds forth to persons of weak faith, to exercise more confidence in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It should be observed, that this man had faith, though it was small. Now the smallest faith is not of human creation, it must be of GOD. And as all faith comes from JESUS, who is the author and finisher of faith; there is more cause to bless GOD, for the smallest degree of faith, than for all the riches of the world. For it implies an union with CHRIST, and interest in CHRIST. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* Acts xiii. 48. And another scripture saith, that *by him all that believe,* that is, be they many or few, be they strong or weak, yet, as it is by JESUS and his great salvation, and not from the merits of their faith, *all that believe, are justified from all things.* Acts x. 43. So that the weak believer or the strong, the babe in CHRIST, or the father in GOD, are all alike as to their justification; though the joy in believing will differ, according to the weakness or strength of faith, in the believer. Reader! I beseech you, to take occasion, from what is here said of this poor man's faith, to make it in some measure a standard, by which to ascertain your own. Weak as his faith was, it still led him to JESUS. Doth your faith in CHRIST do this? He had a consciousness of the weakness of it, and begged of JESUS to increase it: LORD! said he, *I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* Do you feel this? and can a throne of grace witness for you, that you go there frequently with such petitions? This poor man not only sought an increase of it, but he sought it with tears. *Straitway,* saith the Evangelist, *the father of the child cried out with tears, LORD! I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* It is a blessed sign, when the heart is softened under grace, and a sense of unworthiness and unbelief, leads the heart to GOD

to seek relief in JESUS. Reader! I would ask for myself, and if the LORD so please, may he give you grace also so to ask for yourself, as the Apostles did: LORD! *increase our faith.* Luke xvii. 5. But while the faith of an Apostle or a Patriarch, be desirable, let us learn to bless the LORD for what he hath bestowed. For, from the smallest degree of faith, we prove our call of God; and that we have eternal life abiding in us, *by the spirit which he hath given us.* 1 John iii. 24.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

I have separated those verses, from the preceding, though they form a part of the same history; not by way of explaining them, for I very freely confess, that I do not apprehend the full sense and meaning of them: but by way of calling the Reader's attention to them, one point I think is very evident from our LORD's words, that when the disciples questioned the cause of their inability, our LORD doth not say, this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting: in allusion to the evil spirit, for in the parallel passage, Matt. xvii. 20. JESUS directly refers it to a want of faith. Fastings and prayers are creature exercises. Our LORD cannot be supposed to assign to such the power of miracles. And evidently in the parallel passage of *Matthew*, the LORD ascribes the power rather to faith. The subject is however attended with too much difficulty to determine. Though I am inclined to think that by prayer and fasting, JESUS refers to himself, in whom alone all righteousness is fulfilled.

30 ¶ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee: and he would not that any man should know it.

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him: and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

I shall detain the Reader no longer, in an observation on these verses, than just to request him to notice, how tenderly the LORD began to open to them the subject of his death. He had noticed it slightly, in the preceding Chapter, verse 31; and here again he keeps up the remembrance of it. And let not the Reader fail to remark, that in both places, the LORD is pleased to connect together with his death, the certainty of his resurrection.

33 And he came to Capernaum; and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace : for by the way they had disputed among themselves who *should be* the greatest.

35 And he sat down and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them : and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me : and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

Do not overlook in this passage, the GODHEAD of CHRIST. He knew their hearts. And though he asked them of the cause of their dispute, yet this was not for his information, but for their reproof. And I pray the Reader to observe, the very engaging method the LORD adopted to cure his disciples of all that mistaken pride he discovered in them. What a beautiful emblem of CHRIST's kingdom is represented in the humbleness, and docility of a little child ! *David* speaks of the state of his soul, under the consciousness of his nothingness, and abstraction from the vanity and pride of life, *as a weaned child*. Psm. cxxxi. 2. To a child of God, who hath really, and truly known and tasted the preciousness of JESUS ; the breasts of the mother would no longer afford sweet milk ; but the bitterness of wormwood and gall is put upon them.

38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us : and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not : for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward,

42 And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

I cannot offer a better improvement, on this very interesting passage, according to my view of it, and if so be the LORD the HOLY GHOST is the teacher, both of him that writes and him that reads, than to observe, that here is drawn, and by the LORD himself, the line of distinction, between what the Prophet, ages before declared, *the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.* Malachi iii. 18. Every circumstance in the word of GOD, tends to the confirmation, that the two grand distinctions in life, how diversified soever they may appear to our dim sighted view, are formed between the Church of CHRIST and the ungodly world, the seed of the woman, and the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience. The language of CHRIST is decisive, *He that is not against us, is on our part.* And the LORD hath very largely set the same solemn truth forth in all his discourses. The good seed and the tares, the sheep and the goats, the wise virgins and the foolish. And as they are perfectly distinct in their origin, their nature, and connection, so are they in all their progress, condition, and termination. There is nothing that can be called neutral, or of a middle state. To one or the other of these different kingdom all belong, and so will remain to all eternity. Reader! it is blessed, when under the Spirit's teaching, we discover our union with CHRIST, and consequently our interest in CHRIST. Luke xii. 32.

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched :

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched :

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire :

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

So very important, are those solemn and awful words, that the LORD JESUS was pleased thrice to repeat them. It may well become us to make as solemn an enquiry into their meaning. Perhaps the Reader will recollect, that they are a quotation from the close of *Isaiah's*

prophecy. JESUS thus confirms the words of his servant, by giving the authority of the Master. In that prophetic chapter, with which *Isaiah* ends his ministry, he describes the result of the whole. When the LORD hath brought home his kingdom, and the new heavens and the new earth are formed; and all his redeemed are made Priests to GOD and the FATHER, in order to effect their minds with suitable impressions of distinguishing grace, they shall from time to time go forth and look upon the misery of the wicked, *for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.* *Isaiah lxxvi. 21* to the end. Now whether this prophecy referred to the Gospel Church, when *Jerusalem* was destroyed, or whether to the more spiritual state, when, as in the present day, the Jews nationally considered are given up to an unbelieving mind: *eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.* Rom. xi. 8. Or whether it hath a reference to the awful judgments of the last day, or whether the whole be included, and it refers to all taken together; in either sense the doctrine is the same. As in the case of the Parable of the *rich man* and *Lazarus*, the misery of the *former* was increased in beholding the blessedness of the *latter*; so the terrors of hell, will be aggravated from a view of the felicity of heaven; and the glories of distinguishing mercy will make the redeemed ten fold more illustrious when looking over the battlements of heaven, they view the horrors of unredeemed transgressors.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his salt-ness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Various have been the sense given to those verses, by different writers. I presume not to speak upon them decidedly. All I shall propose, I would propose by way of humble enquiry, looking to GOD the SPIRIT to guide me and instruct me through the whole passage; and if I err, to pardon my errors, and suffer them not to be the means of leading others into the same.

And first, I humbly conceive, that as our LORD all the way through this discourse, from the 43rd verse, is speaking of the misery of hell, and the blessedness of heaven; I apprehend that he is still preserving the view of both in what he saith here of the person and the sacrifice. The *one*, is said to be salted with fire, the *other* is distinguished from this in being salted with salt. The *former*, *salted with fire*, it should seem (for I humbly ask the question) hath reference to those whose everlasting misery is expressed under the similitude of a *worm that dieth not, and the fire not quenched.* *Salted with fire* will then imply, that as the common salt hath power to preserve flesh from corruption, so this fire shall be, to preserve in being those persons from being consumed. And while, as was before said, the worm of a guilty conscience shall grow upon them with inexpressible anguish, they shall never die; the fire which is not extinguishable shall be as salt to preserve, while it shall burn with divine wrath to punish, and never go out; but *the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever* Rev. xiv. 11.

In relation to the *latter*; every sacrifice shall be salted with salt: I humbly conceive, that these sweet words have reference to the redeemed in CHRIST. It is a truth too well known, and too firmly ascertained to be questioned, that the whole law was but a *shadow of good things to come*; but the body is CHRIST. Hence, therefore, strictly and properly speaking, there was no real sacrifice, but the one offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST, once for all: for by that *one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. Heb. x. 1—14. So that every offering under the law, was offered, with an eye to CHRIST: and HE was the one glorious substance of all. Laying this down as a foundation, which cannot be questioned, we can now enter into some apprehension at least of our LORD's gracious words, if (as I have ventured to suppose) they refer to the redeemed in CHRIST: *Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt*. CHRIST the sacrifice, shall be offered by faith, with the salt of the Covenant. For so the LORD enjoined the Church when setting forth the sacrifice of CHRIST in type and shadow. *Every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt: neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the Covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt*. Levit. ii. 13. So that while the *salted with fire* acts upon the persons of the unredeemed, as salt to flesh to preserve in being, and yet in unextinguishable torments, the *salt of the Covenant* with which the sacrifice is offered, preserves to everlasting happiness the souls and bodies of the LORD's people; being saved and accepted in CHRIST. Oh! LORD JESUS! say to my soul, and in saying it, confirm thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to hope; *have salt in yourselves*. Let never the salt of the Covenant of my God be lacking, but may JESUS in all his person, offices, grace, and spiritual seasonings, be in all my poor offerings: then shall I be as the salt of the earth, preserved in thee, and by thee, not only from the corruption of the world around, but the corruptions within, and have peace with thee, and all thy people.

REFLECTIONS.

LORD JESUS! While I read thy gracious promise, at the opening of this Chapter, to some of thy faithful ones; who, according to what was then said, did not taste death till they had seen this kingdom come with power; I bless thee that though not present at thy Transfiguration; yet seeing thee by faith, and knowing thee as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, all thy redeemed of the present day can say as holy Simeon of old, *mine eyes have seen thy salvation!*

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

Oh! for a spirit of humility among thy Church and People, that each may esteem other better than themselves: yea, may we all be content to be nothing; yea, less than nothing, that JESUS, our adorable JESUS, may be all in all!

In the awful view of the unregenerate, in their *worm that dieth not*, and the *fire that is not quenched*; oh! give thy people grace to mark,

and rightly prize, their distinguishing mercies. LORD! *how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto us and not unto the world.* Oh! for the salt of the Covenant of my God! Oh! for the unspeakable blessedness in the interest in CHRIST's sacrifice! Oh! for the grace of God the HOLY GHOST, salting with the salt of his regenerating, cleansing, illuminating, strengthening, and confirming influence, my soul unto the day of eternal redemption!

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

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

AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 ¶ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

6 But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

8 And they twain shall be one flesh; so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*.

11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Our LORD's circuit in his ministry would lead, in the contemplation of it, to a most profitable subject. Unwearied in all his services, with zeal to his Father's glory, and his people's happiness, the sun watched his path by day, and the stars witnessed to his communion by night. It was no small distance JESUS had advanced in a little space. In the 8th Chapter we find him on the borders of *Tyre* and *Sidon* westward, and now he is arrived eastward on the coasts of *Judæa* by *Jordan*. Precious LORD! what a lesson, and what an example, to thy ministers and people! John ix. 4.

We have the Pharisees, the sworn foes to CHRIST, in this paragraph at their own trade again; not to receive instruction, but to entangle JESUS in his talk. They brought forward for his decision, that popular question already decided in their mind, but wishing to entrap CHRIST: the subject concerning Divorces. But how unworthy soever their designs were, the Church of CHRIST find cause to bless GOD that the question was put to CHRIST, since it gave occasion for his very sweet and gracious answer; by which the doctrine respecting divorces is put upon its just and unalterable foundation. If the reader will once more read over this paragraph, from the 2d to the 12th verse inclusive, I will then request his attention to the subject, according to our LORD's own statement.

And *first*: Our LORD most decidedly proves, that even in the cases where *Moses* permitted a divorcement, he allowed it not, without compelling the husband to write the bill with his own hand, before he put her away. As if to shew, that it should not be the hasty impulse of the moment, but the solemn and serious result of proper deliberation; thereby allowing an harsh and angry husband the time to relent. And even here, it was to be done with such coolness, turning over all the consequences, that the husband by the same law, however afterwards he might repent, was not by any means allowed to take her again. See Deut. xxiv. 1—4. And the LORD JESUS added that this law, which seemed rather to wink at such conduct than justify it, would never have been given by *Moses* but for the hardness of their hearts. So decidedly against all divorces was the tender and compassionate JESUS.

But, *secondly*: The LORD JESUS doth not stop here. His decision against all divorces arose from an higher authority still; for saith JESUS, from the beginning of the creation, GOD made them male and female; and declared that when joined in marriage, they were no longer twain, but one flesh: that GOD himself joined them together; and man dared not put them asunder. Here is an uncommonly strong argument in this statement by CHRIST: not only because marriage was of divine institution, and the separating man and wife solemnly prohibited by their Maker; but because in the first instance of wedlock, which ever took place in the creation of GOD, there was no possibility of the man's putting away his wife and taking another; for no other woman existed. One man, and one woman, the LORD had made, and no more: and from those two, made one by marriage, the race was to follow. So that here in the first marriage of our first parents, the LORD's holy will and pleasure concerning marriage was fully given,

as a pattern to all their children. I think this is so unalterably strong and conclusive, that no appeal can be made against it. The popular wish, and too general conduct of the Jews, in putting away their wives, received our LORD's decided condemnation.

But we must not stop here. Divorcement received another decided reproof from the very design of marriage: which was altogether with a mystical allusion to CHRIST, and his Church. We have an authority which cannot be questioned, that the marriage of our first parents, *Adam* and *Eve*, in the garden of *Eden*, was altogether a type, or more properly speaking, the shadow and representation of CHRIST's marriage with his Church. A *type*, it might be said, because it set forth what would be accomplished when the fulness of time was come, and GOD sent forth his SON, made of a Woman, in marrying our nature. And yet a *shadow* also, because it became the shade of a prior substance, when before all worlds the SON of GOD did as the Prophet described him, betroth his Church to himself for ever, *Hosca ii. 18, 19. It was not good that the GOD-MAN CHRIST JESUS should be alone*; no more than *Adam*, in the *Adam* nature, in which he was created: for then how would CHRIST have been the Bridegroom of his Church without a Bride? *Jehovah* therefore said, *I will make him an helpmate for him*. Hence therefore of the Church to CHRIST, as well as of *Eve* to her husband; it is said, *therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh*, *Gen. ii. 18* to the end. See *Ephes. v. 23* to the end.

If the reader be not tired with the length of these observations on this passage, I would wish to detain him, one moment longer, on the subject of divorcement. You have seen the LORD JESUS decidedly giving his disapprobation to all divorcement. Perhaps it will be asked, yea it should be asked, as the most interesting question of all others: Did ever JESUS put away his wife? To which I venture most humbly to say; I trow not. Let the reader look over the word of GOD for himself, (and never never can he be engaged in a question of higher consequence,) and I persuade myself he will conclude with me, that no bill of divorcement was ever given by JESUS to his Church. He who by his servant *Paul* hath said; *husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them*, would not be himself bitter against his, *Coloss. iii. 19*. Nay, the Apostle elsewhere saith, when speaking of men's loving their wives as their own bodies, and he that loveth his wife loveth himself, makes this blessed addition, *No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as CHRIST the Church. Ephes. v. 28, 29*. Here's a beautiful scripture in point. As no man ever hated his own flesh; even though covered with sores and wounds, so JESUS loved his Church, though leprous and unclean; Oh! precious, precious LORD JESUS! Surely it becometh thee in all things to have the pre-eminence!

And now, if the Reader feels interested (as well he may; LORD let it engage my unceasing attention!) to look into the word of GOD in the enquiry; whether JESUS ever put away his Wife; let him diligently search the whole Bible. The most striking passages which seem to lean this way, are *Jerem. iii. 8*. *Isaiah l. 1*. *Hosca ii. 2*. But the smallest attention, and especially when connected with the whole body of scripture on the subject, very plainly (according to my view,) declare the contrary. Let the Reader take with the Sta

verse of *Jeremiah*, the 3d, the 1st and 14th verses of the same chapter. Let him attend also to the manner of expression in the 50th chapter of *Isaiah*, and 1st verse, and he will perhaps be inclined to think with me, that the LORD challengeth any one to show the bill of divorcement; knowing there was none. And as for the passage in *Hosea*, chapter ii. and 2d verse; the whole chapter and the following are most decided in proof, that JESUS never did, as the Apostle Paul speaks elsewhere, *cast away his people which he foreknew*. Rom. xi. 1, 2. Our LORD's manner of speaking on this subject; where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, and the like; is not un-similar to what he used to his disciples on another occasion. *At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you that I will pray for you*. John xvi. 26. Now one might be led to think, in the first view of these words, as if JESUS meant to decline praying for them; whereas it is evident JESUS meant thereby to say more fully that he would.

The Reader will I hope forgive the length to which I have extended the subject, from the importance of it; and I shall now leave him to his own conclusions, under the pleasing assurance, that the Almighty SPIRIT of truth will guide both Writer and Reader into all truth, on this most sweet and interesting subject. Indeed, indeed it is blessed to hear the LORD, the GOD of Israel, say that *he hateth putting away*. Malachi ii. 14, 15, 16. And oh! what blessedness will in the end appear, when after all the treacherous departures of JESUS's Church, in all her spiritual adulteries, JESUS must, he will, yea, he cannot rest until he hath brought her home to his FATHER's house, and *presented her to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she shall be holy and without blemish*. Ephes. v. 27. Rev. xix. 5—9.

13 ¶ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

The same observations will meet us here, as Matt. xviii. 1, &c. Luke xviii. 15.

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and

asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God.*

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, De not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

28 ¶ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say

unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my sake, and the gospel's,

30 But he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

In addition to the observations offered on the parallel passage, Matt. xix. 16, &c. I would beg to remark on the expression of JESUS be- holding this young man, and as it is said, *loved him*, the words have no one reference whatsoever to the love JESUS beareth towards his people. There are various degrees of affection perfectly well known, felt, and understood by mankind. Even in the natural affinity of life, our love to one another is regulated by the particular character of relationship in which we stand. The LORD JESUS might be said, when beholding this youth, in whom the corruptions induced by the fall, had not broken out, in the more violent instances of notorious profligacy, as in the great mass of men, to love what he saw amiable. But then, it should be carefully distinguished what this love meant, from the love JESUS beareth to his people. The sequel of this youth's history, in going away sorrowful from CHRIST, and never more coming to CHRIST, as far as we are informed, very decidedly prove that no work of grace ever passed upon his heart. The love here spoken of differs altogether from the special affection the LORD JESUS bears to the persons of his redeemed, which are the gift of his Father, the purchase of his blood, and the objects of the everlasting love of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in whom he puts the influences of his sovereign power and grace to make them wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS.

The concluding part of this passage is uncommonly beautiful and interesting. While JESUS, in strong figures represents the total impossibility of the mere efforts of nature, rising above nature; he sets forth the ease and blessedness with which his redeemed, through his grace, will attain his kingdom. An huge camel might as soon pass through the eye of a needle, as for a rich man, rich in his own fancied goodness, swollen and bloated with his own Pharisaiical righteousness, but never regenerated by grace, to enter into the kingdom of God. While on the other hand, every one of CHRIST's regenerated family, *poor in spirit, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*, and who give proofs of the triumphs of grace over nature, leaving all for CHRIST, will enter with a full tide of glory into CHRIST's kingdom; being saved, *not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to rich, free and sovereign mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the HOLY GHOST, shed upon them abundantly through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* Titus iii. 5, 6.

32 ¶ And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid: and he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

33 *Saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

I beg the Reader not to overlook the affection of JESUS in thus gradually preparing the disciples for his death. See Chap. viii. 31, and Chap. ix. 31, &c. It is a blessed trait of character of JESUS in confirmation of the leading feature of his office work as Mediator, the voluntary nature of it, that he longed for the accomplishment of the whole in his death. Hence we find him, Luke xix. 28, going before ascending up to Jerusalem. *I have a baptism (said JESUS) to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.* Luke xiii. 50. So to Judas. *What thou doest, do quickly.* John xiii. 37. And when Judas and the band came to apprehend him: *JESUS went forth and said unto them, whom seek ye? I am he.* John xviii. 4, 5. Blessedly is it said of him, that *he was led as a lamb to the slaughter*; so free, so willing. Isaiah liii. 7.

35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they say unto him, We can, and Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup

that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

In addition to the observations made on the relation of this conversation, between CHRIST and the Sons of Zebedee. Matt. xx. 20. (which see;) I would only add, that as the petition of *James* and *John* plainly prove, they had at that time no knowledge in what CHRIST's kingdom consisted; so it is equally plain that our LORD's answer had no reference in the least to his power, but to the confirmation of the antient settlements of eternity. In the council of peace before all worlds, CHRIST's kingdom in the persons of his redeemed were all known, and their names numbered in the book of life. And hence, with an eye to this, the Prophet declared, that they should all *again* pass under the hand of him that telleth them. Jerem. xxxiii. 13. I beg the Reader not to overlook in this passage, as it was in the parallel one of *Matthew*: the words are in Italic, verse 40, *it shall be given to them*; which implies that they are not in the original. And if the verse be read without them, the sense will be in exact correspondence with what JESUS saith. John xvii. 2, that *he should give eternal life to as many as the FATHER had given him.*

41 And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John;

42 But Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

What a very lovely and unanswerable argument the LORD makes use of in those verses, to beget humbleness of soul. Who that beholds the SON of GOD leaving the bosom of his Father, and coming voluntarily to give himself an offering and a sacrifice for sin, can in the view of such an instance, assume distinction and pride!

46 ¶ And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great num-

ber of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called: and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? the blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole: and immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

The miracle here recorded being particularly interesting, and somewhat more largely treated, than in either of the other Evangelists, (See Matt. xx. 29. Luke xviii. 35.) I would beg the reader's indulgence to notice some of the more striking features of it.

Jericho was the cursed city. Joshua vii. 26. 1 Kings xvi. 34; but here the Lord will raise trophies to his grace. *Rahab* shall be called from *Jericho*; and thus blind *Bartimeus* shall form from thence an everlasting monument in the Church, to the Redeemer's glory.

The first thing to be observed after the name, is the state and situation of this poor man. It doth not say so; but it is more than probable that he was born blind. Born blind indeed he was in soul, for this is the case of our nature universally speaking: and the SON OF GOD came to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Isaiah xxxv. 5. Isaiah xlii. 6, 7. Isaiah xlix. 9. Isaiah lxi. 1, compared with Luke iv. 18. I beg the Reader to consult what was offered, Chap. viii. 22—26, on the subject of CHRIST, forming a creation; in all such instances of blindness as he cured when the eye had never been formed in the socket, or if destroyed. And Reader! is not every instance of every blindness when restored to sight, an emblem of the sinner, yea, every sinner; when brought from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God!

The next thing to be noticed in the case of this poor man, is the

situation in which he sat by the highway side begging. Begging alms for the body, unconscious of the wants of the soul. What can be more pitiable than when we thus see beggars in our streets, earnest and importunate for the bread which perisheth; but unconcerned for that which endureth to everlasting life. Such was this man's state. Such is every man's state, though he waiteth on the highway of ordinances till JESUS pass by; and the Spirit of JESUS put a cry in his heart for spiritual light and understanding.

The *third* incident in the history of *Bartimeus* was the hearing of JESUS passing by, and the immediate effect wrought in his heart, putting a cry there; JESUS! *thou SON of DAVID, have mercy on me!* Who told him that JESUS after the flesh, was the SON of DAVID? And when he heard this, who informed him that it was under this character his people were to look for his mercy? Who but GOD the Spirit could have told him this; or put such a cry in his heart, which nothing should stifle, until the requested mercy had been granted him? Who, but must see the work of grace, upon this man's soul?

The *fourth* particular worthy our regard in the case, is the conduct of the people who endeavoured to stop his cry. What a striking representation this is of what is every day going on in the world. No sooner is a child of GOD brought under serious concern for his everlasting welfare, but false friends to poor sinners, and true enemies to the rich Savior, aim to stifle all conviction, and crush the infant desire of salvation at once in the soul. Oh! what sharp exercises have some gracious souls gone through, in their first awakenings from their carnal relations and neighbours, before that CHRIST hath been formed in the heart the hope of glory!

The *fifth* thing observable in the history, is the conduct of the poor man, on the endeavours of those around him to silence his cry; his earnestness became but the more increased. True grace, the more it is exercised, the more it will manifest itself: neither will an effectual call from the LORD ever cease, before that the prayer awakened by it and offered to the LORD, be answered in mercy. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Rom. viii. 30.

The standing still of JESUS, and calling the poor man, which are the next points to be noticed in this transaction, are most blessedly interesting indeed. Was there not a *needs be*, for CHRIST standing still; and calling him, similar to *Zaccheus* and the woman of *Samarita*? See Luke xix. 5. John iv. 4. Is not JESUS constrained by his very mission, to seek and save the lost? John vi. 37. Oh! what a subject of holy joy, such views of CHRIST furnish?

Neither do I think the poor man's instant arising, hastening to JESUS, and casting away his garment, (for the whole was CHRIST's grace in the man's heart, and not nature's powers,) are less interesting as the sweet effects proceeding from such a cause! Reader! think how blessed it must be, when at any time a poor sinner is enabled by the same grace as calls him, to hasten to that call; and to cast away every thing of his own; all his own righteousness, or what some men call righteousness, and which the word of GOD calls *filthy rags*, and come to JESUS, just as he is, poor and blind, and wretched, and needy; and receive all *from* CHRIST, since all is *in* CHRIST of pardon and salvation?

And what a beautiful close, to a most blessed and beautiful miracle doth the account end with: the poor man received his sight and followed Jesus in the way; followed him no doubt, in the regeneration; and having found JESUS so blessed in grace, is now sitting down with him for ever in glory. Oh! the preciousness of salvation! Oh! the unspeakable preciousness of such an Almighty SAVIOR!

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

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

C H A P. XI.

CONTENTS.

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

AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you; and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye

this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the Highest.

11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

Bethphage and *Bethany*, seem to have been somewhat like suburbs to Jerusalem; two little straggling villages joining to the city, the one ending like streets where the other began. From hence, and through these, the Lord was pleased to make a public entry into Jerusalem. The Prophet *Zechariah* foretold this; and as no king but Zion's King ever made such an entry, there can be no question concerning the prophecy, and the accomplishment of it. *Zech. ix. 9.*

I venture to think, that the disciples never gave a more decided token of their faith; perhaps none equal to it, during our Lord's ministry, than in thus going without hesitation, to take the colt according to his bidding. For, as the act itself was taking what was not their own, one might have expected that the disciples would have said so, when Jesus commanded them. But the manner in which he gave the order: his foretelling where they should find the colt, and the answer they were to give to the owners; *the Lord hath need of him*; as if intimating the Lord and proprietor of all things. These circumstances over-ruled their minds to an instant obedience. And it is probable, I think, that as the disciples never gave over, even till

CHRIST'S death, their expectation of a temporal Kingdom, they might have been inclined to hope, that the LORD was now about to assume the government.

It is well worthy the Reader's remark, that the LORD JESUS went not to the Court, but to the Temple, as if to shew, that his kingdom was not of this world. Sweet consideration to the heart of the believer! So the Prophet described him; and so the LORD JESUS fulfilled the prophecy. Malachi iii. 1, 2. Nothing can be more decided in confirmation of CHRIST'S character, than the over-ruling the minds of those little children to proclaim him for the CHRIST! And what could be more in point, in thus fulfilling that memorable prophecy. Psm. viii. 2. Surely, never did the LORD more signally silence the malice of his enemies, than when out of the mouths of unconscious children the GODHEAD and CHRISTSHIP of the Redeemer was thus acknowledged! If my Poor Man's Commentary should happen to fall into the hands of children; yea, even *little* children, or should be read in their hearing, I would beg the little ones of CHRIST'S fold to notice this account; and I would beg the elders present to notice it to them. JESUS took delight in their testimony *then*, and so JESUS doth *now*. What can be more lovely than to hear the glory of the LORD *out of the mouth of babes and sucklings*. Mark x. 13—16. 2 Tim. iii. 15.

12 ¶ And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 And seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves: for the time of figs was not *yet*.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever: and his disciples heard *it*.

15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves:

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him; for they

feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 And in the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Every incident in this passage is interesting, and I beg the Reader's attention to it. And first, we are told that our Lord was hungry. Reader! never forget it, for it is among the most precious points of our holy faith, that the Son of God when he took into union with himself, our nature, took the whole of that nature in all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and was truly and properly Man as well as God. For had he not been so, he would not have suited for the purposes of redemption. An angel's nature would not have done; for how would he then have felt as man, and known as man, what his people know and feel? Jesus hungered, wept, groaned, bled, died. And hence in those very feelings, knows the feelings of his people, in all these, and every other case. See Heb. ii. throughout.

The next thing to be noticed in this sweet passage, is the barren fig tree, and the Lord's condemning it to everlasting barrenness. But from the first view of the subject, we may well suppose that somewhat more than a mere fig tree is meant by it. No doubt the Jewish nation is referred to, which like this fig tree, had great shew

of religion, as this tree had leaves; but not an atom of fruit; yea, rationally considered, they rejected the LORD of life and glory. But the similitude reacheth to every other mere professor of the Gospel; in every age of the Church, void of the fruit of CHRIST's righteousness. And all such, from an awful representation in the present day, deceiving by the appearance of large full leaves of a profession without fruit; and in the end will be found dried up from the roots, with the curse of a broken law falling everlastingly upon them, untaken away by CHRIST. Our LORD's observations to his disciples upon the occasion, are most sweet and precious. Faith in GOD; that is, in the rich mercies of GOD in CHRIST, and the faithfulness of JEHOVAH's covenant promises in him, will remove all sin, and all difficulties; as if Mount *Olivet*, which stood far from the sea, was carried at once into it. Indeed, what cannot faith, which is the gift of GOD in CHRIST, accomplish! See Heb. xi. See Matt. xxi. 18, &c. For the observation of CHRIST's driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, see John ii. 14.

27 ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

28 And say unto him, By what authority dost thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell: and Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

I am inclined to think, that those sworn enemies to CHRIST, who are said here to have come to JESUS in the temple, demanding his authority, came in a public body, by way of confronting him; and as

those who were sent by the *Sanhedrim* for that purpose, and determined to silence him, and put an end to his preaching. The LORD JESUS had turned out the buyers and sellers from the temple, and had healed the blind and lame which came to him for that purpose into the temple; and was now teaching the people while walking about the temple, as was the custom in those days among a set of philosophers, who walked with the pupils as they taught them. Let the Reader figure to himself the LORD JESUS thus attacked, and observe the wisdom of the LORD in his answer. By directing not only the minds of his enemies to the subject of John's ministry, but also those to whom he was preaching his Gospel, the LORD took the most effectual method to throw to the ground their opposition, and establish his mission. They dared not admit *John's* ministry to be of divine appointment; for in so doing they would have acknowledged CHRIST, for the whole of *John's* office pointed to CHRIST. And most probably the congregation to whom JESUS was then preaching, had been among John's disciples; so that to have denied John's mission, would have been dangerous. The wretched state to which they were reduced, therefore, in confessing their ignorance, serves to shew the awful delusion under which those men were. And Reader, when we recollect that this transaction took place only a few days before CHRIST's death, the matter becomes yet more awful concerning them; for though put to silence and unable to answer CHRIST, they departed from him only with more determined hatred to seek his immediate death. Reader! You and I shall have read this account to very little profit, if it doth not teach us to what a desperate state the heart of man is capable of being hardened; and at the same time the distinguishing mercy of GOD in every instance where grace is given to believe the record GOD hath given of his dear SON! I John v. 10, 11.

REFLECTIONS.

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

Reader! behold the barren fig tree! Observe its fruitless verdure! Figure to yourself the state of a church, a people, a family; yea, an individual, thus! And calculate if you can the awful state of appearing flourishing to the eye of man, while under the blighting curse

of God. Oh! the tremendous sentence, could it be heard, concerning the unauthorized, uncalled, unsent minister, or graceless people: *No man eat fruit of thee for ever!*

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

C H A P. XII.

CONTENTS.

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

AND he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner :

11 This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

We had this parable, Matt. xxi. 33, to which I refer. But in addition to what was there observed, it may not be improper briefly to remark, that in this, as well as some other parables of CHRIST, we are to keep in remembrance as we pass through the several parts of it, that as it is a parable, we are not to strain the expressions beyond the figure intended; nor do more in the application of the whole than as evidently the LORD intended it in a general way. That the chief scope of it is to shew the LORD's ill-treatment from the Jewish nation is certain; and the several characters represented in the parable as plainly mark it out. The certain man here spoken of is God the FATHER; the vineyard as is elsewhere described, is the house of *Israel*, and the men of *Judah* his pleasant plant. *Isaiah v. 7*. The servants at different times said to be sent, are the Prophets, and faithful messengers preparatory to the coming of CHRIST, and his SON the LORD JESUS CHRIST. But when it is said that this *certain man went into a far country*; that this certain man, put a *may be* upon the reception his SON might receive; *it may be, they will reverence my SON*. These are parabolical expressions, and not to be construed in their exact literal sense and meaning. The LORD is every where, and always present; and therefore can neither be said to withdraw, nor go forth. Neither could the LORD be supposed to say, that there was a probability CHRIST would be revered by the nation, the Jews, to whom he was sent: for provision was only made for those to reverence CHRIST, of whom he himself spake, and every other: JESUS himself assigned the cause, wherefore they would not accept him. See *John vi. 37. John viii. 43*. But the parable is intended to shew the nation the Jews, in their national character. And the event, in the destruction of the Jewish nation, exactly corresponded to the predictions CHRIST here delivered. The whole nation was overthrown, and the people which survived the destruction of Jerusalem, were scattered over the face of the earth.

13 ¶ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees, and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words,

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man : for thou regardest not the person of men : but teachest the way of God in truth : Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not ?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give ? but he knowing their hypocrisy said unto them, Why tempt ye me ? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.

16 And they brought *it* ; and he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription ? and they said unto him, Cesar's.

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

It was said of the LORD JESUS, under the spirit of prophecy, that *with the hypocritical mockers were those that gnashed upon him with their teeth.* Psm. xxxv. 16. And here we behold them in deep design. If to the question of the lawfulness to give tribute to Cesar, JESUS had said, no ; the *Herodians* would have apprehended him as an enemy to government. And if the LORD had justified Cesar's claim, the whole nation of the Jews would have been against him, as they were all longing for deliverance from the yoke, and the very gatherers of the taxes were called publicans, and classed only as sinners. I beg the Reader not only to remark how much wisdom JESUS displayed in avoiding the trap which they had laid for him, but how blessedly he took occasion to remind them of what they owed to God. Who can indeed render to the LORD his due ?

18 ¶ Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection ; and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his wife behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now there were seven brethren ; and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed : and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed, last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?*

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. Ye therefore do greatly err.

I detain the Reader, at the entrance, upon this most beautiful discourse, of the LORD JESUS, to remark to him, how graciously the LORD made every occasion minister to his glory, and his people's welfare. Here were the captious *Sadducees*, the free-thinkers of our LORD's generation, who came to him for no purpose, but to entangle JESUS in his talk. And observe, what a very blessed opportunity the LORD made of it, to speak upon that interesting subject, concerning the resurrection. It becomes a confirmation of that precious scripture; *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remembrance of wrath shalt thou restrain.* The LORD will use just so much of man's wrath, as shall minister to the LORD's purpose, in the promotion of his glory; and all that is over and above, as the violent stream at a mill, shall be turned into another channel. Psm. lxxvi. 10.

The junction of those different sects of men, *Sadducees* with the *Herodians*, was simply with a view to gall CHRIST. Every one will join in the attempt to crush CHRIST; however like *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, in other matters, they are at enmity between themselves. Luke xxiii. 12. So was it then, so is it now, and so will it be, during the whole of the present world. It is blessed to know this, and blessed to prove it. The most violent enemies against CHRIST, while the LORD was on earth, were the self-righteous Pharisees; and the greatest opposers to his purest truths now, are the same characters.

The question put by those men, was founded in consummate ignorance; and as our LORD told them, because *they knew not the scriptures*; that is, they knew nothing of the scripture, but the mere letter; and had never felt *the power of God* in them, by the LORD's teaching. *Seven* brethren marrying one and the same woman, or had the case been *seventy times seven* if possible, it would have been the same thing; for all the connections of nature in this life, are wholly for the purposes of this life, and are dissolved at death.

Our LORD therefore in declaring the children of the resurrection to be as the angels, gave a full and decisive answer to this, and every other question of the like nature. But the occasion was too fair to suffer it to pass unnoticed, as the subject might be made to minister to his people's comfort; and therefore the LORD JESUS not only proceeded in it, by way of establishing the certainty of the doctrine itself, but of throwing some divine light upon it, which have proved ever since, and ever will, until the whole come to be realized in glory, of the most blessed, and unspeakable joy to his Church.

The LORD takes only a single circumstance from the Old Testament scripture, in confirmation of the soul refreshing doctrine, as in itself more than sufficient for this purpose; namely the call of God to *Moses* at the bush. No doubt it was JESUS himself, who in his covenant relation as God-Man Mediator, before his more open revelation of himself in that character, which spake to *Moses* at the bush. So *Stephen* believed. Acts vii. 30. where he calls him *an angel* (or Messenger) of the LORD. And so in fact the LORD JESUS himself intimated, when in his conference with the Jews, he declared his existence to have been before Abraham, and called himself *I AM*. Compare John viii. 58, with Exod. iii. 14. But passing this by, for the present if we consider what the LORD JESUS here saith to the Sadducees, we shall discover that nothing can be more decisive in confirmation of the resurrection. The LORD quotes the expressions made use of by the LORD to *Moses* at the bush. *I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob*. Now at the time that these blessed truths were delivered, these Patriarchs had been long dead, and their bodies mouldered into dust. And yet, God declares himself as much their God as ever. The LORD doth not say *I was* their God, when living in their bodies; but *I am* so now. A thing in itself impossible, if *Abraham*, though dead in body, was not then living in spirit. Hence the LORD adds, *God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living*: and as Luke hath the words in his Gospel, it is added, *for all live unto him*. Luke xx. 38. And *Paul*, under the authority of the HOLY GHOST, was directed to teach the Church that whether believers lived, or died, they were the LORD'S. For (said he) *to this end, CHRIST both died, and rose and revived, that he might be LORD both of the dead and living*. Rom. xiv. 8, 9. I pray the Reader by the way, to join this blessed passage with the two just before referred to. John viii. 58. with Exod. iii. 14, in confirmation that it was our LORD CHRIST who spake to *Moses* at the bush; and may the LORD give him a right understanding in all things.

Now then from the whole of this most blessed, and highly interesting passage, I venture to believe the following conclusions are undeniable. *First*, that the Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were in their spirits, living in a state of separate existence from their bodies, at the time the LORD spake to *Moses* from the bush, when he called himself their God. *Secondly*, that the LORD in this call to *Moses*, declaring himself as he did in his covenant relationship to those Patriarchs, most fully and plainly implied his engagements with the whole persons of each, both soul and body; and therefore the LORD could not be supposed to be understood, as solemnly acknowledging this relationship, which was made at a time when both existed together, if one part of the being of those persons was annihilated,

never more to exist. *Thirdly*, the very recognizing this glorious title of the Patriarch's God in covenant, at a time their ashes were in the dust, solemnly confirmed the assurance of their resurrection. And, *fourthly*, the fulfilment of God's covenant made with those Patriarchs, depended upon the soul and body of each being again united; since not only without it, the covenant promises of God could only be with one part of their persons; but also the happiness of each could only be in part, if the body for ever remained separate from the soul. Reader! ponder well these things: give thyself wholly to them. In JESUS, behold the resurrection and the life, And oh! for grace from God the HOLY GHOST, to have *part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power!* Rev. xx. 6. See Mark xvi. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 20.

28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This *is* the first commandment.

31 And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God, and no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

If we were not well acquainted with the general character of the Scribes, we might be led to hope, that this man's question was with a better design than the Sadducees. But there is nothing neutral in the holy war. Jesus himself hath decided; *he that is not with me*

is against me. Matt. xii. 30. But whether a friend or foe, our LORD hath blessedly taught the divine unity existing in a threefold character of persons, and followed it up with all its blessed consequences. The precious passage from one of the books of *Moses*, which the LORD refers to in proof, is in itself more than half confirmation of the glorious truth of the whole Bible, that the LORD JEHOVAH, the one Eternal and true God exists in a threefold character of persons; for otherwise, wherefore is Israel called upon to hear that the LORD thy God (that is, God in covenant) is one LORD! It never could have entered the apprehension of the human mind untaught of God, or any thing beside. But when the LORD was pleased to reveal himself, as in a great variety of parts in scripture he hath done, in his persons and in the covenant engagements between the persons of the GODHEAD, it formed in the LORD's grace great mercy to his people, to remind them at the same time of the unity of the Divine Essence. Reader! the LORD grant that you and I may so hear, and so love each and every person of the GODHEAD, and know them in all their office-characters and relations, that it may become a proof of our true regeneration of heart; since by nature there is no love, but enmity in us towards the Almighty Author of our being, till God *who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of JESUS CHRIST,* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

35 ¶ And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the market-places.

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

These observations of the LORD JESUS, unasked, and, as it should seem unexpected, because he had put all his enemies to silence, so as to presume to ask him no more questions, come in very sweetly after the former. Having there established the glorious mystery of One Eternal and Divine JEHOVAH existing in a threefold character

of persons; the LORD JESUS here goes on to preach the second wonderful mystery of GOD *manifest in the flesh*. And in the question concerning CHRIST, at once *David's LORD* and *David's Son*, he confirms the doctrine most completely. Luke i. 32. 1 Tim. iii. 16. John i. 14: Rev. xvi. 22: *Matthew* hath more largely given the LORD's discourse upon this occasion, in his condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees. I therefore refer to it. Matt. xxiii. throughout.

41 ¶ And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

It is likely that when the LORD had caused all his foes to quit the field, he sat down with his disciples near the treasury door. Those who have described the Temple, speak of several chests which were placed there to receive the voluntary offerings of the people. This poor widow attracted the special notice of JESUS. How little was she conscious whose eye was upon her! How little did she think that this private retired act would be published to the very end of time in the Church of CHRIST, and be had in everlasting remembrance. Reader! what have we to cast into the LORD's treasury? Indeed, and in truth, nothing but what we have first received. We have too mites; soul and body: and these are both the LORD's. Oh! for grace to give both these; and JESUS looking on; JESUS disposing to the act, and JESUS accepting all to his glory. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE my soul over the many precious contents in this blessed chapter! Both the Jewish nation, and the Jewish church, have been as the LORD's vineyard. Oh! the boundless grace of JEHOVAH in setting apart that people with whom he deposited his Ordinances; *whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh CHRIST came, who is over all God blessed for ever, Amen*. But oh! the wonderful provocations of Israel, in slighting the LORD's servants rising early and speaking, but regarding them not; till at length they killed the LORD of life and glory! But, Reader! are we then by nature or by practice better than they? Oh! no, in no wise. The LORD hath concluded all under sin, that the righteousness of GOD, which is

by faith of JESUS CHRIST, might be given to them that believe. *Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

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

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

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

AND as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings *are here!*

2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately.

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

When we read, as in this scripture, of Jesus departing from the temple, and connect with it that it was his farewell departure, for he never again entered it, what solemn thoughts it awakens? When the LORD departs, woe to that land, woe to that house or family, where the LORD's gracious presence is not. No sooner had *Lot* departed from *Sodom* than the next account is the destruction of it. Gen. xix.

22—24. And who shall say how much the Christless owe in being saved from instant ruin, both in nations, and cities, and families, from the seed of CHRIST living in the midst of them.

This *second* temple, though so vastly inferior to the glory of the *first*, or *Solomon's* temple, so called, that the ancient men who had seen the former, wept at beholding this latter. Ezra iii. 12, 13. And see the LORD's promise in consequence thereof. Haggai ii. 1—9. and which was literally fulfilled when the SON of GOD in our nature entered it: this second temple was a wonderful building. It had been repaired by *Herod*; and *Josephus*, the Jewish historian, saith, that some of the stones were of a magnitude even to *forty-five cubits* long, *five* high, and *six* broad. JESUS declared that such should be the desolation of the place, when the LORD visited it for the rejection of CHRIST, that not one of these immense stones should be left upon another. And we are told in history, that when *Titus*, under whose army *Jerusalem* was sacked, heard of this prophecy of CHRIST, he endeavoured to counteract it; but such was the impetuosity of his army, that no orders could restrain them, and CHRIST's prediction was literally fulfilled.

5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you :

6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ* ; and shall deceive many.

7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled : for *such things* must needs be ; but the end *shall not be* yet.

8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles : these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

9 ¶ But take heed to yourselves : for they shall deliver you up to councils ; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten : and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate : but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye : for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son: and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 ¶ But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house:

16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not.

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect.

23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

24 ¶ But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven.

We have had the relation of this judgment of GOD upon Jerusalem, as predicted by our LORD, read to us in Matt. xxiv. throughout the greater part of it, together with observations. It will be the less necessary in this place to enlarge.

In addition to what was there offered, (to which I refer,) let me only request the Reader to consider the importance of the subject itself, which is recorded by *Luke* also, in the same, or similar solemn circumstances. See *Luke* xxi. throughout; and mark therefrom the awful judgment of GOD upon *Jerusalem*, the beloved city, in the midst of the LORD's mercies. And I take occasion therefrom, to request the Reader to make the nice, but proper distinction, between *Jerusalem* as a nation, and *Jerusalem* as the city of the LORD's inheritance. The HOLY GHOST useth very different words by way of expression, to denote the striking difference between the nation of the Jews, as the people with whom the LORD deposited the *covenant*, and the giving of the law, and the service of GOD and the promises, and the children of promise in CHRIST. The nation of the Jews are called indeed CHRIST's own; because it was his own nation after the flesh, and his own by creation and right. Thus it is said, that *he came to his own, and his own received him not.* John i. II; meaning, that when CHRIST came into the world in the open manifestation of his office character, he came unto his own nation the Jews, and his own nation, as a nation, received him not. But in another part of the same Gospel, when it is said, that JESUS having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. John xiii. I. Here the word rendered *own*, is a very different word from the former, as every one who can read the original cannot but know. In the first chapter, where CHRIST is said to come to his own, the word means no more than that they were his own as a nation, to which as a Jew he belonged; or as the Creator of them, his own *goods*, his *property*. But the other word in the 13th chapter, is a word of peculiar and special nearness and relationship, as a man's own children, his spouse, his brethren; yea, *members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* Such distinct views will serve to guide the Reader through this chapter, in beholding the miseries of *Jerusalem* with a different eye from what otherwise might be done; and shew at the same time, how CHRIST's love to his people is never interrupted by all the adverse circumstances to the ungodly.

And while I am upon the subject, I crave the indulgence of the Reader a little longer. In this solemn prediction of CHRIST, the LORD speaks of the awful events which were then coming on, as giving occasion for *false Christs and false Prophets to arise, which would, if it*

were possible, deceive even the very elect. Now that the security of the LORD's people was not in themselves, is evident from our LORD's expression. And indeed, most blessed was it then, that it was not so; and blessed is it in every age of the Church of CHRIST that it is not so; for if it werē, the enemy would make sad havock of the LORD's people, mingled as they are with the ungodly. Sometimes the elect springing forth from the loins of ungodly parents in the Adam-nature of existence; and sometimes the elect themselves having ungodly children in the natural generation from father to son. Oh! how would those natural ties, (yea, how often do those natural ties) send forth their mature influence to the great obstruction of grace. Perhaps some Reader of my *Poor Man's Commentary*, in this place, if a partaker of the grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, will enter into my meaning, and find cause therefrom while feeling the truth of it, to lift an eye and heart also, to *the God of all his mercy!* Psm. lix. 10.

I would beg to add one observation more, and it shall be short, on those desolating dispensations which the LORD foretold to his disciples, as then hastening upon Jerusalem; and which was not confined to that period, but attacheth itself to the people of GOD, in all ages of the Church; namely, that the true followers of the LORD JESUS should be *hated of all men for his name's sake*. Reader! I beseech you look to this, as among the truest badge of character. Who is the greatest hater of the LORD's faithful ones now? Who hates with the bitterest hatred the lover of JESUS, that ascribes the whole of salvation where JEHOVAH hath ascribed it, to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and makes his blood and righteousness the sum and substance of all? Who hates such lovers of JESUS most? Not the openly profane; not the infidel of any description or character: but the Pharisee, the self-righteous Pharisee; the same class as was the LORD's bitterest foes in the days of CHRIST's flesh, and are now the bitterest enemies to his followers, in the day of CHRIST's power.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even at the doors*.

30 Verily I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

32 But of that day and *that hour* knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

This passage hath been noticed before. Matt. xxiv. 36. to which I therefore refer. I only detain the Reader to remark in addition to what was there observed, that when the LORD JESUS in this verse speaks

of the ignorance of the day and hour of those visitations, the words have not the smallest connection, as some have supposed, with the day of future judgment : but is wholly in reference to this destruction of Jerusalem. And concerning this event, those who lived to see it, and were involved in it, and survived it; could form no exact calculation we are told, by their historian, when it began, and when it ended; the miseries were so great and incalculable !

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is.

34 *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*

35 Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning :

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

The close of this chapter gives occasion to extend our Lord's direction of watchfulness, not only to his disciples of that generation, but to the Church of God in all ages. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, for a child of God to be always on the look out for the second coming of CHRIST; or what is to the same amount, the day of a man's death. For though to every redeemed soul, in whose heart the work of grace hath been wrought, and being savingly converted from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God; that soul is always in an habitual state of preparation, and always ready at a moment's call, to go forth at the Master's call into the world of spirits; yet it is blessed to be in an actual state, waiting, looking, longing for, and hastening to, as the Apostle speaks, for the Lord's coming. Reader! think what a blessed privilege this is, and beg of the LORD JESUS to be so found at his coming. 2 Peter iii. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

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

Reader ! while perusing the many awful events foretold by our Lord, in this chapter; how precious the thought ! CHRIST'S people were

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

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

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

AFTER two days was the feast of the passover and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

2 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

In addition to the observations made on the subject of the Passover, Matt. xxvi. 2—20, &c. to which I refer the Reader, I beg to remark that *Mark* takes notice also, of the feast of *unleavened bread*. It may be not amiss to consider, that those feasts were always together; in fact they were one and the same. See Exod. xii. 8, &c. The Passover was finished in the first evening's solemnity, but the feast of unleavened bread continued seven days. But what an awful picture is here given of the Chief Priests and Scribes! That at a season so holy and sanctified for celebrating that great mercy of God to the Church, in delivering the people from Egyptian bondage; those men should then, of all other seasons, contrive the death of JESUS. They indeed postponed their intentions for the moment, in carrying them into execution, not out of tenderness to JESUS, not lest their solemn services should be interrupted, but from the great affection the common people had to the person of JESUS, lest the LORD should be rescued from them. Reader! pause over this part of the subject, and behold in those men, the awful depravity of the human heart! True, indeed, it was necessary that CHRIST our passover should be then sacrificed; and they literally did that, and no more in the crucifying the LORD of life and glory, which GOD had before determined to be done. Acts iv. 27, 28. But though the LORD's ordination was in all, yet the deed itself, and the malice of the deed, was all their own; and the chapter in the opening of it, gives us an awful representation of the heart of man.

3 ¶ And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head.

4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

There is somewhat uncommonly interesting in this transaction, and as our Lord himself declared, that it was significant of his burial, our chiefest improvement of it should be with an eye to Jesus.

Spikenard was in itself, we are told by naturalists, a small shrub not lovely to the view, but very grateful to the smell, (see my Poor Man's Concordance, *Spikenard*;) but when it was prepared into an ointment, it was very costly. This poor woman is supposed, and perhaps rightly so, to have been either *Mary*, the sister of *Lazarus*, (for this transaction was at *Bethany*;) or *Mary Magdalene*. But the Lord saith the act was symbolical. And what could be more striking, in allusion to his person and sacrifice, than this act of affection, excited, and altogether accomplished by the work of grace in her heart. *Spikenard* was very expressive of the person, and offices of CHRIST. Lowly and humble in himself, there was no beauty to desire him, yet the sweet *savour of his name is as ointment poured forth*. Song i. 3—12. Precious Lord Jesus! though thy people of the present day have not the privilege which this woman had, to anoint thine head at thy table, yet while they sit before thee, and by faith behold thee, we would say with the Church, *cause my Spikenard to send forth the smell thereof*. Every thing in thee, and from thee, is more precious than the mountains of frankincense. Thy person, thy blood, thy righteousness, are all lovely and refreshing.

10 ¶ And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

If we compare what is here said, with what is related, John xiii. 27, of the devil's entering into *Judas*, we shall discover somewhat of the deliberate act of this son of perdition. No doubt the woman's pouring the ointment on CHRIST's head, acted as an incentive upon the mind of *Judas*, as we know the grace the Lord gives his people, calls forth the greater malice of their enemies. Acts vii. 54. *Judas* must have gone away from *Bethany* into *Jerusalem*, immediately after this transaction of the ointment, for the Chief Priests were at this time in council, (see verse 1,) and the traitor now joined the party; though to cover his diabolical purpose, he soon after returned and joined the disciples, and sat with them at the supper. Reader! pause over the view! Oh! who shall calculate the enormity of sin! Oh! who shall calculate the preciousness of distinguishing grace! See John xiii. 18.

12 ¶ And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

13 ¶ And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

It should not be forgotten, that the Lord with his disciples were still at *Bethany*, two miles from *Jerusalem*, and as the time was now arrived for the Passover, it became necessary for the disciples to return into the city, to make provision for it. For, according to the law in *Jerusalem*, the feast must be, and the Paschal Lamb slain, be-

tween the two evenings, and eaten at night. Hence the question the disciples put to CHRIST, and the LORD'S answer as related in those verses. The Reader, I hope, will not fail to take notice how the LORD JESUS here again manifested his divine nature in foretelling his disciples who they should meet, and how they should be received: JESUS over-ruling this man's mind to accommodate the LORD and his disciples. By the disciples' *making ready the Passover*, I should apprehend they bought a lamb, for such no doubt were sold upon this solemn festival at Jerusalem, both to the inhabitants, and to the Jews which came to Jerusalem, to celebrate this feast; and as the law enjoined, they must have carried it to the court of the temple for slaughter, and there burnt the fat upon the altar, sprinkling the blood upon it, before they brought it home to the house where it was to be eaten. And I should apprehend also, that the roasting it whole, and the bitter herbs, and bread and wine, were all included in what is said of the disciples' making ready before that JESUS came in the evening to sit down with the twelve. See Exod. xii. throughout. Deut. xvi. 1—8.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another *said, Is it I?*

20 And he answered, and said unto them, *It is* one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed? good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them; and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more

of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Some have thought that *Judas* did not partake of this Passover, but to me, I confess, there doth not seem the shadow of a doubt but that he did. This first verse is decidedly in confirmation. And in the evening *JESUS cometh with the twelve*; consequently *Judas* included: and as they sat and did eat *JESUS* said, &c. But having very largely dwelt upon this subject, in my *Poor Man's Concordance*, under the article *Judas*, I rather refer to what is there said, than enlarge upon it here.

Though I shall reserve the more striking circumstances concerning the traitor *Judas*, for one collected point of view, in what is said of him, John xiii. 18, &c. yet I cannot help remarking to the Reader in this place, the hardened state of this man's mind, which could so coolly and deliberately return and take his place among the disciples, as though equally loving of his LORD, when he had then entered into an engagement with the Chief Priests to betray him. And when, one by one, the disciples put the question to what *JESUS* had said, that one of them would betray him, though conscious of his infamy, he should dare to brave the question also, and say, is it I? Oh! the obduracy which sin occasions! *Matthew*, in his relation of this solemn scene hath observed, that while the other disciples every one of them, in putting the question to *JESUS*, called him LORD; *Judas* called him *Rabbi*. And certain it is, that in the original the words are different: the one is LORD, and the other *Rabbi* or Master. See Matt. xxvi. 22 and 25. And as *Rabbi* or *Master* implies a nearness and affection which the more distant name of LORD doth not convey, to what an unequalled degree of infamy was the traitor by this time arrived?

I refer to Matt. xxvi. 26, &c. for observations there offered on the interesting view of the LORD *JESUS* and his disciples at this last supper. But in addition to those, I would just remark, that the institution of the holy supper seems to have been immediately made, as soon as the paschal feast was finished; as if to intimate the superseding of the one, in the establishment of the other. And it should be particularly remembered, that in the LORD's appointment of this ordinance, in the breaking of the bread, and administering of the wine, the LORD most expressly designed to convey the spiritual signification that his body being broken and his blood shed, the emblems shewed forth the twofold blessings intended, of pardon, mercy, and peace, in and through the offering of the body of *JESUS CHRIST* once for all; and also all the blessings of the covenant set forth and sealed in his blood, and hence called *the New Testament in his blood*.

There is somewhat truly interesting in the hymn the LORD and his disciples sung at the table. *JESUS* knew what the events of that night would be. He had in contemplation *Gethsemane*, and all his sorrows. But these things stopped not the *Hallel* the Jews always used at the Passover. Some have thought that this *Hallel* was the 114th Psalm, which celebrates the night of the Passover, and the going

forth from Egypt. Reader ! Ought not our celebration of the LORD'S Supper, in the contemplation of the LORD'S love, be always accompanied with our *Hallel* ; our song of Moses and the LAMB ?

27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise : likewise also said they all.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane : and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy ;

34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death : tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee : take away this cup from me : nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou ? couldest not thou watch one hour ?

38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation, the spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned he found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy: neither wist they what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come: behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Rise up, let us go: lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

We have in some measure noticed what is here related by *Mark*, in the parallel passage by *Matthew*. But the contemplation is indeed in itself endless. Never was there a subject of equal importance proposed to the mind of men, or angels, as is brought before the Church in those concluding scenes of the life and ministry of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Who is competent to describe the wonderful and mysterious subject? What faculty, either of men or angels, equal to enter into the full apprehension of it? It should seem very evident that as soon as JESUS arose to go from the table towards the Mount of Olives, *Judas* withdrew to hasten the business of delivering CHRIST into the hands of the Chief Priests: for soon after our LORD's agony in the garden, we find the traitor coming with a band of men to seize JESUS. It is impossible to convey by any form of words, what were the feelings of the disciples on this memorable occasion. The LORD's forewarning them of their taking offence at him that night; quoting a passage well known to them from the Prophets; and making application of it to himself, and them; his taking *Peter*, *James*, and *John* with him, while leaving the other disciples at some little distance from him, his being withdrawn from them (as *Luke* describes it,) about a stone's cast, kneeling down and praying, and charging them repeatedly to do the same; the agony they beheld CHRIST in, with numberless other circumstances of his being *sore amazed*, in exceeding sorrow even unto death. The renewed soul in CHRIST, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, may indeed contemplate in humble wonder and adoration, and the most profound silence, the awful subject; but eternity itself will not be too long to unfold all the sublime circumstances involved in it, and connected with it. I would refer the Reader to that part of this solemn scene which relates to the temptations of Satan, in *Luke* xxii. 40, &c. for in that scripture the subject is somewhat more largely dwelt upon.

43 ¶ And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh *Judas*, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders,

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.

46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me?

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

50 And they all forsook him and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him:

52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

I beg the Reader to observe, and to observe with the awakened attention so infinitely an interesting subject merits, the order in which the LORD JESUS proceeded in this business. The agonies in the garden were finished, the temptations to be endured there from the powers of darkness gone through; and now the LORD JESUS as one hastening with holy zeal to the close of his sufferings, calls upon his disciples to arise, and go to meet the traitor and his party for the execution. Reader! do not overlook this! Remember it is one of the great features in the merits of CHRIST'S death the freeness and voluntary offer of the LORD. See John x. 17. Psm. xl. 6, 7, 8. He had said before to Judas at the table, *that thou doest do quickly*. But *no man at the table knew for what intent JESUS said this unto him*. John xiii. 27, 28. But we may learn from it, that it shewed the promptness of CHRIST'S heart to the work. And though he knew the sorrows which it must induce, yet, *for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despised the shame*. Yea, JESUS called the time, the hour of his glory. And as soon as the traitor had left the company, JESUS declared that *he was now glorified*. See John xiii. 31, 32. Reader! do not overlook these precious traits of character in the person of thy Redeemer!

I request you never to lose sight of those *two* grand points, in the

sufferings and death of the LORD JESUS. The *one* is, the infinite dignity of his person, GOD and Man in one. The *other* is the free-will offering of the LORD. Behold him under these views coming forth from the garden to meet the traitor, and crying out, *Rise up! let us go! lo! he that betrayeth me is at hand.*

It is a matter worth attention also, to observe how the traitor came, with a band of armed men. To take whom? The meek and lowly JESUS, in whose mouth was found no guile, and who *when he was reviled, he reviled not again.* But we must not overlook in this the LORD's hand. Here was JEHOVAH's purpose in all this. The HOLY GHOST, by the Psalmist had prophesied, that both *the heathen should rage, and the kings of the earth with the rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against his CHRIST, his anointed.* Psm. ii. 1, 2. And here it is: *Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Roman soldiers, all Gentiles, or as they are called, the Heathen, shall have their hand in the death of CHRIST, as well as the rulers of the Jews.* And wherefore? Surely, because CHRIST died, both for Jew and Gentile; and therefore both shall be involved in the guilt, as CHRIST is JEHOVAH's salvation for both *to the ends of the earth.* Isaiah xlix. 6.

As the season of the Passover was nearly, if not at the time of the full moon, unless it was a cloudy night, it should seem that they could not have needed lanterns; but yet the Evangelist *John*, in his relation of this circumstance, of *Judas* and the band, saith, that they came *with lanterns and torches and weapons.* John xviii. 3. And it is further remarkable, that not only the Roman soldiers, but the party which came with them, should be so ignorant of CHRIST's person, that *Judas* should think it necessary to give them a token, by way of discovering the LORD JESUS. But I rather think, that the horrible state of the traitor's mind was such, that though he had sold himself to this most detestable deed, yet his sense of CHRIST's GOD-HEAD was such, that as he knew what JESUS had before wrought in moments of danger, so he might accomplish the same and escape out of their hands. I pray the Reader, in confirmation of this, to turn to Luke iv. 28—30. John viii. 59. John x. 39. In short, the man was desperate, and acted desperately. He went *before the band,* (Luke saith,) and he repeated *Rabbi twice,* when he kissed CHRIST, as if to imply, how much he loved him. But what a heart-cutting answer the LORD JESUS's must have been to him, had he not been wholly graceless: *Judas!* (calling him by his name, as if to shew him that he not only knew him, but knew his whole heart,) *betrayest thou the SON of Man with a kiss?* Reader! ponder over the awful subject! Surely the HOLY GHOST hath designed in the history of this man, to shew to what a depth of iniquity the mind of man is capable of falling. See John xiii. 18, &c.

The one of them that stood by, John saith, was *Peter.* John xviii. 10, which drew his sword and cut off the ear of *Malchus.* It was a zeal to their Master which prompted all the disciples to declare their resolution to die with CHRIST. And here was a proof of it in *Peter.* The deed gave occasion for a new miracle to be wrought by CHRIST, in healing the wound, and restoring the ear; but no miracle could affect the heart of those which were given up to a reprobate mind. See that awful scripture. Jude iv.

If we gather into one point of view, all that the LORD JESUS said,

after this action of Peter's, in cutting of the ear of *Malchus*, we shall find large room for improvement. According to *Matthew's* account of this scene, JESUS first addressed *Peter*: *Put up again thy sword into his place, &c.* See *Matt.* xxvi. 52, &c. JESUS next addressed the multitude, according to *Luke*, chap. xxii. 51: *Suffer ye thus far; and he touched his ear and healed him.* He then remonstrated with the Chief Priests, and Captains of the temple, and Elders, in that they were come out as against a thief, to take him, and then asserted his supreme power in common with his Father, for deliverance, had he pleased; but declared the absolute necessity of the measure, for the accomplishment of the scriptures. And which by the way, I beg the Reader not to overlook, in relation to those numerous scriptures, which so largely dwell upon it. *Psm.* xxii. 69. *Isaiah* liii. *Zech.* xiii. 7, &c.

Mark is the only Evangelist which relates the circumstance of this young man following CHRIST, and he doth not give us the least traces to form any opinion who he was. But all the historians of this awful scene agree in describing the desertion of the whole body of disciples. Did *Peter* flee? did *John* and *James*? those who were in the Mount with CHRIST? they who were just before in the garden with him? Alas! what is man, even the highest of men, if grace be suspended but for a moment? And how was it, the band of armed men, who seized upon the person of JESUS, and laid hold of this young man who fled from them naked, suffered the Apostles to escape? Read what *John* hath recorded of the words of the LORD JESUS at this time, and learn the cause.

If therefore ye seek me, (said JESUS,) let these go their way, that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none. *John* xviii. 7, 8, 9. I shall have occasion, when we come to this passage, in the Gospel according to *John*, to speak more largely upon it; but, in the mean time, I would have the Reader observe, that from the miracle JESUS then wrought, of causing those who came to apprehend him to fall backward to the ground, (which take it altogether, is perhaps as great a miracle as the LORD JESUS ever wrought upon earth,) and the authority with which he pronounced these words: *if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.* From both these concurring causes, the LORD JESUS secured the flight of his disciples. A certain authority accompanied what JESUS said: *let these go their way; that is, they shall go their way, touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.* *Psm.* cv. 15. Reader! think how safe, how eternally safe, and secure the LORD's people are, when the LORD gives command concerning them. *Isaiah* xxvii. 2, 3.

53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest; and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55 And the chief priests and all the council

sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.

56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? and they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy. And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

We now enter upon the more immediate scene of this solemn process leading to CHRIST'S death. Every minute circumstance merits our closest regard. Perhaps there is not the smallest indignity offered to the person of the LORD JESUS, but had a mystical meaning. May GOD the HOLY GHOST go before, accompany, and follow, both the Writer of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, and the Reader of it, with his Almighty teaching! Amen.

And first: *Mark* relates, that no sooner had the soldiers apprehended Jesus, than they led him away to the High Priest. Now here, if I mistake not, there was much signification intended by GOD the HOLY GHOST. For this was according to the law; in which the

sacrifice was first to be brought unto the Priest, before it was offered. Levit. xvii. 5.

The next point to be noticed according to Mark's relation, is, that at the High Priest's palace where JESUS was led, the whole *Sanhedrim* were then assembled. *John* indeed, in his account states, that the band which led JESUS away, took him to *Annas* first, and that they had previously bound him. See Mark xv. 1. But let us here attend to Mark's relation of those transactions. We shall be better prepared hereafter for making suitable observations also on the account by *John*. It must have been late, and after the celebration of the Passover, when the *Sanhedrim* was thus assembled, so desperately bent were they to CHRIST's death. And although after that holy solemnity of the Passover, the Jews were prohibited from going abroad for the night, yet to crucify JESUS, this breach may be in their view passed over.

The process of trial which followed, was done with a view to cover over their proceedings, as if done most justly and legally; and as it became necessary to obtain the Roman Governor's sanction to CHRIST's death, without which, the sentence could not be carried into execution, they proceeded in a regular order, and sought for witnesses to condemn CHRIST.

The destruction of the temple, the refusing to give tribute to *Cæsar*, and the supposed blasphemy against GOD; all these charges were brought forward, but no witnesses could be found to substantiate or prove. But when to the adjuration of the High Priest, the LORD JESUS gave testimony to the GODHEAD of his person, and to the authority of his office, the whole assembly present decided, that he was guilty of death! And the consequence as is here related of the utmost indignities and cruelties manifested to his divine person immediately followed! Some began to spit upon him, some to buffet and mock him, and some to smite him with the palms of their hands. I beg the Reader not to overlook the LORD JESUS giving testimony to his GODHEAD. It was for this supposed blasphemy he was sentenced to die. John x. 33. Reader! let us pause over the solemn view, and looking unto the LORD JESUS encompassed with dogs, as he is described by the Prophet, *as the Hind of the morning*, hunting for his blood; let us as another Prophet saith, figure to ourselves JESUS himself speaking and saying to us: *behold and see! if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce unger!* Lament. i. 12. Psm. xxii. throughout, and title.

66 ¶ And as Peter was beneath in the palace,
there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

67 And when she saw Peter warming himself,
she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast
with Jesus of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither
understand I what thou sayest. And he went out
into the porch; and the cock crew.

69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

70 And he denied it again: and a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

For the history and effect of Peter's denial, I refer to Luke xxiii. 54, &c.

REFLECTIONS.

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

LORD! let thy sweet teaching be upon us, while reading the denial of Peter, and the desertion of all the Apostles, still to mark the essential difference between backsliding, and the total want of grace, as in the instance of the traitor Judas. LORD! give us grace to praise the great Author of his discriminating mercy! Dearest JESUS! let Gethsemane be ever dear to the remembrance of thy people. Here in faith would the souls of thy redeemed delight to roam and meditate thy soul-agony and conflicts and temptations. And LORD! when we see thee, taken from thence, to prison and to judgment! oh! for grace to behold thee, *as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace as upon thee, and by thy stripes we are healed.* Oh! the wonders of redemption, that He who knew no sin, should be made sin for us; that we, who knew no righteousness, should be made the righteousness of God in Him!

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

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

AND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate,

I detain the Reader in the very opening of this chapter, to remark with what hot lust those enemies of CHRIST hastened to suck his blood. It must have been little short of midnight before their assembly broke up; if not, (as I confess I am inclined to think,) they sat up all night until the morning; for *Matthew* in his relation of their proceedings saith, that when *the morning was come*, they led *him away to Pilate*. Matt. xxvii. 1, 2.

The most profitable view of these solemn transactions will be, I apprehend, to contemplate the sufferings of CHRIST, with an eye to our personal interest in them, and, as I verily believe, there is hardly a single circumstance, but what hath a mystical meaning, I pray God the HOLY GHOST, in his glorifying the LORD JESUS, that he will be graciously pleased to unfold them to our hearts.

And here, in the first instance, as recorded in this chapter, we are told that they *bound CHRIST and led him away to Pilate*. The binding CHRIST, had certainly a very striking allusion to his Church, for whom CHRIST was bound and crucified. By sin we are all bound over to the just judgment of Almighty God. In the captivity of Satan we are also bound, until CHRIST makes us free; and without his deliverance, in becoming sin, and a curse for us, every son and daughter of Adam is like the unprofitable servant spoken of in the parable, concerning whom the LORD saith, *take him and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*. Matt. xxii. 13.

Now then, if the LORD JESUS will deliver his people out of captivity, he shall in all points personate those whom he delivers. He shall exclaim as in their person, *innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold of me*. Psm. xl. 12. He shall be bound as a malefactor; yea, crucified between two thieves, as if the greatest of the three, standing as the sinner's surety: and thus he shall be bound, and led as a sacrifice, as *Isaac* was bound, and laid upon the altar. Gen. xxii. 9, and as the sacrifices are supposed to have been bound under the law, so here in this point, as in every other, fulfilling all righteousness. See Levit. iv. 7. Psm. cxviii. 27. Isaiah xlix. 24, 25. Hosea xiii. 14.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? and he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing:

4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold, how many things they witness against thee.

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

We have here the LORD of life and glory arraigned at *Pilate's bar*, and witnessing, as the HOLY GHOST testifieth, *a good confession*. 1 Tim. vi. 13. And in this instance, as in the former, we behold strong mystical representations, in what JESUS suffered, to the circumstances of his people. The *silence of CHRIST*, to the many accusations of the Chief Priests, is strikingly descriptive of the sinner's state of guilt, whom JESUS then represented as their surety. It was said of Him, ages before his incarnation, that *he should be led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*. Isaiah liii. 7. In this, CHRIST represented the sinner; silent and abashed, under the sense of sin. For though in himself *he knew no sin*, yet was *he made sin for us*. 2 Cor. v. 21.

Pause Reader, over this view of thy Redeemer! Here is that Great Prophet, which so many ages before had been promised, as coming into the world, whom the LORD said *they should hear*; and that *every one which would not hear that Prophet, should be destroyed from among the people*: here he now stands, silent and accused, as a delinquent and malefactor, before *Pontius Pilate* and the Elders! Mark well, the striking difference, and then ask, in what sense are we to behold him, but as the surety of his people? Deut. xviii. 15. Acts iii. 22, and Acts vii. 37.

6 Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was one named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude crying aloud, began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

11 But the chief priests moved the people that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered, and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him*, whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why what evil

hath he done? and they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

Here is a beautiful meaning also, in allusion to the great purposes of redemption. The lot was to fall on *Jonah*, an eminent type of CHRIST, and he the only Israelite at that time in the ship, from *Joppa*. *Jonah* i. 7. The lot for the *Scape Goat*, was also determined the same way. *Levit.* xvi. 8. And JESUS being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, shall be the one, on whom the whole voice of the people shall decide. *Rev.* xiii. 8. What striking allusions of a mystical nature are there in all these things!

15 ¶ And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified.

16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*.

18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him.

20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

Before we enter upon this part of the awful events, in the cruelties exercised upon CHRIST's person, I beg the Reader to turn to the 18th chapter of *Luke*, 31—34, and read our LORD's prediction concerning them; then mark, one by one, the woeful account. And I request the Reader, yet more particularly, to observe through the whole, that he acted as the surety of his people. There certainly was, as I before remarked, a mystical meaning in all. For it forms a grand feature of our holy faith, that for the joy which was set before CHRIST, *he endured the cross, despised the shame, before that he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* JEHOVAH, which lay on him the iniquities of his people, *turned his glory into shame*, *Psm.* iv. 21, that the sin of his redeemed might be made appear *exceeding sinful*. Let the Reader attend to the shame, and reproaches, and cruelties, poured upon CHRIST, with an eye to this; and the blessedness of the whole will then appear, in their true colours.

The first act of cruelty which *Mark* takes notice of, exercised upon the sacred person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, after *Pilate* had passed sentence of death upon him, and given him up into the hands of the

Roman soldiers, is that of scourging. *John*, in his Gospel, relates that *Pilate* scourged *CHRIST*, or caused him to be scourged, before this; when he did it with a view to release him. And no doubt that this first scourging by *Pilate*, had been with no small severity. Among the *Jews*, there was no permission to give stripes in any case of delinquency, to above *thirty and nine*, lest, saith the law, *thy brother should seem vile unto thee*. Deut. xxv. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 24. But *CHRIST*, our Brother, must be made vile, as the surety of his people, who had made themselves vile by reason of sin, and therefore the *Gentiles*, into whose hands he shall fall, shall lay on stripes, without number, as far as their savage cruelty shall incline them. And thus *CHRIST*, both at the first and second scourging, shall be made vile, that *we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. 2 Cor. v. 21. Oh! the preciousness in this mystical allusion, concerning Him, and his unequalled sufferings, *by whose stripes we are healed!*

The next view we have in *Mark's* Gospel, of our *LORD*, after *Pilate* had delivered him up into the hands of the soldiers, is the calling together the whole band, to insult him, and then clothing him with purple, crowning him with thorns, spitting upon him, striking him on the head, bending the knee before him in mockery, and then unkinging him and unclothing him of his sham royalty, before they led him away to crucify him. In every one of these acts, more or less, we may, under divine teaching, discover the *LORD'S* hand, directing to some interesting circumstances of a mystical nature, in allusion to the persons of *CHRIST'S* redeemed, for whom he became surety, and for whom he suffered.

The clothing him in *purple* was wholly in derision; but then it should be remembered, that to do this, they first stripped him and made him naked; and indeed so was he crucified. And what so shameful as being wholly naked. But this also was necessary, and highly significant; for as our first parents had made themselves naked to their shame, in taking away the curse, *CHRIST* must be put in their very law-room and place so as to fulfil all righteousness.

The *thorny crown*, had mock royalty been only intended, would have been as well played off for their sport, with a crown of reeds! But it was not sport, but cruelty, added to mockery, they meant; and therefore *thorns* were chosen to be struck into his sacred head. Sinners are threatened with having *their heads* and their *hairy scalp wounded*, as enemies to God. Psm. lxxviii. 21, &c. The *LORD JESUS* shall therefore, as the sinner's surety, suffer in their stead. And forasmuch as the curse pronounced at the fall, declared, that *thorns and thistles should the earth bring forth* to the man. Gen. iii. 18. Here also *JESUS* shall be pre-eminent in suffering, as he is in all things; and shall be crowned with thorns, that the *Head* may feel, what in his members the *Feet* only of his redeemed go through, in a thorny wilderness.

Little did those *Gentiles* consider, how they were by their mockery, fulfilling *JEHOVAH'S* design, in the setting forth these things. Insult and cruelty they intended, yet the *LORD* was then in reality setting *his king upon his holy hill in Zion*, and declaring the decree. Psm. ii. 6, 7. They bowed the knee in derision; but in truth then began in a more open display that declaration of *GOD*, that when He

who was in the form of God, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with God, humbled himself to the death of the Cross, every knee should bow before him, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of God the FATHER. Philip. ii. 8—11. The purple robe and the thorny crown, and the reed for a sceptre, were the insignalia of this mock royalty. But whatever they meant, the LORD's purposes were fully answered: for the SON of GOD was at that moment, the brightness of his FATHER's glory, and the express image of his person, whose sceptre of righteousness was the sceptre of his kingdom; and concerning whom when the LORD JEHOVAH bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the Angels of God worship him. Heb. i. 3—9.

21 And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a scull.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them what every man should take.

25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 ¶ And with him they crucify two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days,

30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking, said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.

And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And one ran, and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

In the relation which *John* gives, of their leading away CHRIST to be crucified, he saith, that JESUS *bearing his cross, went forth into a place, called the place of a skull*. But the three other Evangelists tell us, that this *Simon the Cyrenian*, they compelled to this labour. And no doubt, the relation by the whole is correct. For JESUS first went forth with it, but when they found him sinking under the burden, and fearing had he really died with fainting and loss of blood, before they arrived at *Golgotha*, their inhumanity would have lost the greatest triumph over him; they compelled the *Cyrenian* to bear the cross for him.

I beg to detain the Reader at this place, just to observe to him, what otherwise perhaps may not so immediately strike him, in tracing the unequalled sorrows of CHRIST, that it is not to be wondered at that the LORD JESUS should have fainted under the cross. For when we consider what he had already undergone of pain and fatigue, and loss of blood, and agonies, the only astonishment is, that he had not sunk under the pressure before. They who have studied the map of Jerusalem and its vicinity, and have marked the ground over which the LORD JESUS was hurried up and down from one place to another, have shewn that CHRIST actually walked the day of his Crucifixion, and the night immediately before it, many a mile, perhaps not less than seven, without rest or intermission. And add to these, the LORD JESUS, six days before the Passover visited *Bethany*, and was closely engaged every portion of the time, from that period to his death. *John* xii. 1. And *Luke* saith, that he abode in the *Mount of Olives by night*, and in the morning *early* the people came to hear him in the temple. *Luke* xxi. 37, 38. And from the moment of his being apprehended to his death, after all these fatigues and sufferings, there was

no interval allowed for sleep. Well might the Prophet say, we have caused him *to serve with our sins, and wearied him with our iniquities.* Isaiah xliiii. 24. Oh! ye that are weary and heavy laden with sin! come to this wearied SAVIOR. He knows your feelings by his own!

In respect to the painful and ignominious death of the Cross, I refer to the observations made in the Commentary on Matt. xxvii. But in addition, I would just remark, that such were the cruelties exercised upon the occasion, that the malice of hell seems to have been at study, to make the whole the most aggravated and full of torture. Yet what I chiefly beg the Reader not to lose sight of, in beholding the Cross, is the wonderful coincidence of circumstances so over-ruled by the LORD, as that every thing done to CHRIST, or suffered by CHRIST, should have a mystical allusion, to the great design for which he offered his soul an offering for sin. Under this view of the subject, what but God's sovereignty could have brought about such an event, that in their despising the offices of CHRIST, I mean his *Priestly, Kingly, and Prophetical* offices, they should have used the very same words, in which CHRIST complained of those reproaches, *a thousand years* before those events were accomplished. *All they that see me* (said CHRIST by the spirit of prophecy,) *laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him;* Psm. xxii. 7, 8. the Evangelists have recorded those very words, as among the taunts and reproaches of the multitude. The Reader will not fail, I hope to recollect, that the LORD of life and glory was then in very deed, saving his people from their sins by the gracious act of thus offering himself in sacrifice. And their testimony though very differently intended by them, was in fact overruled by the LORD to the same. *He saved others, (said they) himself he cannot save.*

Blesséd Lamb of God! enable thy people to have these things always in remembrance; and never, oh! never may we fail to connect with the view, the intimate concern thy Church and people all have in the wonderful events of this day. But for this thy gracious interposition, thy Church in every individual of it, must have been bound hand and foot, as JESUS was for them, and hurried away to the Judge. Silent as JESUS was; must we all have stood at that tremendous bar. And after sentence had been passed, hell in an army, would have seized upon us, and driven we must have been from the presence of God, into regions of endless despair. Oh! the unspeakable mercy of GOD in JESUS CHRIST.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

40 There were also women looking on afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary

the mother of James the less, and of Joses, and Salome :

41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

Amidst the prodigies which distinguished the death of CHRIST, the renting the veil of the temple was not the least. I am led to view it indeed as of great moment; and as such, would request to call the Reader's attention to it somewhat more particularly. The Reader should be told that in the temple there was a veil of separation between the holy and the most holy place. The HOLY GHOST, by his servant the Apostle, hath thought proper to give the Church some account of it. Heb. ix. 3—12. This veil then, by some invisible hand, was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, at the moment CHRIST cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. And as this was at the 9th hour, that is, three of the clock in the afternoon, which was the time of the evening sacrifice, I pause, to remark how astonished the Priest, who was at that very hour with the people present then in the outer temple, must have been to have seen it, by which the inner temple appeared at once open to his and their view!

This veil was not simply torn, or separated in part, but rent in twain, and that from the top to the bottom. Yes! by the death of CHRIST, the separation between GOD and his people was now for ever removed. Jesus had then opened a new and living way by his blood. Before this, the veil of separation kept back the people. It was impossible to go in; yea, dangerous to LOOK in: and the High Priest himself, could not enter without blood, and that only once in a year. Hence, therefore, the SON of GOD having now accomplished redemption by his blood, he hath himself entered as our forerunner, and opened a new and living way for all his redeemed to follow; and the veil of separation, both to Jew and Gentile can be found no more. Precious LORD JESUS! I would say for myself, and all his redeemed; blessed for ever be thy name; thou hast removed by thy death all veils which stood in the way of our access to GOD. And thou wilt remove all the remaining veils of darkness, sin, and corruption, which are in us. The veil of death, and the covering cast over all faces, thou wilt utterly do away, now *thou hast swallowed up death in victory, and the rebuke of thy people thou hast taken away from off all the earth, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.* Isaiah xxv. 7, 8.

42 ¶ And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

43 Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44, And Pilate marvelled if he were already

dead : and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him, whether he had been any while dead ?

45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

47 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of Joses, beheld where he was laid.

Excepting the enquiry which *Pilate* made of the Centurion by way of being assured of the certainty of CHRIST'S death, we have the same account given by *Matthew* as is here related by *Mark*. I therefore refer to the observations which were then offered. But, if I detain the Reader a moment longer on those verses, it shall be only to invite him to contemplate the tomb of JESUS. Never did death before detain such a prisoner. But, Reader ! it is the joy of his redeemed that he then did. For it is *by death* CHRIST *hath destroyed him that had the power of death ; that is, the Devil : and delivered them, who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage.* Heb. ii. 14, 15. But what a funeral is here ! The sacred body begged, and then perfumed. A few following the procession, and but a few ; and those by stealth as it were. But, Reader ! as the death of CHRIST was of the highest importance to the everlasting salvation of his Church, so his burial became essential both to prove that death, and to answer the prediction of prophecies concerning it. See *Isaiah* liii. 9. *Psm.* xxii. 15. *Matt.* xii. 40. *Hosea* xiii. 14. *Jerem.* xxxi. 26. *Rev.* i. 13—18. *Psm.* xxiii. 4. Reader ! let you and I frequently in solemn meditation visit the Sepulchre of JESUS ! Sacred garden of the most blessed thoughts ! From hence, the first distinct prospect was given of the upper and brighter world. Here JESUS the resurrection and life of his redeemed taught them to look up, and by faith enter upon the possession of those mansions which he is gone before to prepare for them, until he shall come again to receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also. Hail ! thou risen and exalted SAVIOR ! In thy triumphs over death, hell, and the grave, we already can and do sing the Apostle's song : *Oh ! death where is thy sting ! O grave where is thy victory !*

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

Reader! let us both, as lovers of JESUS, attend the funeral. This is the office of near and dear friends. Remember, he is still the same, and the covenant in his blood cannot be dissolved by death. And in the contemplation of our own death, and our sure resurrection in JESUS, let us say with *Job, Oh! that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until the wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!*

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

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

AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Reader! let us pause at the very entrance on this precious chapter, with which the HOLY GHOST is pleased that *Mark* should finish his Gospel. Every word is big with events, in recording the wonderful history of our LORD'S resurrection, and may well merit the closest attention of his people. The sabbath was past, we are told, and the LORD of the sabbath (*Mark* iv. 28.) had rested from his own works. *Heb.* iv. 10. and that blessed scripture but little understood, yet most highly significant, was now to be immediately accomplished. *Jerem.* xxxi. 26. Those godly women, still unconscious of the great things in which they themselves were so highly interested, had bought sweet spices, (and so had *Nicodemus*, *John* xix. 39.) with intention of embalming the body of JESUS. Reader! behold how the LORD was pleased to keep those whom he loved in ignorance for a while, of a subject which when made known, filled their hearts with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let you and I, from hence learn to estimate our mercies, and desire with *Paul*, to know CHRIST, and the power of his resurrection. *Philip.* iii. 10, 11.

2 And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun,

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great.

There is somewhat very striking in the short, but sweet account, of the rising of the sun. It became a beautiful representation of the rising of the sun in nature; to shadow forth Him, who is the sun of righteousness in grace. Well might the created sun arise to his glory, who was, and is, the Creator of all things. Mal. iv. 2. The difficulty those women apprehended, from the great stone at the door of the sepulchre, stopping their way, and the removal of it they knew not how, may suggest to us, how much better to his people the LORD is, than all their fears. But, Reader, though you and I follow those women to the tomb of JESUS by faith, yet we shall have no cordial belief in the resurrection of JESUS, until the LORD hath not only caused the stone to be rolled away from the door, but He himself hath taken it out of our heart. It can be nothing short of an Almighty work to do this. *The first day of the week* with every child of God in being brought acquainted with the resurrection of JESUS, is the first day of a new life and salvation together. Hence Paul's prayer for the Church, which I beg the Reader not to pass from those verses till he hath read. Ephes. i. 15, to the end.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*: for they were afraid.

The Jewish Sepulchres were all made large, not only to admit many bodies being placed by the side of each other; but also for the entrance of the friends, who might indulge the pleasing melancholy of visiting them. I pass over several very interesting circumstances related here, to call the Reader's attention to the tenderness expressed to *Peter* among the other disciples, in calling him by name. The LORD JESUS well knew how exceedingly the consciousness of having denied CHRIST had operated upon the heart of the Apostle, and therefore he will have the message sent to *Peter* more particularly by name: *Go tell his disciples and Peter!* Oh! what grace is in the heart of CHRIST. Had the message been sent to the disciples, only as

disciples, *Peter* might have been tempted to fear, that on account of his shameful conduct, he was no longer a disciple, and as such, not included in it. But being particularly named, how very blessedly he must have felt this renewed attention in his LORD. Reader! do not dismiss the very gracious testimony, such a view of JESUS brings with it, to the hearts of all the LORD's disciples. We learn most evidently from it, that the LORD's grace is not restrained by our unworthiness; neither is it bestowed for our deservings. CHRIST's love, and not ours, is the only standard for CHRIST's mercy to his people. And I would beg to call the Reader's attention to another most blessed instruction, this conduct of the LORD JESUS holds forth, in the immediate regard he shewed to his disconsolate disciples. The first thing the LORD JESUS had respect to, when he arose from the dead, was to send his Angel to comfort his disciples with the assurance of his love, while he informed them of his resurrection. *Go tell my disciples and Peter!* Disciples still, and brethren still, for *John's* relation is to the same amount. John xx. 17. So that his Almighty power, by which he arose from the dead, Rom. i. 4. and his altered state made no alteration in his love. He is still the same JESUS, and the same brother as before. Oh! for grace to have this always in remembrance!

9 ¶ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

I cannot help pausing over this view of CHRIST's grace to *Mary Magdalene*, that she should have the honor of beholding the LORD of life and glory the first of all his redeemed, after he rose from the dead. And as the Evangelist adds, *out of whom he had cast seven devils*. Doth it not seem to intimate, in that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath thought proper, to have this act of grace of JESUS mentioned at the same time, as if the LORD would thereby encourage, and comfort any, and every one, of his more than ordinarily distressed members, to this conclusion, that where *sin aboundeth, grace shall much more abound?* All CHRIST's redeemed shall have the love-tokens of JESUS; but the one which Satan most afflicts, CHRIST will more abundantly comfort.

12 After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as

they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

We never can sufficiently bless the LORD for his gracious condescension, in those repeated appearances he made to his disciples. But how astonishing is it to behold their great unbelief. No doubt for the greater confirmation of the faith the LORD had so appointed it; for it wholly removes the ridiculous charge of the Jews, that while the soldiers slept, the disciples should have taken away the body of CHRIST from the sepulchre; when we find that evidence upon evidence did not prove sufficient for a while to bring those poor timid disciples into the heart's conviction of our LORD's being risen from the dead. See Matt. xxviii.

15 ¶ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

It should seem, from the relation of this final commission the LORD gave to his disciples, that it was not all delivered at this morning and evening of the day of his resurrection, but in the different meetings which JESUS graciously made with them during the forty days he went in and out before them, to the day he returned to glory. And the commission itself of going into the whole of the then known world, and preaching the Gospel to every creature, carried with it the full glorious tidings of salvation in his blood, and righteousness both to Jew and Gentile. See Isaiah xlix. 1—6. And while the LORD thus taught them that the door of salvation was to be opened to the people of GOD, which were scattered abroad, the Gospel itself implied that CHRIST himself in his person, work, grace, blood-shedding, and righteousness, became JEHOVAH's one and only ordinance of salvation, to every one which believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. CHRIST in himself is comprehensive of the whole Gospel. In *Matthew's* relation of this, it is added, they were to baptize the people, in the joint name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, intimating thereby, that to the joint love, and grace, and mercy, of the HOLY THREE in ONE, the whole blessings of redemption flow. See 1 Pet. i. 2, compared with Numbers vi. 22, to the end. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

19 ¶ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Mark sums up the glorious event of CHRIST'S ascension, and the HOLY GHOST'S descension, in a comprehensive manner indeed, in these two verses. But his testimony of those wonderful acts was all that the HOLY GHOST thought proper to make use of by his ministry. The events themselves are more largely followed up in the relation in the Acts of the Apostles, to which, therefore, I refer. For the present, it will be sufficient to observe, that *Mark's* testimony is confirmed by the LORD'S testimony, in those gracious signs which followed. And the LORD JESUS'S name, like the sign and seal of a charter, the AMEN, closeth *Mark's* Gospel, as the Verily, the faithful witness of Heaven. Rev. iii. 14. Isaiah lxv. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

And now FAREWELL *Mark!* thou faithful Evangelist; surely thou hast well done the work of one, and made full proof of thy Ministry. For the testimony of thy Gospel is in the hearts of thousands, to the truth as it is in JESUS, through the power of the HOLY GHOST. Precious is the written Word, when confirmed as an engrafted Word, by the SPIRIT'S grace in the heart; and when that Almighty LORD, sets to his seal, in the heart, that God is true. All the faithful will thank thee, *Mark,* for thy labour of love, as they daily read the wonders recorded by thee of JESUS. And all will find cause, who are taught of God, to say as *Paul* did concerning thee, though not called to the service of the sanctuary, as he was; for he is profitable to me in his ministry!

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

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

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

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

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