

that nothing could damp or abate thy love to thy people. Neither the agonies in the garden, nor the cross, neither the justice of divine wrath against sin, nor the powers of hell, no, nor the forsaking of thy disciples at thy death, nor the continued slights of all thy disciples through the whole of thy life, even until now, hath abated, or can abate thy love for one moment from thy redeemed; but, as thou hast from the beginning loved thy people, that are in the world, *thou lovest them unto the end.* Oh, that the Lord would add one mercy more to this unmerited mercy, and as no waters nor floods can quench thy love, so the Lord would not suffer any, or all, the torrents of sin and death to quench ours. Lord, we pray thee to keep our poor souls *in the love of God, and in the patient waiting for Jesus Christ.*

Hail! holy Lord! Father, Son, and eternal Spirit! we bend before thy throne with thanksgivings and praise for all the wonders of redemption by Jesus Christ! Hasten, almighty God, the call of thy people. Let the *little sister* of Christ's Church, even the Gentile Church, be filled with the breasts of consolation, and may our elder Brother, the Jewish Church, be called home by grace. Oh! for that glorious hour, when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall be completed, and all Israel shall be saved. When the Deliverer shall arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob!* In the blessed hope of this assurance may thy people live from day to day, and may the cry of faith be continually going up for the accomplishment of it, from all the redeemed of the Lord. And while Jesus is calling upon his Church to hear his voice, and saying, *Surely I come quickly,* oh! may every faithful heart make sweet responses to their Lord, and send up the earnest prayer, *Even so! come, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

THE

PROPHET ISAIAH.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE here enter on a part of the Word of God, very different in manner, from all that we have before gone over, through the sacred writings; though directed, in common with all the rest, to one and the same object; namely, *to make the Church of God wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

The scripture prophecies form a most important part in the oracles of divine truth. *Prophecy, we are told, came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* And we may very safely conclude, that as they spake so they wrote. For he who gave a door of ut-

terance to his servants, gave also the pen of a ready writer; that by both, they might minister in his church, and carry with them the witness of the spirit, whose they were, and to whom they belonged in the service of the sanctuary.

In the Old Testament Dispensation, we find the spirit of prophecy, manifesting the divine will from the earliest period. In that memorable, and never to be forgotten promise, which folds in its bosom the whole of redemption, and which opened immediately on the fall, the first dawn of prophecy appeared. For when it was said, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*; and this promise delivered by the Lord himself; every succeeding revelation tended to unfold, illustrate, and confirm this leading truth. And as *the Spirit of Christ* (which an apostle, in after ages, commissioned by the same almighty Spirit, tells us,) *was in the holy men of old*, directing their minds into all truth; so the great scope and tendency of all the prophecies they delivered was uniformly pointing to those two great branches of all revelation, namely, *the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*. So that through all the Bible; this was the burden of prophecy. Every thing delivered in a spirit of prophecy, pointed to Jesus. He, and he alone, was *the horn of salvation, raised up by Jehovah in the house of his servant David*. And of him, and to him, all referred, *which God spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets which have been since the world began*.

Concerning the prophet *Isaiah*, from whose inspired pen we derive the blessed prophecy now before us; the preface at the opening of the first chapter, give us all the information, that we are interested to know, in respect to him. His name is somewhat remarkable: *Isaiah*, which signifies, *the salvation of the Lord*. And it becomes the more so, from the peculiar scope and tendency of his writings, being so much in the strain of the gospel, in reference to salvation. Hence some have not scrupled to call him *the Evangelical Prophet*; and his book of prophecy, a *fifth gospel*. I stay not to inquire as to the exact period of his ministry, having already done this in a general way, at the beginning of my Commentary, under the title of *The Order of the Books of Scripture*. To this therefore I refer; only just observing, in addition to what is there set down, that it formed an interesting æra in the church, being designed to prepare the minds of the people, for the approaching captivity of the church in Babylon, which took place somewhat about 200 years after.

I take occasion once more to beg the Reader, as I have uniformly done, on the entrance upon every book of the sacred Scripture; that he will in spirit, and in heart, join with my poor prayers at a mercy-seat, that both Writer and Reader may be under His blessed teaching, who taught the prophet; that while we receive these divine oracles, as the word of God, and consider that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, we may all along keep in view Him, to whom give *all the prophets witness*; and never

lose sight of the one grand object and design of all their, and every other servant of the Lord's commission; that *through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Amen.

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet opens his vision with complaints. Both Judah and Jerusalem are reproved for their sins, and affectionately entreated to return to the Lord.

THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

We have in this first verse, both the *subject* and the *time* in which it was delivered; together with the *name* and *family* of the writer. All which were proper for an introduction, by way of authority, for the cordial reception of what was written, by the church. But what I beg the reader yet more particularly to remark, is the title of this book. It is called a *vision*, intimating the special revelation by which the prophet was favoured and commissioned for the delivery of it. And, by consequence, how highly it ought to be regarded. The apostle Paul, in after ages, considered what he said upon divine things as of this kind, when passing by all self importance, he cried out, *I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord*, 2 Corinth. xii. 1. Judah and Jerusalem, are the people concerned in this vision; that is the church of God. And consequently in the present day of the gospel, both Jew and Gentile, brought as they now are into one fold, have an interest in all that is preached by the prophet in this vision, Galat. iii. 28, 29. I only detain the Reader with one observation more, on this introductory verse of the prophet, just to remark, that Isaiah must have ministered in the church, not less than *fifty years*; as the Reader will himself find, if he calculates the different periods, from the reign of Uzziah to Hezekiah. And under what discouragement this highly favoured servant of the Lord ministered, may in some measure be conceived, from the account we have of the idolatrous practices, at that time more or less prevailing, of both kings and people, 2 Kings, xvi. 3, 4.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

The prophet hath followed Moses, the man of God, in his sermon, in calling upon the several parts of the inanimate creation to listen to his discourse, Deut. xxxii. 1. There is a vast beauty, as well as force in this manner of preaching. If men will not hear, the heavens will: yea, the very stones of the earth might well cry out in astonishment at man's obduracy. Even the poor beasts of labour, the ox, and the ass, which is dull to a proverb, are possessed of some kind of knowledge, to discern the hand that feeds and corrects them; but Israel, whom God had distinguished beyond all people, were senseless both of his mercies, and of his judgments! How tenderly elsewhere the Lord speaks of this! Hosea, xi. 1 to 9.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

5 ¶ Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7 Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

How affecting are these verses! It is as if God paused over the state of his church. Their sin, like an epidemic disease, was universal. It did not break out in one or two instances of transgression; but the whole body became virtually all sin. They are laden with it.—And where should they be unladen, but upon Christ, the almighty burden bearer?—Reader! do not fail to remark, in the very opening of the prophecy, how in the view of universal corruption, the Holy Ghost is preaching Christ? And, Reader, do not fail to connect with this view

also, another sweet gospel truth; namely, how the Lord, in such deplorable times, had preserved to himself *a remnant according to the election of grace*. Sodom's history was well known, and Abraham's intercession on that occasion could not have been forgotten. When therefore we hear it said, *Except the Lord had left a very small remnant*, how blessed is it to trace the Lord's hand, and to give to the Lord all the glory! Gen. xviii. 20—33. Rom. ix. 29. Then read Rom. xi. 5, and bless God for distinguishing mercy! Precious Jesus! to whom but to thee shall the glorious cause be ascribed! Oh how blessed to mark *the little flock of thy kingdom*, Luke, xii. 32.

10 ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom: give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16 ¶ Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, the

shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land;

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

I make no break in this address of the prophet. The whole forms but one sermon, and a most striking one it is. I beg the reader to remark with me the very pointed terms made use of by the man of God. He calls them by the name of *the men of Sodom and Gomorrah*. Perhaps to intimate, that their place and people merited equal judgment. And had the Lord done so, there would have been no injustice on the part of God. Reader! let us pause over this thought, and not too hastily dismiss the solemn consideration from both our minds. As a nation, how awful do we stand, in the crying and abounding sins of our guilty land! And are we not visited as they? To what shall we ascribe it? Oh! the unknown treasures of grace in covenant love! Precious, precious Jesus! who shall calculate the infinite value of thine atoning blood; which speaks more for thy people, than all their sins against them? Reader, mark what is said in those verses concerning the inefficacy of sacrifices! And do not fail to connect with it, how and in what terms they are spoken of. The Lord calls them *your sacrifices*. Yes, Jehovah hath an eye only to one sacrifice, and that one of his own appointing. Reader! it is the sweetest and most precious of all thoughts; that while you and I are looking up to God in Christ for acceptance, by virtue of that one offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, whereby *he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; we are looking up by the express appointment and authority of God our Father, in his own way, for salvation. See those Scriptures, Heb. v. 1—6. x. 1—14.

21 ¶ How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment: righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

23 Thy princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

Under these figures of speech, are represented the sad fall of our nature. It forms in language a beautiful, though in reality, an awful account. But, Reader, painful as it is to know, yet it is profitable, in order to lead the heart to Jesus. This is among the methods which the Holy Ghost is pleased to adopt, in bringing the soul to God in Christ. He first convinces of sin, and then of righteousness. I think that those

parts of scripture are eminently blessed, which bring with them proofs of his divine teaching; and that, it is one and the same in both Testaments of God's word. John, xvi. 7—11.

24 Therefore saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

28 ¶ And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

31 And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench *them*.

How very blessed is it to behold divine grace triumphing over human transgression: and the Lord who alone can reform, graciously exercising his love in a way of reformation over his people. And, Reader, do observe that when the Lord comes forth to correct his people, it is at the same time to take vengeance of their enemies. When the Lord Jesus speaks of *the year of his redeemed being come*, he connects with it *the day also of vengeance in his heart*, Isaiah, lxiii. 4. Reader! may it be your happiness and mine to know the Lord Jesus in his grace; and we shall know him also in the destruction of our enemies. May Jesus root out those inbred, indwelling sins of our nature, the greatest and most dangerous foes we have to contend with; that in the cleansing of his church and people, we may know ourselves included; when he will *redeem Zion with judgment, and her converts with righteousness*.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul, suffer not a portion of this blessed chapter to be overlooked, nor fancy the prophet's commission in the delivery of it to have ceased with the men of Judah and Jerusalem. Alas! every age and every period of the church, hath carried with it the same marks, more or less, of corruption, and to every one, the expostulation of a gracious God is but too applicable: *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!*

Blessed Spirit of truth! Do thou, Lord, in grace, and love, and compassion, exercise thy kind office, with my poor soul, as the glorifier of Christ Jesus! By thy word, and by thy grace in my heart, give me to see, and feel, and know, that, like Israel, *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.* Let me never seek justification by the deeds of the law, or presume to think myself clean in thy sight! Plead, Lord, in my heart the injured cause of my God, and of his Christ; and by such saving discoveries as thou art making to thy church, by thy blessed word, both of human corruption, and the necessity of divine cleansing; make me to know that in Jesus, and his great salvation alone, it can be accomplished, that my sins, *which are as scarlet, shall be white as snow; and though red as crimson, shall be as the wool.*

And oh! the praises due to a covenant God in Christ, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the rich discovery! Blessed, for ever blessed be Jehovah, in having brought sinners acquainted with the cause of our ruin, and the only source of our relief in Jesus. Lord! help me to seize all the gracious improvements thy mercy hath designed, from the rich salvation by Jesus. And since by his precious blood and righteousness, thou hast opened a way for *purely purging away our dross, and taking away all our sin*; bring, Lord, the souls of thy redeemed, through this gracious process of thy mercy, and let thy people be again called *the city of righteousness, the faithful city!*

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

We have in this chapter, strong, though distant views given of the coming of Christ. In the prospect, the Lord is set forth as both glorious and solemn to the people.

THE word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

The man of God, takes a similar text to what he had used in his former sermon, with only this difference, that what he had termed a *vision* in the last discourse, he calls the *word* in the present; but the audience are the same. Judah and Jerusalem, the church of God, is the congregation.

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be

exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The prophet *Micah* had a similar commission in his day to deliver, and he executed it almost in the same words: see *Micah*, iv. 1—5. There are several very blessed promises delivered by both the Lord's servants, all which had a gracious eye to the prosperity of Zion, in the latter day dispensation; and in the person and salvation of the Lord Jesus, hath been in part fulfilled, and is perhaps now, and will be more and more fulfilling on the earth. *The mountain of the Lord's house*, means Zion; or perhaps more immediately Christ himself, on whom Zion is founded. Jesus is the foundation-stone Jehovah hath laid in Zion, *Isaiah*, xxviii. 16, compared with 1 Peter, ii. 6, 7, 8. This church of Jesus, and in Jesus, is *to be established*; meaning its durability and permanency. *For the gates of hell shall never prevail against it*, *Matt.* xvi. 18. Reader! do not forget, that every true believer in Jesus, is this very day, in himself, a living testimony to this blessed truth. So that what was predicted, so many years before Christ came in substance of our flesh; and what hath remained for near *two thousand years* since Christ finished the establishment of his church, and returned to glory, becomes a precious evidence to comfort the people of God now. But what I particularly beg the Reader to keep an eye upon, and to rejoice in the confirmation of, is that part of the promise, that *all nations shall flow unto it*. Sweet thought! Jesus is *the desire of all nations*; because poor awakened sinners in all nations, find their want of him. Hence here is a promise, folded up in this blessed prophecy, that all nations, the Gentile as well as the Jew, shall flow unto Christ, *They shall come that are ready to perish*, when the great trumpet is blown. And their certainty of coming is secured; for it was one of the covenant promises of God the Father to God the Son; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, *Psalms*, cx. 3. But we must not stop here, in our view of these delightful verses. The *many* that resolve to go up to the house of the Lord, are said to unite others to come with them. Yes! the soul truly awakened to the knowledge and enjoyment of Jesus, will never love to eat his morsel alone. He knows that there is enough in Jesus for all; and therefore he longs

for all to partake. He doth not say, Do you go, for I have found him gracious; but, *Let us go together*. Reader, do mark with me, the blessedness of a gospel walk, and life, and conversation. Never did Zion languish more than now, for the want of these quickenings of each other to her societies. Oh! that there was more zeal for the interests of Christ's church, among Christ's people. And, Reader, take one short observation more, upon these verses, and observe with me, with what confidence it is spoken, that the *Lord will teach of his ways, and give grace to walk in his paths*. Surely by attending upon ordinances, these things are found. The *Lord will be found of them that seek him*, and by waiting upon the *Lord the people shall renew their strength*, Isaiah, xl. 31. Psalm, xxvii. 7. And let not the Reader think I trespass, if I add, the blessings of the gospel church, will be, as here stated: War and bloodshed would cease, if the spirit of the gospel were truly followed. Alas! what cause of sorrow is it, that so many nations and individuals, take the name of Christ, which are foes to the spirit of Christ. Oh that they would lay it to heart: *if any man have not the spirit of Christ*, call himself what he may, *he is none of his*, Romans viii. 9.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

6 ¶ Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.

7 Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither *is there any* end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither *is there any* end of their chariots.

8 Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:

9 And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.

Here the prophet takes occasion to call upon the Jewish church, from the zeal of the Gentile: and since the heathen is so forward to go up to the house of the Lord, how much more ought the Lord's own people to be alive to this service? Reader! it were devoutly to be prayed for, that both Jew and Gentile were mutually striving for the faith of the gospel. But alas! how have *both sinned, and come short of God's glory!* If God's ancient people, the Jews, have forsaken the Lord, what shall we say more in favour of the Gentile church? But the pursuits of silver and gold, *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*; these sweep away the time, the heart, and affec-

tions, and leave men satisfied with *the form*, while destitute of *the power of godliness*.

10 ¶ Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.

11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

12 For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up*; and he shall be brought low:

13 And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, *that are high and lifted up*, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,

14 And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills *that are lifted up*,

15 And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,

16 And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one for himself to worship*, to the moles and to the bats;

21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

This portion of the chapter opens in a very solemn manner. Whether the prophet means the visitations of God in the day of calamity of this world; or refers to the day of judgment for another; in both cases it is solemn. See Rev. vi. 12—17. But is there not a spiritual sense of the passage, alluding to the day, when God by his Holy Spirit, awakens conviction in the heart? Never surely doth the soul lie lower in the dust before God, than when a sense of sin, and the fear of the wrath to come, first breaks in from the Spirit's awakening in the soul. Then pleasant pictures and high mountains, both the cedars of Lebanon, and the oaks of Bashan, are as nothing: the sinner wants to flee if possible from himself; and nothing can comfort the soul under the apprehension of God's wrath against sin, until Christ is revealed in all the suitableness of the Saviour, and *formed in the heart the hope of glory.*

22 Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

What a beautiful and striking close is made in this verse to all that went before. If man be nothing, yea worse than nothing, so full of terror, and so exposed to fear, who would put any confidence in him? His life is but a vapour: his breath is in his nostrils. Cease, cease from him! Look unto Jesus.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! look at the beauty and loveliness of the gospel church! Behold how, ages before it was established, the prophet set it forth. And see now how exactly the church of Jesus comes up to his description. In its great and almighty Author and Founder, behold how it is, and hath been established. And though in the present day, Zion seemeth, and doth indeed languish: yet Christ hath never been, nor ever will be, without a seed serving him, and a church where his name is blessed.

Ought not we to go up to this mountain of the Lord's house? Should not every one be truly anxious to say with the church of old: *Our feet shall stand in thy gate, O Jerusalem?* Precious Lord Jesus! Do thou incline our souls to seek thee, our hearts to love thee, and our best affections to be fixed upon thee. And will thou not, O Lord, *teach us of thy ways, and cause us to walk in thy paths?* Reader! let us not close this sweet chapter, before we have first learned from it, under divine teaching, rightly to value man's nothingness, and the Lord's excellency. Precious Jesus! I would lie low in the dust before thee: convinced that I am nothing, and that I can merit nothing, mine eyes shall be up unto thee, Lord, for all I need, and for all I can require, for grace in this life, and glory in that which is to come. Lord, I would cease from man: I would cease from self: I would cease from every thing in which might be supposed confidence. I pray thee, dear Lord, to give me confidence in thee. Oh for grace to sing that song, and feel its saving power on my heart: *The Lord is my strength and my song, and thou art become my salvation!*

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

The subject appears to be continued through this chapter, which engaged the prophet's attention in the former. The people are reproved for their transgressions, and the consequent displeasure of the Lord is spoken of.

FOR behold, the LORD, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,

The prophet opens this chapter by pointing to the consequence of sin. The bread and the water, the common supplies of life, shall be taken from the people: and what tends to aggravate this distress is; that the hand of the Lord is seen in it: and they shall know that it is the Lord's punishment. There is somewhat truly awful in this! Afflictions of every kind to our poor fallen nature, come heavy; but if they come with a special commission from the Lord, that the Lord hath sent them; they have a tenfold bitterness in them. I beg the Reader to remark with me, the special reading in this verse. The first name of the Lord is in small letters, signifying the *Adonai*, one of the well-known names of Christ, in his office-characters, as Mediator; the *stay* and *support* of his redeemed. The *second* name of the Lord is in capital letters, the well-known incommunicable name of Jehovah. Blessed Jesus! how delightful is the consideration, under all the transgressions of thy people, that the bread of life, and the water of life are not taken away. Reader, I charge it upon your heart and my own, ever to keep in remembrance, that Christ, our Father's first and best gift, is never taken away. Jesus is given to the church, to have and to hold for ever. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

2 The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient,

3 The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.

4 And I will give children *to be* their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient; and the base against the honourable.

6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, *saying*; Thou hast clothing,

be thou our ruler, and *let* this ruin *be* under thy hand.

7 In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house *is* neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings *are* against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

9 ¶ The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin in Sodom, they hide *it* not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

The prophet plainly shews by these verses, that the sin is universal. All ranks and all orders of the people are involved in the same sin, and consequently the same punishment. It is a melancholy state of the church, in all ages, when sin like a disease, runs through all: and it may be said, *Like priest like people*. In such a state, men will look to any thing, yea to nothing, for countenance; and having forsaken the Rock of ages, would take confidence in the reeds of Egypt. Blessed Jesus! give me to see, in the darkest hour, that thou alone canst be a defence for thy people.

10 Say ye to the righteous, that *it shall be well with him*: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11 Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be ill with him*: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

How sweet and precious doth the former of these verses come in, after the preceding relation! And how bitter and alarming the latter! Reader, depend upon it, such will be the striking distinction in that day which shall come, and which shall burn as an oven, Malachi, iv. 1, 2. Both in public and private visitations, the people of God are secure. It must be well with the justified soul in Christ. So Paul hath said under the Holy Ghost, and so the Lord's people know. Romans, viii. 33, 34. Malachi, iii. 17, 18.

12 ¶ *As for* my people, children *are* their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause *thee* to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

14 The LORD will enter into judgment with

the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyards; the spoil of the poor *is* in your houses.

15 What mean ye *that* ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts.

Reader! do not fail to observe, both indeed in this place, and through the word of God at large, that amidst all the backslidings of Israel, the Lord still keeps up the remembrance of their relationship. The name is not lost; *As for MY people*, saith the Lord. And how doth the Lord expostulate with their enemies that cause them to stray: *What mean ye, that ye beat my people?* Precious Lord Jesus! and dost thou not plead with all our enemies in this way? And wilt thou not punish and confound them for the deliverance of thy people? That is a sweet scripture to this amount. Prov. xxii. 23.

16 ¶ Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing *as* they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

17 Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts.

18 In that day the LORD will take away the bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet*, and *their* cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon.

19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings,

21 The rings, and nose-jewels,

22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the cringing-pins,

23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

24 And it shall come to pass, *that* instead of sweet smell, there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well set hair, bald-

ness ; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sack-cloth ; *and* burning, instead of beauty.

What a sad portrait is here drawn by the prophet, of the daughters of Zion. Alas ! how unsuitable to Zion's daughters, who are supposed to be women professing godliness. Reader ! is not the present day very similar to what is here said, of wantonness of conduct, and looseness of dress, among our women ? *Tell it not in Gath !* Indeed, indeed, it is a sad reproach. How ought parents, in religious families, to restrain every thing in their children, which hath a tendency to inflame the passions, and corrupt the heart. But let me throw a veil over the subject. I would recommend the apostle's sweet advice on this point to our females, 1 Peter, iii. 1-4.

25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war :

26 And her gates shall lament and mourn ; and she *being* desolate shall sit upon the ground.

The chapter ends, as it began, and as one might reasonably suppose would be the close ; if sin reigns, sorrow must follow : for *the wages of sin is death*. Blessed be God, who hath taken occasion, from the misery of our nature, to magnify the riches of his grace, and where *sin hath abounded that grace should much more abound ; that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord*, Romans, v. 20, 21.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, while these humbling views of Israel's transgressions are before us, let us bring home the affecting subject to our own hearts, and we shall find cause to cry out with the apostle : *Are we better than they ? No ! in no wise ; for the scripture hath concluded all under sin*. We all partake in one common fallen nature, which in no instance, either in Jew or Gentile is free from sin. Reader, it is profitable at the reading of every chapter, and upon every renewed view of the subject, to have this in remembrance. May God the Holy Ghost, give us both to see and to know, and to have grace to make such improving reflections upon all we read concerning sin, that our own hearts may be affected in the consciousness of our own transgressions, while reading of the transgressions of others, and in the general punishment, when the Lord of Hosts doth at any time take away *the stay and the staff*, our bread and our water ; not of the necessaries of life only, in the bread that perisheth in using, but of the spiritual life, without which, we perish for ever : may we *hear the rod ; and who hath appointed it !* Blessed Lord ! let all thy chastisements be sanctified, and lead our hearts to thee, and not from thee ; for thou art the Lord our God, amidst all our rebellions and all our backslidings.

And, Lord, in all thy dispensations, such as this chapter sets forth to thine Israel, still manifest thyself to us, as thou didst to them, that thou art the God of Israel, and hatest putting away. And though the departure from our God is general, in which *the mighty man and the man of war, the child, and the ancient*, are all alike involved in the transgression ;

and though *the brother of the house of our Father after nature*, cannot heal, neither clothe, nor be our ruler; yet, precious Jesus, thou art *a brother born for adversity*: therefore *be thou our ruler, and let all our ruin be brought under thy hand*, and we shall be saved.

And will the Lord give grace to *the daughters of Zion* of the present hour, that while reading, in the conduct of those of *the ancient house of Israel*, the immodest conduct which became so offensive in the eyes of the Lord, they may have grace to make use of an apparel, suited to the humble followers of the blessed Jesus. Lord! give every one among those, who name the name of Jesus, to study a modesty of dress suited to the christian profession, and may they be adorned as *the king's daughter, all glorious within*. Oh Lord! do thou clothe our souls with thy robe of righteousness, and we shall be then but little concerned how our sinful bodies are adorned: but *having food and raiment, be content*. Lord, do thou enable us all to *put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind: And do thou put on us the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*.

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

This is a most blessed, though short chapter, containing in its bosom some precious views, and precious promises concerning Jesus, and the blessedness of his salvation, amidst the sins, and sorrows, and distresses, which arise out of the fallen state of our nature.

AND in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

The day here spoken of, is, no doubt, meant to refer to the gospel day. And the beauty of what is here said, will be very striking, if we spiritually consider it. By the law of Moses, if a man married more wives than one, he was obliged to keep the first in food and raiment, Exod. xxi. 10. But the indulgence of corrupt passions always did, and always will bring with it punishment. What our blessed Lord said, concerning the putting away of a wife, may be equally applied to the taking more than one. It is for the hardness of men's hearts, such things are produced, Matt. xix. 7, 8. But, dropping the consideration of the subject, as referring to natural causes, we shall have a lovely view of this verse, if we read it in a spiritual sense. Jesus is the husband of his church, which he calls his fair one, his spouse, his beloved! And, as the church at large is made up of innumerable souls, what is here spoken of *seven women*, means a certain number, put for an indefinite number, to intimate many. Now in that day of gospel grace, when Jesus and his great salvation are revealed to the soul, every poor awakened sinner that hears and knows *the joyful sound*, shall come to lay hold of Jesus, pray-

ing to be called by his name. The eating their own bread, and wearing their own apparel, is in allusion to the law of Moses, before referred to. And precious souls, in their first coming to Christ, are all tintured with an idea of their doing somewhat to recommend them. Hence the first question of the jailor at Philippi: *What must I do to be saved?* Acts, xvi. 30. Longer acquaintance with themselves, and with the Lord Jesus, humbles the soul with such confidences. It is blessed to perceive Jesus in this sweet scripture. I need not add how effectually and fully the reproaches of sinners are taken off, when brought into a state of oneness and union with Christ; when married to him, and he to them. Oh! the blessedness of calling him *the Lord our righteousness*; and living under him as the husband, the *Ishi* of his people, clothed with his justifying garment of complete salvation. See Jerem. xxiii. 6. Hosea, ii. 16—20. Jerem. iii. 14. Isaiah, liv. 5, &c.

2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

The Holy Ghost is still harping upon that blessed string, the gospel day, and comforting the church with the view of it. Jesus is *the righteous branch*, which Jehovah declared he would raise up in Zion. And as Jesus shall be glorious in every eye of his people, so his people which are the fruits and effects of his great salvation, shall be lovely in him, and to him also. See those scriptures, Zech. iii. 8. vi. 12, 13. Isaiah, xi. 1. Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6, and xxxiii. 15, 16. John, xv. 5.

3 And it shall come to pass, *that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:*

How truly blessed and gracious is it, to see the provision the Lord hath made for the recovery of sinners. Here the Holy Ghost speaks not only of the blessings of redemption to the church *at large*, but to every individual redeemed soul in *particular*. *He* that is left, and *every one* that is written. Yes, Jesus saith, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*, John, vi. 37. And it was for this express purpose Jesus saith, that *the Father gave him power over all flesh; that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him*, John, xvii. 2. Reader, are you questioning whether you are among the written in the Lamb's book of life? Rev. xiii. 8. Answer the inquiry by the tokens here given. A new and spiritual life is given to them in Jerusalem, the holy city, the church of the Lord Jesus. *They are called with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to to his own purpose, and grace given in Christ Jesus, before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. *And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed*, Acts, xiii. 48. Now then see by these infallible testimonies, whether *your calling and election is sure*. *For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. And hence, in being *saved and called* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but his

grace; and in *believing, having life in his name*: surely these become unquestionable evidences, that God hath chosen believers *in him before the foundation of the world, and that they should be holy and without blame before him in love*, 2 Peter, i. 10. Romans, viii. 14. Ephes. i. 4.

4 When the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

Here we have the blessed process of grace, by which the Lord will accomplish the divine purposes of his love, in redeeming the souls of his people. The daughters of Zion are here spoken of, as a representation of the whole church of Jesus. So the church is named, Psalm, xlv. 10, 11. This church is considered in her pollutions, such as she was when Christ came to redeem her, Ezek. xvi. 3—6. But when, in gospel days, Jesus is come, and the fountain in his blood is opened *to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, for sin, and for uncleanness, then the filth of Zion shall be washed away, Zech. xiii. 1. 1 John, i. 1—7. But how is this to be done? *By the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning*; meaning, that God the Holy Ghost, in his seven-fold gifts, and by his gracious work on the heart, will glorify Jesus, in taking of the things of Christ, and shewing their suitability to the poor sinner. Is the sinner's heart hardened? The Holy Ghost will be to him *a spirit of judgment*; convincing, converting, enlightening, teaching him to feel his want of Jesus, and leading him to Jesus. Are his affections cold, and in himself not disposed to seek after salvation? The Holy Ghost will be to him a spirit of burning; to warm, yea, fire his very soul, in longings for Christ, that his sins may be done away, and both his filth and his blood be purged, and purified from all uncleanness. Oh! the wonderful process of grace, when God the Holy Ghost layeth *judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*, Isaiah, xxviii. 17.

5 And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be a defence*.

6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

How very lovely the chapter ends, as well as it began. The church of Christ, which is married to Christ, and brought to call Jesus her husband, when washed from all her uncleanness, made comely from his

comeliness, which he hath put upon her; and become holy in his holiness, shall now be protected from all dangers arising from without, and made blessed in all glory and comfort within. Jesus himself will dwell in her, and be both her glory and defence; both her sun and shield. And this, not only in Zion at large, the whole church, which is Christ's body, but every individual, which forms one to constitute and make up the whole. Upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, every single follower of the Lord shall be thus blessed, protected, and made both happy and glorious in Jesus. And the Lord makes use of his ancient plan of manifesting himself, as he did to Israel, in the wilderness. As *the pillar of cloud*, and *the pillar of fire*, in the camp of Israel, indicated the Lord's presence with his people, so the Lord here alludes to those symbols, that he will be with them now. Reader, blessed and glorious as those tokens, of the Lord's being in the midst of Israel, were in the church in the wilderness; fancy not that their advantages were equal to ours. The word of God's grace, and the covenant-engagements of Jehovah, render all outward signs unnecessary. That single promise of our Jesus, confirmed to the heart, as it is, by the Holy Ghost, sums up every other in one. *Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world*, Matt. xxviii. 20. Oh! thou dear Emmanuel! God with us! God in our nature! Thy presence, and the union, and oneness of thy people with thee, makes every thing blessed! Thou art indeed all we need: *a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land!* Isaiah, xxxii. 2.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! how can I read the first verse of this chapter, without instantly having my mind directed unto thee, as the husband of thy church and people? Thou hast indeed taken away our reproach, in having called us by thy name, and granted us grace to call thee our Lord. But, dearest Lord! I cannot say as the Jewish women said, *I will eat my own bread, and wear my own apparel.* No, thou rich and bountiful bridegroom; I am in poverty and wretchedness too deep to do that. Thou art to me both the bread of life, and the garment of salvation; and therefore, Lord, both feed me and clothe me, as he to me all I need; for *thou art good and gracious to all that call upon thee.* And surely, Lord, in this day of gospel-grace, thou, blessed Branch, wilt be most beautiful and glorious in every eye, both of thy Father and thy people; and all that are engrafted in thee, and upon thee, will bring forth fruit, that shall be excellent and comely.

And oh! ye saints of my God! hail every one of you who are the written among the living in Jerusalem. Ye shall be called holy, in the holiness of Jesus. And he that hath provided, and opened a fountain for all cleansing, will wash away all filth from the daughters of Zion. Yea, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, will God the Holy Ghost accomplish it, and manifest thereby, that it is *not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Lord, do as thou hast said: Create upon families, and houses, and churches, and people of thy redeemed, both glory and defence. Yea, blessed Jesus! be thou thyself our glory and our defence, the Holy One

of Israel in the midst of us. For then shall we be in grace here, and glory hereafter, *the redeemed of the Lord, who dwell safely!*

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

Under the beautiful similitude of a vine, and vineyard, the Lord speaketh of his church. By reproof, and by entreaty, the Lord reasoneth with Israel on the sad subject of the church's disobedience, and setteth forth the Lord's patience and long-suffering.

NOW will I sing to my well-beloved, a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

Is not this God the Father, speaking to God the Son, as Mediator and Head of the church, upon the subject of his people? Surely it is the Father which hath given to his dear Son the church, and the church to his Son; and therefore it is here very properly called *his* vineyard. Do not fail, my soul, to remark, in the opening of this chapter, how the Father speaks *of* Jesus, and *to* Jesus. He is the only beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth. My soul, will it not prove, what of all things thou must wish to have fully proved, that one heart and one soul, in this sense, distinguish God's affection and thine; if God's beloved be thy beloved, and God's dear Son, be thy dear Saviour?

2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

Observe now God speaks of the church, and the blessedness of it. *First*, its situation, in a very fruitful hill: *secondly*, its security from enemies of every kind, it is walled around: *thirdly*, the soil in which it was placed, all the stones being gathered out of it: and *lastly*, the choiceness of the vine. Reader, think of the grace, love, mercy, and favour of all the persons of the Godhead, towards our poor ruined nature, which are here set forth, under these several images! The *wine-press* and the *tower* built in it, are so many farther proofs of divine love; intimating the ordinances and institutions the Lord hath set up from age to age in his church. Oh! think what an awful state that soul, that church is in; which instead of bringing forth the sweet fruits of the Spirit, bringeth forth only the corruptions of unrenewed nature, which *like the wild gourd*, in the prophet's pottage, *produceth death*, 2 Kings, iv. 39, 40.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and

men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

May we not suppose, that somewhat like this appeal, will be among the judgments at the last day? And then it will be found, that the soul that is Christless now, will be speechless then.

5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Was not this awful judgment actually inflicted, when Israel became unchurched at the siege of Jerusalem? That it is more than a parable, this passage fully explains. And, therefore, there is no period in the history of Israel like that, which took place, agreeably to our Lord's own prediction, by the army of Titus Vespasian, Luke, xxi. 5—11. How pathetically did the prophet mourn over the event of the Babylonish captivity, under the same similitude, Psalm, lxxx. 8—16. And, Reader, mark the concluding verses of the same Psalm, and take notice how the church calls upon the Lord, to look to Jesus for the recovery of his church and people. Surely there is much gospel in that Psalm.

8 ¶ Woe unto them that join house to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

Here is a solemn woe denounced against carnal pursuits; and yet who feels restrained by it? My soul, you need not look abroad into the world, for examples of the unprofitableness of sin: in thyself thou mayest but too often find the sad wild grapes, which grow upon this thorn hedge of a worldly planting. Alas! what disappointment and bitterness spring out of every desire that is not formed in Jesus, and sanctified by Him.

9 In mine ears *said* the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, *even* great and fair, without inhabitant.

10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

The prophet speaks with confidence, concerning the issue of worldly minded men in their pursuits, because the Lord said it, and so plain, as when a man whispers in the ear of another. It is a general intimation that nothing of the kind shall prosper. Their houses shall be uninhabited, and their product nothing; yea, in measure shall they fail. Ten acres of vineyard, which, when fruitful, might be supposed to yield many hogsheads of wine, shall give out but one *bath*, which makes about *eight gallons*; and in their seeds an *omer*, which is in quantity a *bushel*, shall yield but an *ephah*, that is the tenth part of a gallon. Such hath ever been, and will be more or less, the disappointments of the carnal.

11 ¶ Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine inflame them!

12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.

13 ¶ Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because *they have* no knowledge: and their honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:

How striking are these expressions! Wine and dancing, revelling and music, rioting and sensuality, bring on their own punishments. Hell and the grave yawn to receive those who kill themselves by intemperance. Both poor and rich, in their different means of gratification, fall under the same sins, and are alike cut off in their transgression. Here is an awful picture of a fallen state. Alas! every age produceth but the same. See a similar representation, Amos, vi. 1—7.

16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.

17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

Here is a sweet break to the sad account, which, like some herbage to the traveller over a desert, comes in to our relief in these verses. Jesus will be exalted in the hearts of his redeemed, in the worst of times. And the fold of his flock shall be satisfied with his goodness. Reader, this may be every day seen in the midst of the world's pursuit. The church of Christ is fed, supported, and refreshed; let sinners, among the carnal, prosecute their evil courses as they please. While the dinner parties, and the midnight revellings of the world, are going on; the people of God have their prayer-meetings, and their public ordinances also. Malachi, iii. 16.

18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:

19 That say, Let him make speed, *and* hasten his work, that we may see *it*: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know *it*!

20 ¶ Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, *so* their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25 Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses *were* torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

Here are accounts of still increasing wickedness, and woes of still increasing misery. Reader, in the present Christ despising generation, doth not the prophet's representation suit, as though written for the very purpose? Is there not one and the same family feature? Alas! how fallen is our nature: how general, yea, universal, the taint of evil? Is it to be wondered at, that sorrows abound, where sin so much abounds? Let the Reader, if by grace happily preserved from such daring impiety, not overlook, nor forget, to what cause to ascribe it. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

26 ¶ And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly.

27 None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:

28 Whose arrows *are* sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind:

29 Their roaring *shall be* like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry *it* away safe, and none shall deliver *it*.

30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if *one* look unto the land, behold darkness *and* sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

Methinks I would read these verses with a twofold aspect. God had said by the prophet, in a preceding chapter; *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; while to the wicked, it shall be ill with him*, chap. iii. 10, 11. And may we not make application of what is here said, in both senses? The Lord will lift up an ensign for his people, in the same moment that he will lift up an ensign for destruction to

his enemies. And when Jesus, the glorious ensign of his people's redemption comes, it is both for vengeance and for salvation. See chap. xi. 10. and chap. lxiii. 4.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let us mark from the perusal of this chapter, the two great leading points contained in it; the grace, and mercy, and loving-kindness of the Lord; and the fallen, corrupt, and wretched state of man. Both views are here presented to us: and both open to very solemn and improving subjects.

How exactly answering to the love of God to his people, is the description the prophet hath given of the church, under the similitude of a vine. Calling his people out of Egypt, forming them into a church, and planting them in Canaan; casting out the nations before them, and watering them continually with his blessing: these things are strongly shadowed forth under the images of planting, gathering out the stones, making a fence, and causing the clouds, and the rain, and the sun, to shed their influences.—Reader, look at Jesus, *that plant of renown!* Behold in the wonders of redemption, what God hath wrought. And then take a view of what hath followed in all generations of the church: when the Lord looked that *his vineyard should bring forth grapes, wherefore brought it forth wild grapes.*

Reader, it will be your wisdom and mine, while contemplating in this chapter the riches of grace, in the Lord's forbearance and long suffering to his people, to look into our own history, and behold what correspondence we can find there, with what is here said of God's antient people. Oh for grace to make such improvements from the whole, as to see that all our mercies are in Jesus. It is for him, and his righteousness, his atoning blood and salvation, that the world continues. But for his gracious interposition, the whole earth would have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Lord! visit thy church, thy vineyard, thy people. Oh take unto thee, Lord Jesus, thy great name, and as thou hast wrought out salvation *for us*, so work salvation *in us*. Behold the purchase of thy blood, and for thine own sake turn to thy people a pure language, that they may all call upon thee with one consent. *Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

The prophet in this chapter is soaring very high in visions and revelations of the Lord. Here is much of Jehovah's grace, in the glories of the Redeemer's person and kingdom, in this Chapter. The prophet gives the date of it also.

IN the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Wherefore the prophet was so particular as to put down the precise time, when the Lord favoured him with this glorious vision, which he relates in this chapter, is not said; but from the strong impressions it made upon his mind, it was indeed impossible, that he himself should ever forget it. Jacob at Bethel, and Moses at Horeb, where the visions of God began with them, could neither of them ever lose the remembrance of the time or place to all eternity. Reader, you and I have our spots, our Bethels of remembrance also, I hope. They are sweet things in the believer's recollection. The year that Uzziah died, was memorable, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21—23. But what we are most highly interested to observe, in the relation of this vision of the prophet, is the intention of it, and for what purpose the account of it is handed down in all ages to the church. This is the grand point for us to attend to, that what Isaiah hath here recorded, under the Spirit of the Lord, we may take home to ourselves, and by the lively exercises of faith, behold our interest in it. May God the Holy Ghost thus unfold its glories to our hearts. He tells us, that in this vision, he saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Now, Reader, I pray you to turn to that blessed chapter of John the Evangelist, where the Holy Ghost hath decidedly explained the relation of the prophet, and made application of it to the person and glories of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Mediator and Head of his people; *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him*, John, xii. 41. Hence the Lord, whom the prophet saw, was the Lord Jesus Christ, in his mediatorial glory. And this serves at once to unfold, and explain to us a thousand things of the highest moment to our joy and comfort, to have right apprehensions concerning, for it throws a light upon all those other scriptures, where the visible appearance of the Lord is spoken of, and which from other scriptures compared with them, we otherwise could not explain. As for example, it is said, Exod. xxxiii. 11, *that the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend*. So again, Exod. xxiv. 9, 10, *Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, went up into the mount: and they saw the God of Israel! Yet in all the parts of scripture, we find one uniform account given, of the impossibility of seeing Jehovah's face, and live*, Exod. xxxiii. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 16. How are these scriptures to be reconciled? The Evangelist John hath done it in a single verse: *No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John, i. 18. Hence nothing can be more plain, than that all the manifestations God hath been graciously pleased to make of himself in all ages of the church, hath been in the person of his dear Son, as the God-man Mediator, both before his incarnation and after; as the Son of God was, (as he himself saith) *set up from everlasting* in this glorious character, as the Head of his Church, so his glory in that character, was frequently manifested to the Church, and to special servants in the church. What a blessed thought to the Church, and to the people. *The Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up*, which Isaiah saw, was Jesus. Hence, Reader, what unanswerable testimonies are found in this one scripture, to the Godhead of your Lord. Surely it never can be questioned whether he be possessed of all divine attributes, that was thus seen upon a throne in heaven. Surely none, if they thought aright, would doubt the sovereignty and eternity of his na-

ture and essence, who thus sat on a throne, as if to intimate both his power, and glory, and government, and dominion. And how blessedly are those sweet words of our Lord Jesus explained by this very scripture: *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* John vi. 62. So again: *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven,* John, iii. 13. Blessed Jesus, we thank and adore thee for these gracious manifestations of thyself. Oh let the train of thy graces fill our souls, as the train of thy glory filled the temple, Rev. v. 6. iii. 21.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

From the light thrown upon this blessed vision, in the other parts of scripture, as before shewn, and all evidently and plainly directed to prove that it is the person of Christ, who manifested himself to the prophet; we shall now be the better able to enter into an apprehension of all that follows; that is, as far at least as our capacities are enabled to go in the subject; and I hope that both writer and reader, will find cause to adore Jehovah, in his threefold character of person, in and through the only medium by which we can approach to adore him, even this glorious God-man Mediator, for such gracious and saving discoveries of himself. The *seraphim*, which are here said to have stood above, Paul calls the cherubim of glory: consequently they are not angels, Heb. ix. 15. A reference to other scriptures, will, I think, prove that they cannot mean angels. The first account we have of a subject like this in Isaiah's vision is Gen. iii. 24, where cherubim and a flaming sword, are said to have been placed at the east of the garden of Eden. In Levit. xvi. 2, Jehovah saith, I will appear in the cloud on the mercy-seat. In the prophecy of Ezekiel, chap. i. the vision he saw of the glory of the Lord, was under the similitude of *four living creatures*. And as an explanation of this astonishing vision, John, the beloved apostle, in the view of heaven opened, which he was favoured with, saw four beasts *in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne*, Rev. iv. 6. Now angels are no where said in scripture to be in the midst of the throne. What those seraphim in Isaiah's vision are, I do not presume to say: but I humbly conceive, from the frequent mention made in scripture of them, and especially as having the face of a man joined in the representation, and this from the very opening of the word of God, at the garden of Eden, to the close of it in the Revelation; that it is intended to set forth the divine glory: and at the same time to shew that the only access to Jehovah for fallen man, is in and through the

person, glory and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word itself, *Seraphim*, which is plural, means *Burners*. And this will not be found unsuitable to the idea, that they represent the glory of the Lord, in and through a Mediator; for the Holy Ghost hath by the apostle, declared, that *our God is a consuming fire*, Heb. xii. 29. And the hymn sung, which Isaiah heard, I humbly conceive, was not sung by the seraphim, but the heavenly host; similar to that song, which John heard, of redemption. They that sung it were neither the beasts nor the elders: for *Jesus took not upon him the nature of angels*. The song of redemption could only be sung by the redeemed from among men. See the words of the song itself, Rev. v. 9, 10. Respecting the *wings* of the seraphim, it is worthy remark, that nothing is said of their form. If upon the supposition that they themselves are designed as symbols of God in Christ, there will be no difficulty in the apprehension concerning those wings. The Lord is veiled to his people in covering; and swiftness to fly to their help and salvation; and yet, in the dispensations of his providence, his path is hidden: these may be easily understood as emblematically represented. Concerning the infinite holiness of Jehovah, which the hymn celebrated, every part of scripture concurs in the testimony. And in nothing more, than by the wonders of redemption, God never took a more decided method to impress his creatures with a due sense of the holiness of his nature, than by the death of Christ. In that one act, a greater display was made of the holiness of Jehovah, than if all creation had been offered up in sacrifice. It spake in the loudest voice, that rather than the Lord's holiness shall be tarnished, the holy child Jesus shall die. The effect wrought in heaven, by *the voice of him that cried*, may serve to shew the infinite awfulness of the divine presence, even in mercies. Reader, think what a solemn thing it must be to have to do with God, even when God is coming forth to bless. Oh the tremendous state of unregenerated sinners, when the Lord comes forth to judgment!

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the LORD of hosts.

Here we see, even in God's own servant, what trembling is induced in a near apprehension of God's presence. Men may think lightly of sin, who never felt the galling chain of it; and some poor unawakened sinners, who have never ascertained what righteousness is, by the divine standard, may fancy much of themselves, and of their own righteousness; but when a soul hath once seen God in Christ by faith, and Jesus expiating sin by no less a sacrifice than himself, then all self-complacency and self-righteousness fall to the ground. Reader, I pray you look at *Isaiah* in this view of him, and hear his confession; and then turn to observe *Job's* account of himself, Job, xlii. 5, 6; and then hearken to the Lord's testimony of him, Job, i. 8; then look at *David*, the man after God's own heart, Psalm li. 1—5; hearken also to *Paul's* relation, Rom. vii. 18, to the end: and if such views do not humble your soul to the very dust of the earth, depend upon it, it is because the Holy Ghost

hath never convinced you of *sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*; John, xvi. 8—11.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Reader! do remark with me, the infinite grace of the Lord! see how, amidst all the sanctities of heaven, the case of a poor sinner upon earth was taken notice of, and provided for. Depend upon it, the Lord is continually so doing for all his people. By one of the seraphim flying to Isaiah and performing this act of grace, I confess that I am but the more strengthened in my belief, that the seraphim were representations of Jehovah in Christ. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to take of the things of Jesus, and shew them unto the people. The altar can mean no other than Jesus. And it is the blood of Jesus which alone cleanseth from all sin. But while I thus express my views of the passage, I desire to do it with the lowest reverence. I only humbly inquire if it may not be so? Very, very far from speaking decidedly upon it. Lord, take away the iniquity both of my lips and pen, as thou didst in mercy, remove the prophet's guilt!

8 Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am I*; send me.

Here, if I mistake not, the subject takes a different turn. Isaiah, in the former part, relates what he had seen and heard in a special relation to himself, and the Church, to whom he ministered: but here he relates what he was witness to, in relation to a higher mission than that of any among the sons of men. He begins it with an *also*, as if to disconnect what went before from what now follows: *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Let the Reader consult those scriptures, where a consultation is as it were set forth between the persons of the Godhead, and then may the Lord enable him to determine for himself, (for far be it from me to determine for him) whether this be not a similar instance. Thus at creation, Gen. i. 26. So again at the destruction of Babel, Gen. xi. 5, 6, 7. And why may we not suppose that this vision which the prophet Isaiah was favoured with, was a representation given to the Church, through him, of the conference at redemption? And if this be the case, it is Jesus, and not Isaiah who gives the answer, *here am I, send me*, see Psalm, xl. 7—10. Reader, pray consult those sweet scriptures, they will amply reward your attention; and may the almighty Author of them himself explain them! Isaiah, xlii. 1—8; then i. 5—9.

9 ¶ And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Reader, pray attend to these verses: for so important are they considered in the gospel-church, that no less than six times are they taken notice of, and referred to, in the after-writings of the scriptures. All the Evangelists quote them, and they are again spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, and by the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans. See in proof, Matt. xiii. 14. Mark, iv. 12. Luke, viii. 10. John, xii. 39. 40. Acts, xxviii, 26, 27. and Romans, xi. 8. And what awful confirmations have we of their truth, both in the word of God, and the experience of men in all ages! Even when Jesus himself, *who spake as never man spake*, was the preacher!

11 Then said I, LORD, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

Here the prophet, as if struck with what he had seen and heard, puts in a question, and a solemn one it is: "How long shall it be that the enemy of souls shall triumph, and fallen man remain under the ruins of his apostasy?" Hear what Jesus himself saith as mediator on this subject, Isaiah, xlix. 4. And how have his servants in all ages complained, Jerem. xx. 9. John heard also the anxious question of the martyrs, much to the same amount, Rev. vi. 9, 10.

13 ¶ But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it* shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance *is* in them, when they cast *their leaves*: so the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

Oh what a verse of blessedness, what a promise full of Jesus and his glory, is here! O for grace to behold, and to enjoy Jesus in it! The Jewish nation could not be destroyed, because Christ, after the flesh, was to spring out of the stock of Abraham: and on his account the nation should be saved. It is, saith the Lord, but as a tenth, but as a remnant; nevertheless, in that tenth, in that remnant, there is the holy seed. Jesus is the substance contained in all, as the teil tree, or the oak, in the acorn of which, from the first creation, all the subsequent oaks are folded up. Precious thought! In Jesus, from everlasting to everlasting, all his seed, his people, his children were deposited, and will be brought forth from age to age, until the last is completed. Reader, was there

ever a more blessed close to a most blessed chapter? O for grace to bless the eternal Spirit for such a revelation! Now, Lord! we see why it is, that sinners are preserved amidst all their undeservings. There is one that standeth by and looketh on, and while to our eye there is nothing to be seen, but, like the withered blighted branch of the vine, every thing is unpromising, and dead, and lifeless; yet there is in it *a tenth*; yea, Jesus is in it; *Destroy it not*, he saith, *for a blessing is in it*. So, saith Jehovah, in his rich mercy and free grace, *so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all*, Isaiah, xlv. 8.

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MY soul, close not the book: for the same Lord, the same *Adonai*, yea thy Jesus is still upon his throne, as he was in the days of the prophet, and thou by grace, through faith, as he by open vision, mayest draw nigh and behold him; for he calls upon thee, and upon all poor, needy, perishing sinners, like thyself, to come hither and behold the glory which he had with his Father before all worlds. And do not forget that thy Redeemer's throne is a throne of grace as well as glory, on which Jesus sits to receive his poor, and to give out of his fulness. And, for thy great encouragement, do not forget also, that while thou art benefited by his grace, Jesus will be glorified in giving out to thy necessities; yea, God thy Father will be glorified in Jesus, whenever a poor sinner is made blessed and happy in Jesus. Come then, my soul, to his throne, and let God be glorified in his Son, and Jesus be glorified in thy salvation; in thy finding *grace to help in every time of need*.

And behold, my soul, the glorious *seraphim* above the throne, and round about the throne, and let their appearance comfort and encourage thee! Yea, let thy hymn go forth in the language of heaven: for surely never would the heavenly song have been handed down to earth, if it had not been meant that the redeemed upon earth, from among men, might learn and sing it. Cry aloud my soul, with holy joy, and say, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*.

But while thou art singing with a new-strung heart of redemption, the song of heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect; forget not, O my soul, that thou art still a man of unclean lips, and that thou dwellest in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Yes, precious Jesus, I would not only remember this, but through all eternity, never, never lose sight of it. Heaven itself will be more heaven to my soul in the view, that from the brink of hell it was Jesus brought me. Thy love, thy grace, thy pity, thy compassion, blessed Lord, is now the sole cause of my song of grace, and will be my everlasting song of glory to all eternity. Oh for the continual cleansing from off thine altar. Lord Jesus! let the live coal be daily, hourly administered to purge mine iniquity, and to make me clean in thy blood.

And O, my gracious God, grant me, grant thy Church, thy people favour, that it may not be said, to the ministry of thy holy word *Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not*. Oh Lord! give to him that writes, and to him that reads, the hearing, the seeing, the understanding, the believing heart; that

may both enter into the full enjoyment of this blessed vision, *to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* Lord! let it be found in our souls' experience, and to our souls' joy, that there is in us, as in the teil tree and the oak, that glorious substance, *the holy seed*, even Jesus, in all his merits, blood, and righteousness, for the salvation of our souls! May this be found our portion, in the love and mercy of God our Father; the grace, blood, and righteousness of Jesus Christ; and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost! Amen.

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

Part of this chapter is historical, and part prophetical. The distress of Jerusalem gives occasion to introduce a memorable prophecy concerning Christ. The chapter closes with threatenings.

AND it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

2 And it was told the house of David, Saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

If the Reader will consult the corresponding scripture, in the history of the kings of Judah and Israel, he will find that a considerable time had elapsed between the vision in the preceding chapter, and the opening of this. It is not said, what year of Ahaz's reign it was, when those kings came up against Jerusalem. But it could not have been less than sixteen or seventeen years after *Uzziah* died: for the whole reign of Jotham is passed over, and that continued sixteen years. See 2 Kings, xvi. and 2 Chron. xxviii. The character of Ahaz is so largely given in those scriptures, that I refer the Reader to what is said of him, and his impiety, in these places.

3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field;

4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted for the two tails

of these smoking fire-brands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of Tabeal:

7 Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

8 For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

9 And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

I beg the Reader to remark with me, the Lord's tender mercy to his people. Surely in this history, as in a thousand others, the Apostle's words are fulfilled: *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*; Romans, v. 20. We hear nothing of Ahaz sending to Isaiah, or himself calling upon the Lord; but it is the Lord sending to Ahaz. Grace must first be given, or there will be no moving of the heart to the Lord. Reader! (6) remark the command of God to the prophet, to take his son with him, when he sent him to meet Ahaz. The Lord sent the prophet, notwithstanding Ahaz's undeserving, with a message of comfort; and perhaps the child's being with him, was intended as a sign; for his name seems to have been significant of it. *Shear-jashub* implies, *a remnant to return*. In the Old Testament Scripture, the Lord's servants were remarkable for giving names to their children, according to the times, or special mercies received, by way of memorial. And no doubt, as oft as they looked upon them, it brought the pleasing circumstance afresh to recollection, and called forth new praise. It were to be wished, that New Testament saints would adopt the same plan: they would find the Lord's blessing upon it. Faith, in honouring God, will find God honouring the exercise of it. If the Reader would wish to see instances, I refer him to those scriptures, Gen. xxviii. 19. 1 Sam. i. 20. Psalm lxx. in the title. It is not said what effect the prophet's message produced on the king's mind; but by what follows, we are led to admire and adore the Lord's grace in bearing with sinners, who slight his renewed mercies. Reader! do not fail to remark from it, how, in all ages, sin and its hardening effects abound!

10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God ; Ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David ? *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also ?

14 ¶ Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign ; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

Reader ! do not forget again, in the perusal of this most blessed scripture, to observe how the Lord takes occasion from man's unworthiness to magnify the riches of his grace. So, indeed, the Lord hath done from the beginning. The fall of Adam made way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh ! what wonders are found in the subject of redeeming grace ! How blessed is it to see God's graciousness ! The Lord had sent his servant, the prophet, on a message to Ahaz, to comfort him, notwithstanding his transgressions, in the prospect of his enemies coming up against his kingdom ; and though it doth not appear, that it had any effect upon the mind of Ahaz ; yet the Lord will speak to him again ; and, if possible, in a yet more endearing manner, bids him ask a sign, which might become the proof of divine faithfulness. But the king is deaf to all entreaty. Alas ! what creatures we are, when void of grace ; how lost and insensible, even to the goodness and long-suffering of God ! But though Ahaz slights the Lord, the Lord will not slight his people ; the sign shall not be lost to the Church, for it is a most blessed one ! And though the king despised it, there were, no doubt, many of God's hidden ones to whom it proved, as the Lord designed it, a gracious support against the rapidly approaching afflictions of the church. Since Ahaz will not ask a sign, Jehovah will give the house of David a sign unasked : yea, the Lord himself will give both the sign, and the blessing veiled under the sign, from his own free, unmerited, unsought-for goodness. Behold then the astonishing sign ! *A virgin shall conceive*, without the use of the natural means of propagation ; *a son shall be born*, without the intervention of a human father ; and this wonderful child shall be called by a name significant of his nature, as God and man in one person, even *Immanuel* ! And though so distinguished from all others, yet in the common circumstances of life he shall be as others are ; *butter and honey shall he eat* ; that is, he should be subject to all the natural wants, and infirmities of manhood, sin only excepted. Now all these marks and characters were signs indeed, which when fulfilled in one and the same person, left no question remaining as to whom the prophecy referred ; and as they never were, nor ever could be fulfilled in any other but the Lord Jesus Christ ; how blessed is it to trace the love of God, thus watching over the church, and

thus opening to the church's view the coming of her Lord, at an age so distant and remote, as that in which the prophet Isaiah lived. I only detain the Reader, to remark with me, the grace of God in the sweet discoveries made of Jesus, from age to age: how, by gradual means, from the first dawn of revelation, down to the very moment of Christ's coming, the Lord unfolded the wonders of his person and character, like the light of the morning, shining more and more unto a perfect day! To Adam it was said, that the Redeemer should be *of the seed of the woman*; to Abraham, *of his house and family*; to Jacob, *the tribe of which he should spring*; in the time of David, many of his offices, in his *prophetical, priestly, and kingly* character, were foretold; and now in the days of the prophets, other features were given: *Isaiah* in this place declares, that he should be born of a *virgin*; *Micah* is commissioned to tell the *place* of his birth; *Daniel* the *time*: and thus the Lord prepared the church, by little and little, to have clear conceptions both of his person and character, that every soul might be on the look-out to hail and welcome the coming Saviour!

16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

I have separated this verse from the whole passage going before, from an idea, (though I presume not to say I am right) that it is not connected with what is said concerning Christ, but as a sign to Isaiah concerning himself, and the events then pending in the church. Some have translated the words, "For before *this* child," that is, his own child, *Shear-jashub*, whom the Lord had commanded the prophet to take with him to Abaz, "before *this* child was grown up," the land thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." And in confirmation of this as an history, it is remarkable, that about three years after this preaching of Isaiah to Abaz, as we read, 2 Kings, xv. 30, Hoshea killed Pekah the son of Remaliah, and, 2 Kings, xvi. 9, the king of Assyria slew Rezin: It should seem, therefore, that it was to those events this verse referred, and not to Christ, with whom it should seem it had no connection.

17 ¶ The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; *even* the king of Assyria.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall hiss for the fly that *is* in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria.

19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of

the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.

20 In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, *namely*, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of his feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep;

22 And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk *that* they shall give that he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.

23 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.

24 With arrows and with bows shall *men* come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

25 And *on* all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

After the Lord had given the unspeakably blessed promise, concerning the coming of Christ, that his people in those degenerate times might have comfort, he proceeds to his solemn threatenings; and most solemn and awful indeed they are. Ahaz, in his impiety, had been looking to Assyria for help; and to purchase it, had robbed the house of the Lord of the silver and gold, 2 Kings, xvi. 8. The Lord therefore tells him, that this very king shall be the instrument of his ruin. And whereas he feared the weapons of men, the Lord will make even the *flies* of Egypt, and the *bee* of Assyria, those little feeble insects, the instruments of his misery. Reader! think what a state of ruin the sinner is brought to, whose very comforts turn to sorrows; and in the things wherein he chiefly proposed to himself happiness; the bitterness of all his afflictions abound! Oh! for grace to read these things with a spiritual improvement, that we may learn how dreadful it must be to have God for our foe, who can convert our very blessings into curses, and make that which was intended for good, be unto us an occasion of falling. The ruin by reason of sin, in the representation made in the close of the chapter, of *shaving the land* of inhabitants, that briers and thorns come up; the brood of

cattle restrained, and all the tokens of want and misery take place; if read spiritually, may serve to shew how the mind is exposed and laid open to every evil, where Christ is not. *Let Ephraim alone, he is joined to his idols*; if the Lord saith thus of church or people, there needs no more to the most finished misery. *Lord!* I would say for myself and Reader, *Oh! take not away thine Holy Spirit from us!* Hosea, iv. 17. Psalm, li. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pass over every lesser consideration, to attend to that blessed and most important prophecy, contained in this chapter, concerning the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though Ahaz refused to hear, and would not ask a sign of the Lord, let you and I receive this blessed sign, so graciously given to the church, and on our bended knees, read and adore God in Christ, for so rich and precious a scripture. And now that we have lived to see the whole fulfilled, yea more than fulfilled, in a thousand additional mercies, which the Son of God hath brought with him, and with which he hath beautified and comforted his church; oh! for grace to meditate in the same, night and day; and to read both the prophecy and the accomplishment of it, under the Spirit's teaching, until all the blissful consequences included in it be incorporated in our hearts, and we discover and enjoy our interest in all that belongs to our Jesus and his great salvation!

Oh! thou dear Lord of thy church and people! Didst thou, the glorious Ancient of days, condescend to become the babe of Bethlehem? Didst thou, blessed Jesus, vouchsafe to be born for me, and rather than the poorest of thy family should perish, wouldest become man, and not abhor the virgin's womb? Oh! the preciousness of that name, that glorious gracious name Immanuel, which is more fragrant than ointment poured forth! Never may I lose sight of it; never may I go abroad, or remain at home, without bearing it about with me: it tells me, my Jesus is God! Surely then he *can* save me; surely he *will* save me! The work of redemption was not too great for him. Yea, it gives efficacy to all he did, and all he suffered. For now I see by it, that all he did, and all he suffered, were the acts of God, mighty to save. And sure I am, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him. God my Saviour will carry on, and complete, all that remains to be done concerning me; how then shall I perish, or come short of his glory? Oh! thou glorious Immanuel! blessed Jesus! give me to hail thee for ever by this endeared name. And moreover, as my Redeemer is Immanuel, *God with us*; so is he Immanuel, *God in our nature!* Oh! what so near or so dear as Jesus, who is *bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh?* Lord, I pass by all the affinities of life, in comparison of thee: for thou fillest all, and art nearer than all. And oh! how delightful the thought! that while my soul finds such rapture in the consciousness of the relation; Jesus will not deny his poor relation, but condescends to own him. Yea, he commands that I should be told, *he is not ashamed to call his people, brethren?* Precious, precious Jesus! And be thou adored, my Lord,

for such a sign, in such a prophecy, given to the church, by thy servant, *Thanks be to God! for his unspeakable gift.*

C H A P. VIII.

CONTENTS.

The prophet is in this chapter opening a subject, concerning the future troubles of Israel and Judah, by reason of their sins, and in a spirit of prophecy pointing out the destruction of both kingdoms, which should be accomplished. But the loving-kindness and grace of God mingles great promises of mercy, in the midst of judgment; and all in allusion to Christ.

MOREOVER the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

3 And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

4 For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

The prophet is commanded to commit to writing what he had to deliver. We have reason to bless God for this appointment, by which scripture records have been handed down to us. We find several prophets speaking of it, Jerem. xxxvi. 2, 28. Hosea, viii. 12; and he that seems to have represented the Prince of the prophets, is said to have had a *writer's inkhorn by his side*, to mark his people, Ezek. ix. 2. Precious Jesus! may it be found, that thou hast written my name *in thy book of life*; Luke, x. 20. No doubt, this scripture record of Isaiah was very weighty; for the Lord gave a name to it, and commanded the prophet to call his son by the same name, *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*; which in the nearest sense of the words signifies, *a making speed to the spoil*; like one that hastens to lay hold of his prey in battle. And thus doubled as it were to the prophet's mind, Isaiah was taught himself the certainty that the Lord would accomplish what he had pronounced. His child should never be named without bringing with him a fresh memorandum. Concerning those witnesses he took with him, to record what he had written at the Lord's command in the roll, the Prophet calls them *faithful witnesses*; by which I presume he meant, men *in office*, who could not afterwards depart

from what they had subscribed their hands to; for one of those men, *Uriah* the priest, as we read 2 Kings, xvi. 10—16, proved very *unfaithful* to the Lord, in setting up an altar after the pattern of the idolatrous altar which Ahaz brought from Damascus. But probably this act of *Uriah* was after this prophecy of *Isaiah*. The same scripture gives an account of the fulfilment of *Isaiah's* prophecy, 2 Kings, xvi. 9.

5 ¶ The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,

6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of *Shiloah* that go softly, and rejoice in *Rezin* and *Remaliah's* son :

7 Now therefore, behold, the LORD bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, *even* the king of *Assyria*, and all his glory : and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks :

8 And he shall pass through *Judah* ; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach *even* to the neck ; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breath of thy land, O *Immanuel*.

In these verses the prophet is led to speak of great things, reaching far and near. Under the figure of waters and rivers, kingdoms and empires are represented. The waters of *Shiloah* which are said to go softly, mean the Lord's tender dealings with his people ; but sinners are looking to an arm of flesh ; great names among men, like *Rezin* and *Remaliah's son*, are what they are seeking after. Hence, saith the Lord, by those very persons shall *Judah's* punishment come. And this was fulfilled, when, as we read in the writings of this same prophet *Isaiah*, chap. xxxvi. xxxvii. *Sennacherib* besieged *Judah*. See the corresponding history, 2 Kings, xviii. xix. But what I more particularly beg the Reader to remark with me, is, that part of this scripture, which hath a reference to Christ. The prophet keeping his eye, as it were, upon the map of the Holy Land, where the Lord *Jesus*, in after-ages, should set up his standard, beholds, in the mean time, the ravages of the *Assyrian* army, which the Lord would permit to come up over it, for the punishment of his people ; and rapt into future times, he beholds, with the eye of faith, the glorious events to be accomplished by *Jesus*, and cries out, "The enemy will pass through *Judah* ; yea, *he shall fill thy land, O Immanuel!*" Reader ! pause over this sweet scripture, for it is most sweet ; conceive how full of Christ's glory, must have been *Isaiah's* mind ! He knew that this was the very sacred spot of the whole earth, where, in the fulness of time, *Jesus* would be born, and accomplish salvation by his blood and righteousness. And therefore, while under the full influence of the spirit of prophecy, he saw, and was delivering to the then church, the prediction of the ruin and overthrow the enemies of *Judah* and *Israel* would accomplish,

by the Lord's appointment, as the punishment of their sins; yet the Prophet's mind, looking beyond those times, to the days of Christ, breaks out in the midst with an address to Jesus; it is as if he had said; "So great, so overwhelming will be the Lord's judgments, by the hands of enemies, over his own beloved land and people, that I see thy Zion, O Immanuel, thy beloved Jerusalem, covered over even to the neck, by the stretching of his wings!" Reader! look at the subject also in a spiritual sense; and behold how the whole nature of man, as well as his land, hath been over-run by the great enemy of souls; and then think of the mercies wrought by our Immanuel, in having bound the strong man armed, even Satan, when subduing our nature, and bringing forth our souls from his captivity! Luke, xi. 21, 22.

9 ¶ Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

Here are blessed encouragements given to God's people, in the midst of impending judgments. It is as if the prophet had said; "The Lord's punishment of Judah, as a nation, is inevitable; it shall come; all attempts to alter his purpose will be vain. Look therefore neither to young nor old, to counsel nor strength, for all will fail; but repose in the Lord. God is with us: He whose name is Immanuel, will come in due time. And in the mean season, as he is to be born of a virgin, and from among his people; *the holy seed*, shall be the substance thereof," chap. vi. 13. Reader! let you and I always take comfort, in the worst of times; and under the darkest dispensations, in the recollection of this. If Jesus be with us, there is a blessing in it, though our state be as the withered grape, Isaiah, lxxv. 8. Say, as the wife of *Manoah*: *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have accepted Christ at our hands*; Judges, xiii. 23. Precious Lord Jesus! it is thou that art *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof*, Jeremiah, xiv. 8.

11 ¶ For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a

stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

I pray the Reader to observe with me, the tender care of God over his people, in times of general calamity. In these verses, the Prophet is commissioned to comfort the Lord's mourners; and a precious word of comfort he gives. The Lord speaking to the prophet with a strong hand, intimates the strong impression made on the prophet's mind, by what the Lord said. As if he had said, "Tell my people, in the midst of those sinners, not to fear the general tidings of evil, neither shall they seek to form alliances with any: but let them sanctify me in their hearts, and make me their fear and their confidence; and they shall find that the fear of God will drive out the fear of man, as the fire of the sun will put out the fire of the hearth; or as the ocean will swallow up all rivers." Oh! that God's people, in all ages, were to adopt the same divine plan. But I beg the Reader not to overlook, in these verses, besides this general direction, another special mercy marked: I mean in the features of Him, who is promised as a sanctuary. The very characters by which he is here revealed most fully point him out: He who is to be for a *sanctuary* to his people, is to be to others, for a *stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence*. Now who can hesitate a moment to discover the Lord Jesus in these distinguishing characters? If there were any doubt on this subject, the scriptures of the New Testament would fully explain it: *Simeon* was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to tell *Mary*, that Jesus was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which should be spoken against. Luke, ii. 34; the Apostle Paul calls Jesus expressly by this name, a *stumbling-stone and rock of offence*, Rom. ix. 33; Peter speaks to the same amount, and both in reference to this very prophecy, and to another to the same purport in Isaiah: compare Isaiah, xxviii. 16, with 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8. Yea, Jesus himself makes reference to the same, in his conversation with the Jews; and as Isaiah saith in this passage, that *many among the people of Judah shall stumble and fall, and be broken*; so Christ explains how by falling or stumbling on this stone, viz. himself, which God the Father had laid in Zion, Matt. xxi. 42—44. And, Reader, mark what the Prophet saith at the close of this paragraph, at the Lord's command, *to bind up the testimony, and seal the law among his disciples*. What can be more gracious, on the part of God; or what more blessed to do, on the part of the believer? Oh! Lord, help me to have recourse to thy blessed word at all times, for the unalterable testimony of thy truth; and in the experience of it in my own soul, to set to it my poor seal also, *that God is true*; John, iii. 33.

17 And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth

his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

It should seem that this is the prophet's own testimony and his own resolution, in the calamitous times coming upon the church. In the prospect of the coming Saviour, under all apparently frowning providences, he will still look for smiling mercy.

18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion.

We have authority from the Holy Ghost, to make application of these words to the person of the Lord Jesus. Some have thought that, as the two sons of the prophet Isaiah, *Shear-jashub* and *Mahershalal-hash-baz*, are particularly noticed by the Lord in Isaiah's ministry, the prophet also speaks of them in this verse; at least, they say, the prophet may be supposed to speak of them, as well as of Christ. But would not this be sadly to debase the subject, and enervate the scriptures, in mingling any thing, or any person with the Lord Jesus Christ? I take occasion to remark, once for all, in this place, that, according to my poor humble view of divine things, men putting several constructions on passages of this kind, as partly referring to Christ, and partly referring to themselves, or those around them, is not following the steps of the Holy Ghost. It is to Jesus, the one glorious object and head of his church, all scripture points, and it is in Jesus the whole centres. We must, in the present instance, refer the whole of this passage to the Lord Jesus, since the Holy Ghost, by his servant the Apostle, hath decidedly said as much. See Hebrews, ii. 13. And so again, in one of the Psalms, the sacred writer, under the spirit of prophecy, thus introduceth the Lord Christ, saying, *I am as a wonder unto many*; Psalm, lxxi. 7. And hence a light is thrown over that scripture also of the prophet, to prove that what was said of Joshua the high-priest, refers not to Joshua, but to Christ; Zech. iii. 8.

19 ¶ And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

21 And they shall pass through it, hardly be-stead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret

themselves, and curse their king, and their God, and look upward.

22 And they shall look unto the earth: and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and *they shall be driven to darkness.*

I do not think it needful to detain the Reader with long observations on this part of the chapter. The advice here given is to the same amount as the former; the Lord utterly condemns all seeking, but to himself. In all ages men are prone to look to any thing and every thing, for help and counsel, in their distress, rather than to God. Hence the wickedness of fortune-tellers and necromancers, and the like. The Lord hath manifested his displeasure against all of this kind. And it is only to be lamented, in a land professing the gospel of Christ, that there should be found a single person daring enough to take up so infamous a business, or a single person weak enough to make use of it. The words of this passage are an unanswerable reply, and refutation to all: *should not a people seek unto their God? To be sure they should: for who but the Lord can teach his people to profit? Who but God can be their help in time of need?*

REFLECTIONS.

How truly blessed and profitable it is to watch the Lord's care over his people! Though in times of general wickedness, the Lord visits a nation and a kingdom; yet will he take care of his chosen in the general overthrow. If men will look unto an arm of flesh, that arm shall be their confusion. But if his people do but sanctify the Lord God in their hearts, then he will be for a sanctuary; and when he sends troubles and visitations on the earth, yet like a Father to his children, who seeth a storm approaching, he brings them into the house and shuts the door after him, and thus secures them from the danger; so the Lord saith, *Come my people, enter thou into the chambers of my providence and the covenant of my love, and shut thy doors about thee, until the indignation be overpast.* Oh! the love of God in Christ to his people!

Precious Jesus! I must not close my meditation on this Chapter, until that I have first bent the knee of my soul in thanks to thee, thou dear Lord, that here, as in other portions of thy blessed word, I discover, that thou who art to me the Rock of ages, and the rock of my salvation, hast been, in all ages, to the unbeliever, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.* Lord! how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world? How is it that thy humiliating state, thy life of sorrow, and death of shame, should appear to me so lovely, while it becomes so offensive to others? Surely it is grace makes all the difference. I should have fallen on this stone and been broken, as well as thousands have done, hadst thou not kept me from it! Yea, Lord, there was a time when I saw no beauty in thee, to desire thee: and art thou now the altogether lovely, the fairest among ten thousand! To thee, Lord, be all the

praise! I bless thee, my adorable Redeemer, for that sweet scripture thou hast said, and left upon record: *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me!*

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

Here is another blessed prophecy, full of the Lord Jesus, and of gospel mercies folded up in him. The prophet speaks of the joy of God's people, when, in the midst of darkness, the light of Christ's coming shall break in upon them. The chapter closeth with threatened judgments to the despisers of his word.

NEVERTHELESS the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Napthali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

The opening of this chapter is a continuation of the same subject as the former. The Church was there said to be in darkness. And certainly before the coming of Christ, the darkness was uncommonly great: for from the last prophecy delivered by *Malachi*, to the hour in which *Zechariah* ministered at the altar of incense, there had been no open vision; a period of near 350 years; Luke, i. 8 to 11.

2 The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

This blessed account was fulfilled, when the Lord Jesus, preceded by his herald, John the Baptist, manifested himself to Israel. The gospel is full of it. Matt. iv. 12—16.

3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy; they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

5 For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood: but this shall be with burning, and fuel of fire.

The joy here spoken of, is not that carnal joy, which men of the world are seeking after; but the spiritual joy of grace in the heart: and the similitude of harvest-men and warriors is uncommonly beautiful. The husbandman soweth in hope; the soldier warfares in the same: but *the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*. The seed sown must pass under a long and anxious process; and the warrior must go through a long and painful campaign, before he can cry, Victory! But the joy of both is great, when the end hath crowned the action. Such is the joy of the spiritual. When the Lord hath broken the yoke of sin and Satan, those foes, more tremendous than all the host of *Midian*, and brought the soul out of prison, and the prison-house; and when this battle of the warrior, hath been accomplished by the blood of Christ and the fuel of the Spirit's fire; oh! the joy of the soul in Christ Jesus! The Prophet is here, under the spirit of prophecy, speaking of those things as already accomplished, when as yet Christ, the sole author and finisher of them, is not come. But this is among the features of prophecy: for what shall assuredly come to pass, is in the divine mind as if already completed. Hence Christ, who was to come in the fulness of time, is called *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8.

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Now comes in that blessed prophecy which hath refreshed the Church, and will, as long as time shall be, continue to refresh the Church, in all ages; and which, when compared with the accomplishment, as far as hath been completed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus, and which faith is looking forward to the full completion of, forms one of the most blessed of all subjects, to call up our love, and contemplation, and praise, during a whole life of grace, until faith be swallowed up in glory. *Unto us, the Church, a child is born; Jesus, in assuming our nature, takes it up from infancy: for it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren.* And he not only came of his own free voluntary will, at the call of God his Father; but He that called him to the service of Mediator, gave him as his Son, unto the people. These are united views (and most blessed views they are, when seen together) blended in one, of Christ, as the Redeemer of his people. His own free-will offering became essentially necessary, to give value and efficacy to all he wrought

and suffered. And the authority of Jehovah, in the appointment became equally necessary for faith to act upon, when pleading the efficacy of his merits, and propitiation before God. The Prophet having thus introduced him, now gives some of his adorable names, which, like the beautiful constellation of the heavens, becomes a cluster of glories all in one, to point out the infinite loveliness and greatness of his person, and his transcendent excellencies in all his offices, characters, and relations. It would take a volume of itself, to set forth the Lord Jesus under the several names the prophet hath here distinguished him by; and these are but a few of the numberless precious names, in which the scriptures reveal Christ, by which his people know him, and make use of him as their daily necessities and his glory require. His name shall be called *Wonderful*, saith the Prophet. But who is able to shew, to what extent it is so? The wonders of his person, as God and as man, and as both, forming one Christ; the wonders of his essence, nature, and perfections; the wonders of his offices, characters, and relations; the wonders of his incarnation, birth, life, ministry, labours, death, resurrection, ascension, and all the great events he is carrying on now in glory: the wonders of the redemption he hath wrought, is now accomplishing, and will accomplish; the wonders of his love, grace, mercy, and fellowship, in all its heights, and depths, and breadths and lengths; the wonders of his saving grace, in the hearts of men, and in thy heart, my soul, to thee; the greatest wonder of any, that after so much grace, and mercy, and thy repeated rebellions, the spark is not extinguished, the smouldering flax is not put out, nor the bruised reed broken; which all hell is for ever trying to accomplish, and thine own unworthy and unbelieving heart too often joining in the confederacy to bring to pass! Is not his name Wonderful? And doth not his grace to thee make thee a wonder to thyself, in consequence of it? Oh! thou wonderful Lord! thou unerring, faithful, kind, tender counsellor, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* Oh! thou *mighty God!* thou all-sufficient Jesus! to see the purchase of thy blood, and thy Father's gift completed and made effectual! Oh! thou *everlasting Father!* in all things everlasting, in love, in provision, in care, in security: a blessed eternity of all relations in one art thou, to thy people. And surely thou art *the Prince of peace*, for thou hast made our peace by the blood of thy cross, and hast commanded peace for ever. Oh! for grace to know thy name, and by every name to put our trust in thee: *in thy name to rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness to make our boast!* Surely every thing in thy kingdom must correspond to the greatness of thy name. It must be an increasing kingdom, a righteous kingdom, a peaceable kingdom, a glorious kingdom, yea, an everlasting kingdom, that shall have no end. Thy Father's zeal will take effectual care of this: for thou layest out all for thy Father's glory; and the whole purposes of salvation are that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Oh! for grace to bless a covenant God in Christ, for all these wonders of redemption, and now begin the song, which will never end in eternity: *Salvation to God and the Lamb!*

8 ¶ The LORD sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.

9 ¶ And all the people shall know, *even* Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,

10 The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change *them into cedars*.

11 Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;

12 The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is stretched out still*.

What is here said, though it may have a peculiar reference to the state of the Church in the days of the prophet, is not so limited, but that it hath respect to the Church in all ages. The Lord hath sent his word, his redemption, unto his people, and it hath lighted unto the ends of the earth. But, alas! even to the present hour, *who hath believed our report*, may every servant of the gospel exclaim, and say, *and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Neither judgments nor mercies, neither prosperous nor humbling providences, though accompanying the Lord's word, will procure reverence to the Lord's commands. If the Lord smites in one dispensation, the proud unhumiliated heart will seek comfort from another; and though the Lord throw down the building sin hath erected, yet sin will rear another. Hence the Prophet cries out, and every gracious looker-on joins in the same confession, "This is the sad cause, why judgments continue, the Lord's anger is not removed, but his hand is stretched out still!"

13 ¶ For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.

14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel, head and tail, branch and rush in one day.

15 The ancient and honourable, he *is* the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he *is* the tail.

16 For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err; and *they that are led of them are destroyed*.

17 Therefore the LORD shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on

their fatherless and widows; for every one is an hypocrite and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Here is the sad cause of the Prophet's lamentation, and a miserable close he makes indeed of the sorrowful subject, at every termination: for the thing explains itself. The Lord corrects in mercy; but men regard it not. The Lord humbles his people, in their houses and families; in their offices and rank; in their connections and relations; but it is all the same. Though the lofty be brought down, and the ancient and honourable be made low; though death enter in at their windows, and their young men be cut off, and distress follow the fatherless and widows; the judgments do not reclaim; *no man repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?* Jesus and his salvation are not sought after, nor regarded. *They refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely!* Hence the prophet closeth this paragraph as the former, and takes up the same woeful lamentation.

18 ¶ For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up *like* the lifting up of smoke.

19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.

20 And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

21 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: *and they together shall be against Judah.* For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

If the Reader will compare this chapter in the several parts of it, with the 26th chapter of Leviticus, he will find a solemn explanation given of what is here said, and mark the progression of divine visitations in both. Every thing manifests, that when the Lord smites, it is to reform: and when the calamities the Lord sends, (as here marked,) are brought to the highest pitch; when men, like an army besieged and without provision, are reduced to the extremity of eating the flesh of their own arm: if these awful visitations be unaccompanied with grace; depend upon it, if the Lord cease to correct, judg-

ments are at hand. Hence the Prophet again repeats, as the running lamentation of each distressing view of the subject, "These are the sad causes of the Lord's just anger." *For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts!*

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! behold in Israel's history, the real history of all men by nature; and the one universal cause of the Lord's controversy with the sons of men. *All have sinned, and come short of God's glory.* And think, my soul, what a mercy it is, that the Lord doth correct. But for this, there would be no hope of a reform. One of the most tremendous scriptures, is that, which the Lord proclaims, concerning the incorrigible, when giving them up to fulfil the measure of their iniquities: *So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee.* Lord! I would say for myself, and for every poor sinner like myself, give us not up *to eat the fruit of our own devices.* It is better to suffer now, than to perish for ever. But oh! accompany thy corrections with thy grace; and cause thy children *to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

Precious Jesus! how blessed is it, under such circumstances, to look at those sweet promises, which are given in this chapter concerning thee, and thy great salvation, by whom alone all deliverances are wrought. Had it not been for thee, thou gracious glorious Lord! though the Lord's anger had been stretched out to all eternity, not a soul could have found the possibility of returning to him. His justice must have burned to the lowest hell: neither could it have been satisfied for ever. Hail! thou almighty Deliverer of thy people! We welcome thy coming in the name of the Lord! Blessed for ever be the joyful sound, that *unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given!* Oh! the unspeakable felicity, that *the government is upon thy shoulder;* and that *all power is thine, in heaven and in earth.* Give then, thou dearest Lord, to thy people, to know thee, by every endearing name and in every glorious character. Be thou to me, to each, to all, our wonderful Counsellor, our mighty God, our everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace! And since in ourselves, and in all our circumstances, we are nothing, can do nothing, and by reason of sin are worse than nothing; oh, Lord, do thou carry on thy work with power in our souls; and of *the increase of thy government and peace let there be no end.* Let it be ever growing, and still to grow. Give an increase of grace, in every heart of thy redeemed upon earth. And even when thou shalt have brought home thy ransomed from earth to heaven, and the whole work and glory of redemption is then fully manifested to be thine; yet, blessed Jesus, even then, when thou shalt have delivered up the kingdom of thy mediatorial power, and Jehovah in his threefold character of person is glorified in the salvation of the Church; then, then, thou adorable Redeemer, thou wilt still be the glorious Head, and cause, and source, of all the blessedness of thy Church and people; and every new gift of felicity they enjoy, they will enjoy in thee, and from thee, and with thee, and it will be Jesus, and his church, to be glorious and going on in glory, for ever and for ever. Oh! the wonders and blessedness of salvation in Christ!

C H A P. X.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here denouncing punishment in the Lord's name, to the proud oppressors of his people. In the midst of which there are several sweet breakings-out of that great salvation by Jesus, from whence alone the people of God can find deliverance or comfort.

WOE unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed;

2 To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and *that* they may rob the fatherless!

3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation *which* shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

4 Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

Amidst general sins, with which both the people of God, and the oppressors of the Lord's people, are said to abound, the Prophet is pointing to some special instances of the kind, which marked the higher order, magistrates and rulers. Against which, the Lord particularly sets his face, assures them that there will be a day of account, and therefore puts the question home to their own consciences. Reader, do not fail to remark how the Holy Ghost, in all ages, is carrying on his preparatory work in the heart, by pleading with the sinner on account of his sin, to plead with him of his want of Jesus.

5 ¶ O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

6 I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but *it is* in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

8 For he saith, *Are not my princes altogether kings?*

9 *Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?*

10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria:

11 Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the LORD hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

13 For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man*:

14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs *that are left*, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

15 Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? *or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?* as if the rod should shake *itself* against them that lift it up, *or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.*

I pray the Reader to remark with me, how the Lord taketh to himself the whole of the destruction of Judah. If the Assyrian destroy the kingdom, it is because the Lord hath commissioned and appointed it. It is the Lord that sends Assyria against an hypocritical people, even his own people; and what the Assyrian doth, is because the Lord hath ordained it. Let the Reader turn to the 36th chapter of this prophecy, and behold the fulfilment of what is here foretold. And while he reads the proud boasting of the Assyrian captain, in his master's name, let him recollect what is here said by the Lord concerning him. It is always blessed to trace effects to their causes. And this comparative view will be very profitable, under divine teaching, to the Rea-

der's mind; for he will see by the sequel of the history, that though the Lord made the Assyrian his instrument, it was but as his rod to correct, and not to destroy. The Lord saith in this passage, that when he hath performed his whole work upon his Church and people, then shall come the punishment of Assyria, by whom he accomplisheth his purpose; and like as a father who corrects his child, when finished, throws the rod away, so shall the axe, that boasteth itself against him that heweth with it, be no more. If the Reader will read the close of the 37th chapter of Isaiah, from the 21st verse to the end, he will see the accomplishment of what the Lord hath here said.

16 Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.

17 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;

18 And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.

19 And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

In these verses, if I mistake not, the Lord is pointing to the cause of his mercy to his people, in delivering them from Assyria. It is not for their righteousness, for the parallel scripture saith, the Lord doeth it for his own sake, and for his servant David's sake, chap. xxxvii. 35. What is this but God's grace, in his own covenant-engagements, which he will fulfil, for his own glorious name's sake, and with an eye to the salvation by David his Holy One, even the Lord Jesus Christ? Hence, therefore, when the pride and fatness of his own hypocritical people are brought down, and a leanness of soul is induced, and all their fancied glory done away; as was the case when king Hezekiah desired the Prophet to lift up a cry for the remnant that was left; then was the loftiness of man brought down, and the Lord of hosts alone exalted in that day. See chap. xxxvii. 1—4, ii. 11.

20 ¶ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

21 The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *yet* a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

23 For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

Reader! how blessed is it to discover, here and there, through all the sacred writings, the outlines of Jesus? It hath the same effect as to a thirsty traveller going over some hot burning sands on a sultry day, when he finds a cooling stream; so when to the spiritual Reader in quest of Jesus, going over the account of Israel's sins, and their enemies' triumphs in consequence, their salvation by Jesus is brought into the view, oh! how doth it refresh the soul! How very blessed to this amount is this portion! Here is the gospel-day first spoken of, and then the gracious consequences of it. There is still a remnant in the worst of times, and they shall escape. The Apostle was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to preach from this text, and to leave his sermon in print for the Church's comfort; and a blessed sermon it is. God had promised to Abraham that in blessing he would bless him, and in multiplying he would multiply his seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore. Well, saith the Apostle, as the Patriarch was promised it, and as the Prophet predicted it, so is it come to pass. Reader, turn to the scriptures, and satisfy yourself on this great point. See Gen. xxii. 15—18. Behold Christ and his Church here gloriously set forth! Then read once more what the Prophet hath said in these four verses: and then turn to Romans, ix. 27, to the end, for a beautiful explanation of the whole. There is one circumstance more to be attended to, in these verses, that I would not wish the Reader to overlook, and that is, that of the remnant here spoken of, it is said, they shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. And what can more plainly speak the blessed effects of grace upon the heart, than when precious souls of God's redeemed are gathered off from all false refuges of lies, all self-confidences, all self-righteousness, and are brought to stay themselves wholly upon Him, whose name, by way of striking emphasis, is called the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS! Oh! the preciousness of seeing Christ so pointed out, so fully and sweetly preached by the prophet, and of being taught by the SPIRIT thus to know him, and to rejoice in him, and to stay our souls upon him! Jerem. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. The last verse in this portion is as awful as the former verses are gracious and consolatory. And what doth it declare, but what every other portion in the word of God both declares and confirms: *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him!* Isaiah, iii. 10, 11. Acts, iii. 23.

24 ¶ Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod,

and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.

26 And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; and *as* his rod *was* upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

27 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his charriages:

29 They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

30 Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth.

31 Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

32 As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand *against* the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

33 Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature *shall be* hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.

34 And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

I do not think it necessary to swell the page of my Commentary, by making particular observations on this passage. What might be said here, may be said, and hath been indeed said often, and one general re-

mark will suit all. The Reader will observe, that what is here said by a gracious Lord, is continually said by him to comfort his people, under their exercises and sufferings. Their own backslidings correct them, and their own transgressions bring the rods of Assyrians upon them. But though corrected, it is but in measure; though cast down, they are not cast off; though persecuted, yet not forsaken. In Jesus they are taken into covenant with God, and therefore there is still one invariable, unceasing love of God to their persons, while to their sins, the Lord manifests displeasure. Reader! look over this portion in the chapter with this view, and it will be blessed. Oh! the felicity of perceiving Jesus in all; whose rich salvation runs through all. Blessed, for ever blessed be God, for Jesus Christ!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! hath it ever struck you, when at any time perusing the judgments of God upon a guilty land, as set forth in this chapter, how awful the state of those must be, whom the Lord appoints for the correction of his people? Like the Assyrian here spoken of, all of this description are only commissioned to correct, not to destroy. They are by the Lord's bridle in their jaws, but the kindest ministers for good and not evil. And had the children of God but light enough during the dark hour, to see the joints of their chain, how different would be their views of God's people, and of the divine love in sending them. Howbeit, they mean not so, neither do their hearts think so, for their wish is to destroy: but Jesus appoints, overlooks, regulates, restrains, and brings about his blessed purposes, in all. How sweet the thought!

My soul! bless thy Lord for this most precious scripture! The remnant of Israel is still on the earth. It is in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass! See to it, my soul, that thou hast the gracious marks here set down: *They stay no more upon him that smote them.* They look not for salvation from an arm of flesh. Thy false confidences, and false supports have too often, my soul, like the reeds of Egypt, pierced thee through with many sorrows. Surely thou art looking no more to the works of thine hands, nor saying to them, Ye are my god; for in Jesus alone the fatherless findeth mercy! See to it, that thou art now finally, fully, and completely returned, among the remnant of Jacob, unto Jacob's mighty God, and staying thyself in truth upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. Oh! for grace to call heaven and earth to witness, that He, and He only, who is Jehovah's Christ, is thy Christ; and the Father's chosen, thy chosen: so shalt thou never be confounded nor ashamed, world without end.

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter is in part a prophecy concerning Christ. It contains an account of his stock, and the features of his person; the wonders of his redemption, in the call of the Gentiles; and the restoration of the Jews.

AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots :

The Holy Ghost had before sent a message to the church by the Prophet, to tell them that the wonderful Person, the Messiah they had been so long taught to expect, should be born of a virgin, with some leading marks of his character ; but now the Prophet is commissioned to tell the church, that he should spring from the stock of David. And to manifest his humbleness, he is to come but as a small rod from a stem ; and from Jesse he is rather said to arise than from David, Jesse's son. For Jesse lived and died in obscurity. The Prophet adds that he shall be a branch, a *Netzer*, so is the word, which though in the events of his coming, he would be beautiful and glorious, yet, in the view of many, but as the despised Nazarene. Oh ! how truly lovely is every account of Jesus ! Reader, consult those scriptures, Rev. xxii. 16. Matt. ii. 23. Rev. v. 5. Isaiah, iv. 2. Acts, xiii. 22, 23.

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD ;

What a blessed confirmation of the truth of this prophecy, and of the person of Christ, was the descent of the Holy Ghost, at the river Jordan ! John the Baptist was before instructed by this very thing, how he should know Christ. See Matt. iii. 16. John, i. 29—34. And, Reader, do remark farther, how delightful the Prophet's expression is, that the Spirit of Jehovah should rest upon him. For the Spirit was not given to our Christ by measure, as to his servants. Do not overlook this, but consult those sweet scriptures, which unfold and confirm it, Isaiah, lxi. 1. with Luke, iv. 18. John, iii. 34. I stay not to enlarge upon the several qualifications of our Lord in his office-character, by the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit here enumerated ; it will be sufficient to remark that the human nature of Christ was anointed with super-eminent grace, and a fulness to fit him for the great work of redemption, Jehovah called him to perform, and engaged to qualify him for. Psalm, xlv. 6, 7. Coloss. i. 14. ii. 9.

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD : and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears :

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth : and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

In the Hebrew the *quick understanding* seems more particularly to apply to the sense of *smelling* ; intimating that the perception of Christ

should be peculiarly so, and totally different from all others. Let the Reader look into the gospel, and mark the numberless instances in the ministry of Jesus, in his discerning the thoughts of the heart: John, ii. 24, 25. Rev. ii. 23. And what a lovely testimony the Prophet adds of this, when saying, that he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes: to shew that he forms not his standard of decision by what men say, or by the outward appearance of things, as earthly judges do, and indeed can do no other. But his judgment shall be, because he readeth the heart. How sweet the thought, to his poor, and to his meek in the earth! Think of it, I beseech you, ye that are poor and exercised; and let this precious view of your Jesus always bring comfort with it!

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

I beg the Reader to say, if it be not so, whether these divine perfections of our Lord were not introduced here in order that his people might behold in them their perfect security? And as a man's girdle goeth round the whole loins, and may be laid hold of behind or before; so the figure is beautifully chosen, to teach a poor trembling believer, who fears to come before the face of the Lord by reason of any renewed transgression; or if, in return to his prayer, the Lord seemeth to turn the back and not the face; in either case, and in every case, he is commanded by faith to lay hold of the girdle of Christ's loins, encircled as it is with righteousness and faithfulness. Isaiah, li. 8. Psalm, lxxxix. 27 to 35.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Spiritual blessings are promised, under figurative expressions. Such are the blessed effects introduced into the circumstances of mankind by the gospel of Christ, that, like the beasts of the forest tamed and brought under order, the passions of our fallen nature shall be regulated and restrained. *A little child* shall lead them; that is, the Lord's people shall be so much under the blessed influence of grace in the heart, that they will need nothing of human learning to guide them. And was not this prophecy fulfilled in the days of the gospel, when Mary

became the first preacher of the resurrection? Angels brought the tidings to the women; and they, and not the apostles, first spread it abroad.

10 ¶ And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea: and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make *men* go over dry-shod.

16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

How blessed is the account here given of the Gentile church. To this same root of Jesse, meaning Christ, shall the Gentiles seek. And that we might not lose sight of our elder brethren, the Jews, the Lord here promiseth to lay his hand the second time, to recover them. The interests of both shall be interwoven, and ultimately bound up toge-

ther. So very powerfully will the Lord work in the accomplishment, that all the seven streams of the *Nile*, yea, if *Jordan* or *Euphrates* were in the way, all should be dried up, and cease to flow, rather than the streams of that river, even the gospel, which maketh glad the city of God, should have the tide of its blessings stopped; by which salvation is made known, and rendered effectual to the Lord's people. Think, Reader, what overwhelming blessings flow in, with Jesus, upon the soul? If the Red Sea dried up to open a passage to Israel, how shall not the redeemed go over dryshod, to whom Jesus hath opened a *new and living way by his blood?* Exod. xiv. 29.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Jesus! was the prophet commissioned to bring the Church acquainted with thy nature, according to the flesh? Didst thou indeed come forth as a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and as a branch out of his roots? Then art thou of my own nature; bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. Oh! thou Plant of renown! in thy person, work, righteousness, in the whole of thy redemption, thou art the Lord our God; thou, even thou, hast wrought out salvation for us, and salvation in us: surely, blessed Jesus, thou art all thy people need, and all they can enjoy, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity! Oh! for a portion of that Spirit which rested upon thee, and which thou impartest to thy people, *according to the measure of the gift of Christ!* For this will induce all those blessed effects of thy gracious gospel, when the corrupt passions of men shall be brought under the sweet influences of grace, and nothing shall then hurt or destroy, in all thine holy mountain! Blessed Lord! hasten thy glorious purposes concerning thy kingdom! Oh! when shall the hour dawn upon a sinful, dark, and degenerate world, when the Lord will set his hand the second time, to recover the remnant of his people? When will the time come, that men shall break their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks? Hasten, blessed Lord, the triumphs of thy kingdom! Cut short thy work in righteousness, thou that art mighty to save: and let that precious promise be fulfilled, when Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land. Oh! Lord of hosts, bless, as thou hast said, saying; *Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of mine hands, and Israel, mine inheritance!*

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

A gospel song of the triumphs of Christ, and the Church's triumphs in him: suited for all ages, for the whole of Christ's body, in one collected mass, and for each individual.

AND in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

Reader! do not forget, that the day uniformly spoken of is the gospel day; the day of Jesus, and his salvation. And therefore, in every heart made blessed in that day by regeneration, a view of past sin, deserving God's just anger, and a conscious sense of redemption by the Lord Jesus, puts a new song in the mouth, and holy joy in the heart. Such was the joy of *Zaccheus*, when Jesus declared to him, *This day is salvation come to this house!* Luke, xix. 9.

2 Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation.

Reader! take especial notice of what the hymn expresseth; namely, that the Lord God is the sinner's salvation. It is not enough to say, or sing, that the Lord hath brought us to salvation, but that he himself is our salvation; not that we have salvation *from* him, but salvation *in* him. He himself is the whole of it. Reader! observe the twofold name upon this occasion; Jah, and Jehovah. I do not presume to say as much, but may it not, with reverence, be asked, Is it not to intimate the whole persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as God, and Jesus Jehovah as Mediator? And how can any child of God who sings this song with the Spirit, and the understanding also, say otherwise, than *I will trust and not be afraid?* What can they have to fear, who have Jehovah in his threefold character of person for their salvation?

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

There is a great beauty in some of our old Bibles, which express this phrase of drawing water, as if it were out of *the wells of the Saviour*. Every thing of grace is fetched by faith from Christ, and is in Christ. Ordinances are nothing without Jesus; and it is Christ himself, and not means of grace, however pure they are in themselves, that are the fountain and well of the soul. Hence the Church sings: *A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon is my beloved!* Song, iv. 15. Hence also, Jesus to the Samaritan woman, said, that the water he gave, should be in his people, *a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life!* John, iv. 14.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth.

Here the whole Church is supposed as engaged in this hymn of praise. In the former part, it was the song of one: *I will praise thee.* In this, it is, Praise *ye* the Lord. And they are not only praising Jehovah in songs of redemption themselves, but stirring up all others to the same devout and becoming exercises. Every thing forms motives

to praise Jehovah's glory in himself; Jehovah's glory in giving grace to his people; all, and every view of him, in the excellent things he hath done, demands the tribute of thanksgiving: and *this is known in all the earth!* Reader! think how wretched must that soul be, and how much the harp of melody in his own heart must be out of tune, that can find no cause in himself and his own experience to join the chorus!

6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

This is a beautiful close to this rapturous gospel song. And let the Reader observe that expression, which tells the cause for which such shoutings of holy joy are to go forth; because *great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of his people*. Not only great, and glorious, is Jehovah in *himself*; but great, and gracious also, in *them*. This is the blessed and additional cause of joy. And some have observed, and very properly too is the observation made, that as the word which is translated *inhabitant*, might have been rendered *inhabitress*; meaning the Church, and the females of Zion; here is a call upon both sexes, as well as all ranks and orders, to join in the chorus, as the Psalmist in one of the Hallelujah Psalms, expresseth it: *Let both young men and maidens; old men and children, let all praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is excellent; and his glory is above the earth and heaven.* Psalm, cxlviii. 12, 13.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! how art thou tuned in heart to sing this sweet song of the Church, and to join thy feeble note in the hymn of salvation, with all the Lord's redeemed ones? Surely none can be more conscious than thou art, that out of Christ, Jehovah's anger must for ever burn against the sin and rebellion of thy nature; and if the Lord's anger be turned away, and he comforteth thee; is not this in Jesus, and by Jesus, and for the alone sake of Jesus? And canst thou not, my soul, look up, and say with the Church, both above and below, *Behold, God is my salvation?* For is not Jesus the almighty deliverer, by his blood and righteousness, from sin and sorrow, to holiness and joy? Is it not his holy hand, and his glorious arm, that hath gotten himself the victory? Did not God the Father graciously devise it; and God the Son purchase it; and God the Holy Ghost make application of it to thy wants and circumstances? And conscious of thy personal interest in it, wilt thou not shout aloud, and say; *Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation!*

And wilt thou not then, my soul, continually be drawing water from the wells of salvation? Jesus himself is the well, even the well of living water, of which whosoever drinketh, shall live for ever. And he is an open well, a fountain not sealed to all his redeemed. Here life is found for quickening sinners, and for maintaining the life given to the languishing and dying frames of his saints. Lord! to these wells of salvation, even to thyself, blessed Jesus, would I pray for grace, daily,

hourly to come; that by the wells of thy word, and in ordinances, by the influence of thine Holy Spirit, my soul may be like a watered garden from day to day, whose waters fail not: that Jesus may keep alive the grace he hath given, revive it when decayed, refresh it when languishing, and preserve it and perfect it unto life eternal. Oh! for grace thus to come, and to call others to come, and that the fathers unto the children, may declare his truth. Hither, ye poor, thirsty, famishing sinners, hither come to Jesus, the well of salvation, and draw no longer from the pools of your own righteousness! In Jesus alone the thirst of the soul finds satisfaction; *and whosoever drinketh of him shall never thirst, but Jesus will be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.* Amen.

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

We have a prophecy concerning the destruction of Babylon; and the Lord, for the comfort of the Church, causeth his servant to make it known, and the powers by whom he would accomplish it, even the Medes and Persians.

THE burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

I pray the Reader to remark, with me, at the opening of this chapter, that from this part of the prophet's writings, a new subject seems to open: the prophet begins, what he calls *burdens*. Hence we have, in several successive chapters after this burden of *Babylon*, the burden of *Moab*, and the burden of *Damascus*, and the burden of *Egypt*, and the like. But the history of those nations is no farther entered into, than as they minister to the Church, either in persecuting the Church, or becoming instruments to her prosperity, according to the sovereign will and appointment of God. Although *none of them thought so; neither did their heart intend it*: yet to this little handful of people, this Church, this portion of the Lord Jesus, they all ministered; and every monarchy of the earth rose, or fell, as should bring about the Lord's purposes concerning Zion. I would beg the Reader to keep this in view while reading the history of men and nations; yea, even in modern times, as well as in the ages that are past, he will find, that for the salvation and preservation of God's Israel, all the nations of the earth are formed; and that they are moved about and directed to this one purpose only. Here the Lord begins with Babylon, in the threatened desolations which should overtake that nation. The things predicted were not to be accomplished for more than a hundred years; and during that time, the Lord's Israel was to go into captivity in Babylon, and seventy years were to be accomplished upon them. But in the mean time, the Lord will comfort his people with his promises. Reader! mark this! Is it not most blessed, and most gracious in the Lord, if, when at any time he is about to correct them for their transgressions, he pours in his consolations before? Do you know any thing of this kind in your own exercises?

2 Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.

3 I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, *even* them that rejoice in my highness.

4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, *even* the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

6 ¶ Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

7 Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt.

8 And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces *shall be* as flames.

9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

10 For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

In the figurative language of prophecy, the Lord describes the destruction of Babylon. The army that shall come against Babylon, the Lord calls his sanctified ones, and his mighty ones. By *sanctified*, we must not, as we are very apt to do, suppose is meant God's *holy* ones; but only such as the Lord hath set apart, and appointed to this service. The word *sanctified*, doth not always mean holy. The army by which, as the Lord's instruments, the Lord would destroy Babylon, were no more holy than the Babylon to be destroyed. Babylon was now, by the Lord's appointment, to take his people into captivity, and afflict them. But Babylon, after that is over, shall be accounted with, and be herself ruined. Hence therefore, the Lord sends by whom he will

send, and when he is pleased to correct his whole Church, or any one individual of that Church, the rod the Lord corrects with, shall, when he hath finished the correction, be thrown away. Reader! mark this observation for present times, as well as those that are past, for it will be found uniformly true. If the Reader will compare what is said in this chapter, with what the Lord hath said in another part of Isaiah's prophecy, he will find a beautiful and striking correspondence. See Isaiah, xlv. 1—4.

11 And I will punish the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

I know that I am singular in my views of this sweet portion, which comes in between what went before, and what follows after these verses: at least I have never seen the writings of any Commentator, who doth not apply these verses, as the former, to the subject of Babylon's destruction; as if from the greatness of the slaughter which would take place in the fall of Babylon, men would become so scarce, as that one only would be more precious than gold. But, with all humble submission, I would say, that I cannot help reading these two verses as in parentheses; as if in the midst of judgment, the Lord remembered mercy; and while speaking of the dreadful punishment which should take place for sin, the Lord pointed to his dear Son, as the one only source from whence a whole world of evil should find mercy. Surely, it is from Jesus alone, and by his gracious interposition, that the earth stands. And therefore, why may not the Lord be supposed to be saying by these verses; When I have punished, and am punishing the world, for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and have caused the arrogancy of the proud to cease; then shall my people look unto Him whom they have pierced, and mourn; and then shall the Man, Christ, *my fellow*, be more precious than fine gold: even this one identical Man, the Lord our righteousness, than the golden wedge of Ophir. Reader, remember, I do not presume to say that such is the interpretation of the passage: but if I err, may the Lord forgive my error: I confess that the very thought refresheth my soul. And the passage, seen in this point of view, in the midst of Babylon's burden, is not unlike some sweet herbage, or some cooling stream, found in the midst of the desert, where all around is a heath, or a dreary prospect.

13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

14 And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up; they shall every

man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.

15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined *unto them* shall fall by the sword.

16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and *as for* gold, they shall not delight in it.

18 *Their* bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

In these verses we have a continuation of the subject concerning the destruction of Babylon, with the effects to be wrought by it on all the people. And, what is very observable, so hardened against all impressions of mercy shall be the enemies of Babylon, that, contrary to the usage of armies, this army shall totally disregard plunder. They are not fighting for silver nor gold: they are the Lord's instruments of destruction; and as such, their minds are all instinctively directed to the accomplishment of this one purpose. Probably in answer to the prayers of his people, who cried to him under the oppression of Babylon. Let the Reader consult to this purpose those scriptures, and then judge: Lament. iv. 21, 22. Psalm cxxxvii. throughout.

19 ¶ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces: and her time *is* near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

I pray the Reader to read this prophecy very attentively, and mark well

the awful destruction threatened. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in a day; and Babylon in a night. In the same moment when Belshazzar was rioting, came his death. *Dan.* v. 30. The glory of Babylon is not only related by profane historians to have been the greatest of all monarchies; but sacred scripture makes mention of it as such. *Thou saidst* (saith the Lord) *I shall be a lady for ever; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come upon thee in a moment, in one day; the loss of children, and widowhood.* See Isaiah, *xlvi.* 5 to the end; and the accomplishment, *Dan.* v. 31. And what is yet, if possible, more remarkable in the fulfilment of this prophecy, is the astonishing overthrow. All conquerors, when they subjugate kingdoms, conquer them to possess them; and the more splendid they are, the more they delight in their conquests. But concerning Babylon, the Lord had said, *it should never be inhabited, nor dwell in from generation to generation; unless by doleful creatures, satyrs, and beasts of the desert; and this was literally fulfilled: for historians who have visited Babylon, all agree in one report, that the very spot where it stood, though in its splendour it covered over thirty miles in breadth; cannot now be ascertained. None indeed have ventured to explore the interior parts of it, on account of the beasts of prey, and serpents which dwell in it. There is one thought more, which this prophecy, connected with its accomplishment, furnisheth; and that is the view which the gospel hath taken of it, when speaking of it as a type of the utter destruction of Babylon under the New Testament dispensation. If the Reader will consult *Rev.* xvii. and xviii. and compare them with this prophecy, and the passage already referred to, Isaiah, *xlvi.* 5 to the end, he will find abundant matter to furnish him with subjects of the most improving nature.—I only add, as a finishing comment on the whole, when the Reader hath made his own observations upon these solemn scriptures, looking up to God the Holy Ghost for instructions to improve the whole to the divine glory, and his own happiness, I beg of him to look into the human heart, yea, into his own, and see whether, by the fall of man, there is not a similar ruin induced, so that the heart which was once the temple of the living God, is now become the habitation of corrupt passions, like dragons and beasts of prey! Oh! the state, the fallen state of fallen man!*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we have been now attending to the inspired penman's account of the burden of Babylon. And we who live in gospel days, have lived to see the accomplishment of God's denunciation against that devoted kingdom. Here let us ponder well the solemn subject; for it is a very solemn one. Think not, Reader, that the subject is remote, and the history one in which you and I have no concern. Indeed, indeed we have the highest concern. For as Babylon became the den of dragons, which was once the glory of kingdoms, and the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency; so our corrupt and fallen nature, is become the habitation of every unclean and corrupt affection, which was once beautiful and lovely. And unless this nature be changed by sovereign grace, and the heart, which is now like a cage of unclean birds

and beasts of prey, be made once more the habitation of God through the Spirit; how shall we ever see the face of God in glory, or be recovered to our original happiness?

Precious Jesus! how doth every view of our nature, and the miseries of it, tend to endear thee to the heart, and to bring home the vast, the infinite importance of thy salvation? Oh! thou purifier of our lost nature! Oh! thou almighty Jesus! thou canst cleanse, and thou wilt cleanse by thy blood, the souls and bodies of thy people! Yes! blessed Jesus, in thee, and by thee, they shall be restored, yea, more than restored, to their original purity and holiness. Thou wilt drive out the strong man armed, and subdue all our sins, under thee. Yea, *the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.* Hail, thou glorious restorer of all our waste places! Hail, thou blessed Emmanuel, who hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Ere long thou wilt take home thy Church to thine eternal kingdom, and present it to thyself, *a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it shall be holy and without blemish.* Amen.

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

This chapter is explanatory of the former. The Lord sheweth the causes of Babylon's ruin, to avenge the cause of his people, and to punish their enemies.

FOR the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

What a beautiful opening is here! And now while we are enabled to read the prophecies, unfolded and fulfilled in Christ, how is the whole explained to our clearest apprehension! Reader! though the final accomplishment of this prophecy refers to the restoration of the Jews, when all the Gentiles shall be gathered in, yet the Lord's mercy to his people, whom he foreknew, is all along carried on, from age to age, in the Church, and is uniformly spoken of as the one great object of his providence and grace!

2 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

3 ¶ And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow,

and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.

4 That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers.

6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, *and* none hindereth.

7 The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break forth into singing.

8 Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon

thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, *Is* this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

17 *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners?

18 All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.

19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and as* the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

22 For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

26 This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

I do not interrupt the reading through this long chain of the most wonderful events, because it forms one grand whole. The destruction which will ultimately fall upon the enemies of God and of his Christ, and the triumphs of the Church, are here set forth, under very strong and figurative expressions. I cannot improve upon them, by attempting to represent the truth in stronger language, than is here made use of; for nothing indeed can exceed it. But what I particularly beg the Reader, with me, to remark is, that what the Prophet had before said, is here completely fulfilled: *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him!* Isaiah, iii. 10, 11.

28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.

29 Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit *shall be* a fiery flying serpent.

30 And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, *art* dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none *shall be* alone in his appointed times.

The date of the prophecy is here faithfully set down, in order that, when accomplished, it may not be suspected to have been written after the things predicted had come to pass. The year that *Ahaz* died. The same year that *Uzziah* died, Isaiah had that glorious vision, chap. vi. 1; and the death of *Ahaz* was remarkable also in this burden, concerning *Babylon*. Isaiah forewarns *Palestina* not to rejoice at the death of the king, for others shall arise to punish.

32 What shall *one* then answer the messengers of the nation? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

This verse forms a blessed conclusion to the whole subject of *Babylon's* burden. It is as if the prophet had said, "Should any one of the nations around behold *Babylon's* fall, and *Israel's* emancipation, and return to their beloved *Jerusalem*, should any one ask, or send messengers to inquire into the cause, wherefore is this? the answer is 'di-

rect: It is the Lord's controversy, not man's: Zion is the Lord's, he hath founded her, and therefore he will defend her. And though Zion's enemies may for a while seem to triumph, and the transgressions of Zion may bring her into captivity; yet the Lord loveth Zion, and will bless her, and the poor of his people shall know this, and depend upon it." Zeph. iii. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

How truly blessed it is to observe, and know, that the Lord watcheth over all the concerns of his people! Though Babylon triumph for a while, and though the Lord suffer his people to go into captivity; yet they are still his people, and the Lord will not permit them to be oppressed for ever.

But what an awful scripture is this, for all the enemies of Christ and his people to read: *Hell from beneath is moved for all such, to meet them at their coming!* And what an aggravated load of woe is it, to think that they have been uniformly fighting against God and his people; so that their misery is abundantly aggravated, like the rich man's in the parable, when lifting up their eyes in torments, and not only seeing heaven afar off, but they whom in this life they most hated made most completely happy!

My soul! see to it, that thou art a citizen of Zion, and not of Babylon! This is the Church, the City, the royal, the holy City, which the Lord hath founded. Oh! for grace to be found a citizen of Zion, when the Lord writeth up the people. Better to be a doorkeeper of the gates of Zion, than a dweller in the tents of ungodliness. Lord, it is thou that hast founded Zion in Jesus; and in Jesus may my soul be found in Zion.

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

The prophet here enters upon the subject of Moab's history: and a woeful account it is. Not a word of comfort through the whole.

THE burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence;

2 He is gone to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads *shall be* baldness, and every beard cut off.

3 In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly.

4 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealah: their voice shall be heard *even* unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.

Here is a sad account of Moab! And in order to enter into a full apprehension of the history, we must consult the scripture account concerning this people. If we look back to the original settlement of Israel, we shall find that this was a nation descended from Lot, Gen. xiii. 10, 11; and the very Moab which, by Balak, called an idolatrous enchanter, even Balaam, to curse the people of God, see Numbers, xxii. and xxiii. Israel had many times power to destroy them, but did not; yet Moab perpetually harassed Israel. In all ages, the people of God suffer persecution. The Reader will see more of their history, by consulting those scriptures, chap. xvi. 14. Jerem. xxviii. 1. Ezekiel, xxv. 8. Here the Lord describes the day of Moab's visitation, and the effects of it.

5 My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitive *shall flee* unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

I pause over this verse to remark, and admire, the tender mercies of the Prophet. Though an enemy, yet the Prophet weeps over Moab. Alas! who that is born of a woman, but must feel for the miseries induced by sin in our common nature? Methinks here is a loud appeal to the ministers of Jesus, to have very feeling hearts over the miseriee coming upon sinners: How did the bowels of Jesus yearn over the approaching desolations of Jerusalem? Luke, xiii. 34, 35.

6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate. for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.

7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows.

8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.

9 For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

Every thing contained in these verses is like the Prophet's roll, written within, and without, and full of nothing else but *lamentation, and mourning, and woe*. Alas! what an awful thing must it be, to be full

of this world's sorrow, and without the knowledge of, and an interest in Christ to soften it!

REFLECTIONS.

READER, in the history of Moab, behold the history of every man by nature, exposed to the just judgment of God, the curse of his broken law, and all the terrors, which will one day fall upon the wicked! their hatred to God and his Christ, is manifested by their hatred to his people; neither can the malignity be taken out or purged by whole burnt sacrifices. From generation to generation, their anger burns with implacable hatred, neither can any thing soften it. And as nothing tends to lessen or remove it, so the causes everlastingly must exist, to increase it more and more! Oh! the awful state of the enemies of God and his Christ!

Reader! can we look back to the days of our dwelling with the Moabs of this world? Can we remember our return, like *Ruth* and *Naomi*, from the country of Moab to the land of Bethlehem, even the house of bread, in Jesus, who is himself the bread of life. Oh! the blessedness of such a recovery! Precious Lord Jesus! give us grace to praise thee: for nothing but thy power, in the sweet influences of thy Holy Spirit, could persuade *Japheth* to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, or constrain our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for *Jesus Christ*. Blessed Lord! since thou hast called us by thy grace, and brought our souls to be savingly acquainted with thy love, oh! help us to live to thy glory, and to cease from all the Moabs, who are the enemies of thy cross, and to come out from among them, and to be separated, and touch not the unclean thing; so wilt thou receive us, and be a *Father unto us, and we shall be the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty*.

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

This chapter is a continuation of the burden of Moab. The prophet calls upon Moab, in her distresses, to be looking unto Him, who alone could save her, that should sit upon the throne of David, which is Christ; and in the neglect of this predicts her total ruin.

SEND ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

2 For it shall be, *that*, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

3 Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth

It appears, that in the days of David, Moab was under tribute to Israel, and paid gifts: 2 Sam. viii. 2. And it should seem, that Moab had at the time of the Prophet's ministry, withdrawn her allegiance. Hence the Prophet admonisheth Moab to revive this payment. And as in the days of *Mesha*, king of Moab, this tribute was paid in lambs, the Prophet recommends Moab to do so now; 2 Kings, iii. 4. But is there not a spiritual lesson, of a much higher nature, intended by the Prophet's direction to Moab? Israel was about to go into captivity, and Moab was under the heavy displeasure of the Lord: Now, saith the prophet to Moab, offer up the lamb for an offering in sacrifice, with an eye to Christ. Seek pardon and peace through his blood; and in token of your sense of sin before God, be kind and affectionate to the Lord's people; hide the outcasts of the Lord's heritage, and look unto mount Zion: otherwise, Moab will be utterly spoiled, and scattered, and driven away, as a wandering bird.

4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

5 And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

These are beautiful verses, and full of gospel. The Lord recommends Moab to give shelter to Israel. They are outcasts, but still they are the Lord's. *Is this Zion* (said the nations, in Jerusalem's mourning) *is this Zion, whom men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?* Lam. ii. 15. Now Moab is advised to take the Lord's outcasts in, and give them welcome in the day of their calamity. And the motives for doing so are added: *In mercy shall the throne be established:* that is, Jesus, the seed of David, will erect his throne in mercy, and the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, shall partake of the blessings which will issue from his throne. Therefore seek the favour of this almighty King, by being kind to the King's people. Reader! the same advice holds good in all ages, and among all nations. And who shall say, if the Lord inclines the heart of sinners to be kind to the Lord's distressed saints, might it not encourage an hope, that he who gives the grace of love to his people, will give the grace of faith and repentance towards himself?

6 ¶ We have heard of the pride of Moab; *he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath; but his lies shall not be so.*

7 Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every

one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely *they are* stricken.

8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, *and* the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come *even* unto Jazer, they wandered *through* the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.

9 Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.

10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in *their* presses; I have made *their vintage* shouting to cease.

11 Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.

12 And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

If the Reader looks closely to what is here said concerning Moab, he will find it a suited representation of all the pride and ostentation of all the flourishing nations of the earth. The pride of Moab consisted in her wines and luxuries; her strong holds, and noble cities. And what is it now, even in the present hour, among all carnal men and nations? What is said of *Calnah*, and *Hamath*, and *Gath*, may be said of kingdoms and of individuals; *they lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches; they eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph!* They know not the Lord's Christ. Take away their carnal rejoicings, and they have nothing left to rejoice in. Amos, vi. 2—7.

13 This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

14 But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and

the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant *shall be very small and feeble.*

Here is the close of the history of Moab, and an awful history it is. The Lord's purpose, and the time of executing his purpose, are both determined: so hath it been in all ages, and so it is, and must be accomplished. What a solemn, but beautiful observation the apostle Peter makes upon this subject, in the close of one of his Epistles: he had been observing, with much pain of mind, how profane scoffers held in contempt the Lord's threatenings of sinners, and closeth up the observation with a word of consolation to the Lord's people: *Beloved (saith he) be not ignorant of this one thing that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* And then the apostle adds a most striking scripture, and an earnest exhortation from it, to which I pray the Reader to refer, 2 Peter, iii. 10—14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! pause over this chapter, in the solemn contents of it, and then gather into one collected view, the history of Moab, in the scripture account of it, from beginning to end; and behold what a miserable life, the life of carnal men of every description and character is, in whatever point of view they are regarded. Moab is but a picture of men and things out of Christ, throughout the earth. The situation of Moab was indeed most lovely, in those rich plains of Jordan, by Jericho. But what are grapes and vineyards, or the fertility and riches of a kingdom, where the inhabitants know not the Lord? What is the whole Turkish empire, in all the luxuries the imagination can conceive, while under the curse of God in Mahometan darkness? Oh, Reader! think of the vast and immense privileges of the blessed gospel of the ever blessed God! It is not *for the precious things brought forth by the sun, neither for the precious things put forth by the moon; but the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush!* When once the soul is truly awakened to a sense of sin, and the apprehension of the wrath to come; when the short and perishing state of things around is properly seen, and as rightly valued; then nothing short of Christ can bring comfort and content to the heart. Reader! let us learn wisdom from the history and destruction of Moab, and send to Him, who is the ruler of our sinful land, our tribute, and seek in his sacrifice, pardon and forgiveness. Let us not only send to him, but come to him, the true Lamb of God, *which taketh away the sins of the world.* He is upon the throne of David, *judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.* Yea, he is the Lamb in the midst of the throne; and that throne is a throne of grace, as well as glory. He will hear, and answer prayer, for he is still the meek and lowly Saviour, who hath said, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* Oh! for grace to come boldly unto his throne, *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in all time of need!*

C H A P. XVII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter opens with the burden of Damascus; but there is much concerning Israel in it also. Damascus is threatened with destruction. The Lord's promises concerning Israel, some sweet views of gospel times are here and there introduced.

THE burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from *being* a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

2 The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make *them* afraid.

3 The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria; they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

Damascus was the chief city of Syria; and in how many instances the Assyrians distressed the Church of God, the Old Testament history hath largely recorded. It is most instructive to observe, as we prosecute the annals of the Church, how the Lord raiseth up one nation, and putteth down another, as those nations are made instrumental to humble or to raise Israel's glory. In the mean time, the Lord preserveth the Church, as his handful of people, in the midst of all, through the earth. Rise or fall who may among the nations, yet Jacob, the Lord's portion, continueth the same. Micah, v. 5—9.

4 And in that day it shall come to pass, *that* the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

5 And it shall be as when the harvest-man gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

There was a time, even in the days of Solomon, when the nation of Israel was great and flourishing; but now, *how is the fine gold become dim!* Reader, look at this scripture in a spiritual sense, and observe how the glory is departed! But blessed be God, there is yet *a remnant according to the election of grace*; Rom. xi. 5.

6 ¶ Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two *or* three berries in the top of the uttermost bough, four *or* five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the LORD God of Israel.

7 At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

8 And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect *that* which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images.

I follow the same order as our Bibles, in including these verses, as they are there done, in parentheses; for it seems to me to be so designed, as if to call upon the Reader to observe how the Lord, in the midst of Israel's judgment, remembers mercy; and in times of desolation, so remote from the coming of Christ, still throws in this sweet scripture, to remind the Church of the gospel days yet to come. Reader! determine for yourself (for I will not determine for you) and may God the Holy Ghost guide and instruct you in the determination; but is it not with reference to Jesus, that the Prophet was here commissioned to tell the Church, that at that day a man should look to his Maker, and his eyes have respect to the Holy One of Israel? What day could the Prophet mean, but the gospel day? And what direction should the eye of faith have, but to the Lord Jesus Christ? Isaiah, xlii. 1, and xlv. 22.

9 ¶ In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.

10 Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shall set it with strange slips:

11 In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: *but* the harvest *shall be* a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

12 Woe to the multitude of many people, *which* make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, *that* make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!

13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but *God* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee afar off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

14 And behold at eveningtide trouble; *and* be-
the morning he *is* not. This *is* the portion of
them that spoil us, and the lot of them that
rob us.

I include the whole under one view, and, besides the general observa-
tion to be made upon them as a prophecy, fully accomplished, in af-
ter ages, I pray the Reader to make his spiritual reflections upon what is
here said, and I venture to believe that he will find a large scope for the
most improving application. If the Lord's Israel do forsake the Lord,
the Rock of their salvation, the sure consequence is chastisement and dis-
appointment. The Lord withers their gourds, and a worm will grow out
of the root of their most pleasant plants. At evening tide they find trou-
ble, and before the morning their comforts are gone. There is nothing
for the soul to rest upon, or find joy in, but Jesus; and if we do not
make him our chief happiness, it matters not what else we place it in;
for all will deceive, and prove a delusion. Precious Lord! how doth
every part of thy blessed word manifest the infinite importance of
thyself, and thy great salvation!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! mark the burden of Damascus; and behold, in the his-
tory of that people, the final end of all the enemies of God, and of his
Christ. Of what avail was the splendour of this kingdom, or the power
of her armies? Though the haughty Syrian exclaimed, in the vanity of
his heart, *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than
all the waters in Israel?* yet, like the waters of the Dead Sea, every
thing around them, and in them, and what was brought forth from their
watering, produced nothing but death. Without God, without Christ,
no ordinances of grace, no word of salvation, no blood of sprinkling!
Alas, when the evil day cometh, and the prosperous days of carnal de-
lights are once over, all is over!

Precious Redeemer! let mine eyes be unto thee, and let my soul
have respect unto the Holy One of Israel! Surely nothing can truly
sweeten even the sweets of this life, that they shall have no bitterness
mingled up with them, except thou art in them; and the very thoughts
of an hereafter (until a conscious interest in thee, and in thy salva-
tion, makes that hereafter truly blessed) will be for ever full of horrors
to the thinking mind. Be thou, therefore, precious Jesus, the all of this
life, and of that which is to come. In thee, and from thee, let all
my springs flow; for then, and then only, *will my meditation of thee be
sweet.*

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

*This Chapter, like the former, is full of threatenings to the people
to whom it refers, on account of their ill-will to Israel. It is but short,
but it contains heavy tidings.*

WOE to the land shadowing with wings,
which *is* beyond the rivers of Ethiopia :

Though the name of the nation against whom woe is here denounced, is not mentioned; yet, by being said to be beyond the rivers of *Ethiopia*, it is easy to discover, that it is a nation which had proved perfidious to Israel. The Lord taketh up, and avengeth the quarrel of his people: *Whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye*; Zechariah, ii. 8.

2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, *saying*, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled.

Here is the threat of this enemy. Taking advantage of Israel's humblings, he cometh on when Israel is cast down. Let the Reader spiritualize the passage to himself and his own circumstances, and he will find it profitable. If the world, or the great enemy of souls, come on to distress the souls of God's people, when the Lord is chastening them; the Lord seeth, and will avenge their quarrel. Though the Lord correct, yet they shall not; and though he brings down, he will bring up, and they shall not hinder. It is blessed to see this, and to know it! What a very sweet scripture, in a way of expostulation, is that in the prophecy of *Obadiah* against *Edom*, on this very account. I pray the Reader to look at it: *Obadiah*, verse 8 to the end.

3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountain; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, *and* like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away *and* cut down the branches.

6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

Here the Lord soundeth an alarm to all the enemies of his Church; and they are admonished to attend to the sound of the trumpet, that

then the Lord goeth forth for the salvation of his people, *even for salvation with his Anointed*. Every eye shall see, and all faces shall gather blackness, when the Lord turneth back the captivity of his people. And observe how striking is the prophet's expression: *for so the Lord said unto me*. Christ is the rest, in which Jehovah resteth, and is well pleased: and therefore in him, and his great salvation, Israel's deliverance and security is found. And hence, when the Lord sware in his wrath, that the unbelievers should not enter into his rest, it referred to their rejection of Christ; Heb. iv. 1, to the end.

7 ¶ In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

I do not presume to say as much, but I am inclined to think, that what is said in this verse, is meant to shadow forth the glorious revenue of everlasting praise, which poor sinners, of every description and character, shall offer, when brought to the Lord, in a way of grace and salvation. They are here spoken of as scattered and peeled. And who more so than souls brought under conviction, until brought into a state of salvation in Jesus? And as the subject of woe in this chapter is to the land beyond the rivers of *Ethiopia*, why may we not suppose the song of praise, and the present brought unto the Lord, may be from the same land concerning whom the Psalmist says, *she shall soon stretch out her hands unto God?* Psalm, lxxviii. 31. It is blessed to trace the most distant shades of whatever refers to the glorious salvation by Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

WHEN we consider the extensive nature of sin, and behold the universal reign of it in every nation, over every clime, and among all people; how full of relief is the thought that His empire, by whom sin is destroyed, is said as finally and fully to be *from sea even to sea; and from the river even to the ends of the earth!* And what but God's grace can overcome and subdue man's corruptions by nature! What shall stop the hatred of the heart against the love of God, but God's love in subduing that enmity? If, therefore, we behold *the land shadowing with wings beyond the river*, coming forth with wrath against the Lord's people; and if we behold the Lord going forth with whirlwinds of the south, to blow the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, why should it be thought incredible that the weapons of sin should fall from the hands of the mighty, and the proud heart be brought to bend to the sceptre of divine grace?

Reader, mark what the Lord said unto the prophet, and let our souls seek to our rest as the Lord did unto his. Precious Lord Jesus, thou art *the rest wherewith the Lord will cause the weary to rest, and thou*

art the refreshing. Here may we behold souls fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows! Here may the kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. Yea, blessed Jesus, here may all kings fall down before thee, and all nations do thee service! Amen.

CHAP. XIX.

CONTENTS.

In this chapter, Egypt, the original and sworn foe to Israel, comes in for her judgment. Great misery and distress are threatened to Egypt. The close of the chapter contains great mercy, which is promised to Egypt in calling the inhabitants to Christ.

THE burden of Egypt, Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

2 And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, *and* kingdom against kingdom.

3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

4 And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts.

5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

6 And they shall turn the rivers far away; *and* the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

7 The paper-reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.

8 The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and

they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.

9 Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded.

10 And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices *and* ponds for fish.

Here is the same subject of national distress for the burden of Egypt, as that of Damascus or Moab, though the end differs: foreign wars, and domestic jealousies are predicted: so that every man's hand is to be against his brother. As a nation and people, Egypt is described as most calamitous. Famine, and the want of bread; and fish, which their rivers supplied in plenty, were to fail by the Lord's drying up the waters. In short, a general desolation was to take place, in the burden of Egypt. If we spiritualize the history, it may be said, and said with truth, that there is a very Egypt, and the burden of Egypt falls in upon the soul, whenever the Lord remits the out-pouring of his Holy Spirit. Reader, do you not find, in the risings of sin within, and the remains of indwelling corruption in the soul, that, like the Egyptian darkness, even a deadness and a darkness which may be felt is induced, and a burden indeed, of an intolerable nature, comes over the mind? And in such seasons, doth not the very spirit fail, and every thing seems to be, for the time, in respect of grace, lost? And how often is the poor heart tempted to cry out, *My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord?* Lament. iii. 18.

11 ¶ Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish; how say ye unto Pharaoh, *I am* the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

12 Where *are* they: where *are* thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

13 The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, *even they that are* the stay of the tribes thereof.

14 The LORD hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken *man* staggereth in his vomit.

15 Neither shall there be *any* work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

16 In that day shall Egypt be like unto wo-

men : and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it.

17 And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

In these verses the subject of lamentation is carried on, under various descriptions, and all corresponding to denote the burden of Egypt. Their senators and wise men became unable to guide the helm of public affairs. Egypt was remarkable for learning ; for Moses, we are told, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. But now the whole nation is sunk into ignorance. And the cause is from the Lord; for it is said that the Lord had mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof. And so great was the dread of the Lord and his people upon the minds of the Egyptians, that every one that made mention only thereof became a terror to himself. Reader, improve the subject spiritually, and it will indeed be very profitable. Is not this account of Egypt similar to what the mind of man feels under the awakenings of a sense of sin, and a dread of divine wrath in consequence thereof? Are not the humblings of the mind under fear and apprehension of a judgment to come, infinitely greater than those which arise from the dread of temporal evils? And when the Lord convinceth of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, will not the soul be more convulsed, than with any other terror? John, xvi. 8.

18 ¶ In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction.

19 In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

I beseech the Reader to remark every word in these verses. Let him observe how the sweet promises contained in them open. *In that day*, namely, the gospel day; the day of Christ, which *Abraham*, ages back, but now so much nearer, *saw afar off, rejoiced and was glad*. And how blessed is the promise to Egypt in this day. Egypt, had been miserably spoken of before, but now in mercies. So is it in all the transitions from nature to grace. The language of Canaan is the language of the gos-

pel; so that Egypt, shall partake with Israel in the mercies of redemption, and shall speak the same language. And observe, that this is to be not in one or two instances, but by towns and cities; yea, five at once, as if to intimate that day of gospel grace, when the Holy Ghost shall be poured out upon all flesh, agreeably to the promise, Joel, ii. 28—32; Acts, ii. 17—21. Neither is this all: for an altar to the Lord shall be set up in Egypt. Christ is the New Testament Altar, and the Egyptians, like Israel, shall present all their offerings upon Him, and in Him, and by Him: neither doth the blessing of gospel grace stop here; for when the poor sinner, under convictions of sin, and the oppressions of the enemy, is constrained to cry out unto the Lord, the Lord will send a Saviour, and a great one, and he will deliver him from all his burden, and from all his sins. Pray, Reader, pause over this precious scripture, for it is indeed most precious; and say, to whom but to Jesus the almighty Saviour of lost sinners, can this refer? Indeed was not his name called JESUS by the angel, for this express reason, because he should save his people from their sins? Matthew, i. 21.

21 And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it.

Pause again, Reader, over this lovely verse, for it is a continuance of the same doctrine. The blessed and auspicious effect of a Saviour, and a great one, being sent to the cry of the Egyptians, shall be followed up with another vast privilege; the Lord Jehovah shall be known to Egypt, in his covenant character and relationship, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord. A good understanding shall take place between them: and whereas, in times past, the knowledge of the Lord was only in Israel; now *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea*. Surely there never was a more blessed gospel, nor a more blessed promise! And when fulfilled, in bringing sinners from afar, to the knowledge and love of God in Christ; what a blessed accomplishment is there of these scripture prophecies! Isaiah, liv. 13.

22 And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

Still prosecuting the same blessed theme, here is another gospel mercy. The Lord will convince, and convert; the Lord will wound, and heal. The Holy Ghost will make his word as a fire and as a hammer, to melt and break the stout heart of the sinner, *by the Spirit of judgment, and the Spirit of burning!* And he that brings under the rod, will bring into the covenant, and shew himself to be both *the Spirit of truth, and the Holy Ghost the comforter!* Jeremiah, xxiii. 29. Isaiah, iv. 4. Ezek. xx. 37. John, xiv. 16, 17.

23 ¶ In that day there shall be a highway out

of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, *even* a blessing in the midst of the land:

25 Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed *be* Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

What a blessed close doth the prophet make of this sweet sermon of prophecy, in the end of the chapter! The gospel church is said to be an *highway* for the people; and so it is, when the Lord lifts up his standard through the earth. The enclosure of Israel, that had been kept for ages, is then thrown down; and both *Jew and Gentile one brought into one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, the righteous*. Oh! the felicity, when Christ shall be universally acknowledged, as the Lord Jehovah's Christ; the one, the only ordinance of heaven for salvation to all the earth! Lord, I would say (and the Reader will surely join my soul in the prayer of faith), hasten thy blessed purposes, and let that sweet promise to our *Shiloh* be accomplished, when *he shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; when men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed*. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter, and gather up the several interesting contents of it into one view: pray over it, and beg of God the Holy Ghost to make it truly blessed to thy meditation.

In the afflictions of Egypt, behold the sure afflictions which arise out of a fallen sinful state. Burdens, like those the Egyptians felt and groaned under, must and will make every sinner groan, when once the heart is broken for sin, and truly brought acquainted with the miseries of it. But when, from under the galling load of a guilty conscience, the poor sinner cries unto the Lord, because of the oppressors; then the Lord sends them a *Saviour, and a great one*, and he delivers them. Yea, before they called, before they felt their misery, before the evil of sin was known in the earth, God the Father hath sent Jesus his dear and ever blessed Son; a Saviour, indeed, and a great One, mighty to save, to save his people from their sins.

Reader! what saith your experience to these things? The day is come; the highway is cast up; the gospel door is open, when Egypt and the multitude of the isles are called to join the true Israel of God, in the salvation of the Lord Jesus. Oh! for that rich blessing of God in Christ here recorded, to be every day fulfilled, that Jehovah the Lord of Hosts may bless with all spiritual blessings in Christ, *Egypt, his people, and Assyria—the work of his hands, and Israel his inheritance*. Amen.

CHAP. XX.

CONTENTS.

In this chapter, the prophet becomes a type, as well as a preacher. The Lord is pleased to make his servant Isaiah, by this means, instruct the church, concerning Egypt and Æthiopia.

IN the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it;

2 At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

It is probable that this event of *Tartar's* taking *Ashdod*, formed an epoch in history, so remarkable, that the year needed not to be recorded. And no doubt that the prophet's going about bare-foot, and without his garment of sackcloth, which he usually wore, made the time also memorable. Isaiah, it should seem, while he wore sackcloth, thus preached, by the poverty and mournfulness of his apparel, as well as by his words. But the Lord, his master, will have him now proclaim his truths by type, as well as by preaching. Happy are those servants of the Lord in all ages, whose lives and discourses both tend to glorify God in Christ.

3 And the LORD said, like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years *for* a sign and wonder upon Egypt, and upon Æthiopia;

4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with *their* buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

5 And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Æthiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

6 And the inhabitant of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such *is* our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

It was gracious in the Lord, to explain the meaning of this typical representation, that no misapplication might be made of it. And while the lesson tended to humble both nations, Egypt and Æthiopia, as the Lord designed it; the Lord's mercy to his people Israel, was the more

signally displayed. Surely Israel might learn therefrom, how unsuitable an arm of flesh must be to support them, when a whole nation was thus led into captivity itself. Reader! the same lesson is in force even now; where shall we look for aid in the hour of necessity, but to the Lord our righteousness? *Truly in vain, saith the prophet, is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel; Jerem. iii. 23.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! art thou struck with the view of the Prophet becoming a type, as well as a preacher and a prophet in the church of the Lord; and no doubt in the three years walk through the streets of the people, made thereby the drunkard's song, and the sport and derision of the profane; and will it not lead thee to contemplate Him in his unequalled humbleness and meekness of deportment, who, though Lord of life and glory, went about the streets of Jerusalem, in the garb of a poor Jew, *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?* Precious Jesus! how do all thy servants sink to nothing, compared to thee; pre-eminent in humility, as pre-eminent in nature, in office, and in character! Thou wert indeed the sum and substance of every type; and the one great end and purpose of both sacrifice, prophecy, and ordinance. With what unwearied zeal for thy Father's honour, and with unabating love to thy church's salvation, didst thou endure *such a contradiction of sinners against thyself!* And how didst thou, when reviled, *revile not again, but committed thyself to him who judgeth rightly!* Lamb of God! keep the eyes of thy redeemed stedfastly fixed on thee; and in every exercise of life, may thy servants hear the sweet voice of consolation, arising out of thy bright example, made perfect through suffering: *Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, where-with the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

CHAP. XXI.

CONTENTS.

Here are several burdens brought into one chapter in succession to each other: the burden of the Desert of the Sea; of Dumah, and of Arabia: but all in relation to God's covenant people Israel.

THE burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

2 A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

The *Desert of the Sea* can mean no other than *Babylon*; and the ruin of it is foretold by way of comforting God's people in their cap-

tivity. It is blessed to observe, how beforehand the Lord is for his people, in laying in comforts again a time of tribulation; Elam and Media, that is, Persia and the Medes, were to conquer Babylon; and therefore, when the church in her captivity found that the Medians were come to besiege Babylon, the recollection of this prophecy might give them comfort: for in the ruin of Babylon, would be their deliverance. Daniel, v. 31.

3 Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing *of it*: I was dismayed at the seeing *of it*.

4 My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

5 Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, *and* anoint the shield.

Here the Prophet describes as it should seem, the terrible consternation and alarm, the impious monarch of Babylon would be thrown into, in the memorable night of his destruction. Let the Reader compare what is here said with Dan. v. 1—6, and 30. And how often in modern times, hath the last hours of notorious sinners been followed with similar alarms in their guilty consciences!

6 For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

7 And he saw a chariot *with* a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, *and* a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed:

8 And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the day time, and I am set in my ward whole nights:

9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

Here by vision, a sketch of that memorable event is given to the Prophet. Though at a distance of time and place so remote; yet the outline of the horrors of Babylon is given to the Prophet, to be-

hold in vision: Chariots and horsemen; the cry of a lion, and a voice proclaiming, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods broken to the ground!* These were strong prophetic intimations of the vast ruin and overthrow, which should take place. And the Prophet's seal to the vision is striking, in that he saith, that what he had delivered, was from the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel. Reader! do not overlook, that as this event, here foretold, was exactly fulfilled; so there is a far greater blessing the church is now taught to look for in gospel times, and from existing circumstances, we hope it is not greatly remote, in which *Babylon, the mother of harlots, shall fall to rise no more!* Rev. xvii. 5. xviii. 1, 2.

11 ¶ The burden of Dumah, He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchmen, what of the night? Watchmen, what of the night?

12 The watchmen said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.

The burden of *Dumah* is short, but expressive; a watchman is questioned by a man of Mount *Seir*, a region possessed by the *Edomites*, the children of *Esau*, *What of the night?* he repeats the inquiry, and the watchman gives an answer; though no more is said, either of the cause or of the event, in the inquiry; yet it is a part of scripture, which, may be made abundantly profitable, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost. A man of *Seir* is a Gentile, a stranger, a foreigner: doth he ask questions concerning the God of Israel? let every faithful watchman be ready to make answer: tell him of the night of sin, and the night of death; tell him of Jesus *the hind of the morning!* Propose to him all those numberless things, of grace and salvation, which are in the person, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and see if he will inquire farther; for then surely the work is of the Lord, *who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working;* Isaiah, xxviii. 29.

13 ¶ The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.

14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.

15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.

16 For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Within a year, according to the year of an hireling; and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:

17 And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be

diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it.

The *Arabians* and *Dedanims* are here brought in for a portion of the calamities now hanging over the countries to be made desolate. It is probable, that the latter were the descendants of *Dedan*, a son of *Abraham*, whom *Keturah* bare him, Gen. xxv. 3. And as to *Kedar*, so often spoken of in the word of God, we are not at a loss to trace the origin to *Ishmael*. The church in her song, speaks of her corruptions by nature, under the figure of the blackness of *Kedar*; while rejoicing in her comeliness, from the comeliness put upon her, by her Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ; *Song*, i. 5. All these burdens carry with them the same divine signature, that they are not of the prophet's own mind, but come from the Lord; and are therefore sure and certain.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! while reading the burdens of others, do not overlook thine own: but if Jesus, that almighty burdenbearer, hath removed the guilt and dominion of sin from thee; while thou art praising his name for the unspeakable and unmerited deliverance, thou wilt still remember *the wormwood and the gall!*

Oh! how galling was the load of sin, and how full of horrors the apprehension of the awful consequences of it, before Jesus was revealed, *as taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself!* And now, Lord, how blessed is it to see that thou *hast borne our sins in thine own body on the tree, when thou didst die, the just for the unjust, to bring sinners unto God!* Hence, blessed Jesus, I would now bring thee all my sins, and all my sorrows; for thou hast said, *Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee!* I know, Lord, that thou wilt kindly and graciously support me, and bear me up under all; and I know, Lord, that through thy grace helping me, I shall be more than conqueror in and through all. Jesus will bear me up, and carry me on, and bring me through all that yet belongs to my pilgrimage here below, until he takes me home to his everlasting kingdom, to bear me in the arms of his love for ever.

CHAP. XXII.

CONTENTS.

The invasion of the land of Judæa, is here predicted, and sad events implicated in it: but towards the close, there are many precious promises, typical, as it should seem, of Judah's deliverer, even Christ.

THE burden of the valley of vision. What ail-
eth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up
to the house tops?

‡ Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city,

a joyous city: thy slain *men are* not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.

3 All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together *which* have fled from far.

The valley of vision, must mean Judæa, for the Psalmist describes it as such, Psalm cxxv. 2. And the holy city, Jerusalem, is called a *land of vision*, on account of the prophet's dwelling in it, and delivering their predictions there. And here, the Lord's land, which is the glory of all lands, comes in for her visitation also, because of transgression. The songs of the temple are changed for the cries of the streets; and the people are in distress, in the prospect of the enemy's approach. Reader! what is said here of God's people in general, may be said of every individual in particular: *when without are fightings, within will be fears*: correction is in the covenant. Psalm lxxxix.

4 Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

5 For *it is* a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

6 And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men *and* horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

7 And it shall come to pass, *that* thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

The Prophet, like a true servant of the Lord, though himself had the least hand in bringing down the judgments of God, yet he will be the first to lament them. Alas! when God's corrections are in our land, what would become of it, if the Lord's handful of people were not at prayer? What a gracious and earnest request was that of the king, when he sent to the prophet, to beg of him, *to lift up his voice, for the remnant that was left*; Isaiah, xxxvii. 1—4. Joel, ii. 17, 18. Here is a sad representation of the devastations made by the Persian army!

8 ¶ And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.

9 Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gather together the waters of the lower pool.

10 And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.

11 Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

Whatever were the histories in the siege of Judah, as this scripture records, I stay not to inquire; but I think, without violence to the expressions, by *the uncovering of Judah*, and *the breaches of the city of David*, we may very safely suppose, it had reference to somewhat more than the mere events themselves, carried on in the siege. May it not be in reference (for I humbly ask the question) to Judah's being made sensible of her hypocrisy and deceitfulness, with her God; by which a breach in the covenant is made, and the Lord now resents it? Judah had sinned, but yet put on a covering of piety; and in her distress, looked to the number of her troops, and the strength of her inhabitants; but lifted not her eyes for help to the Lord, her Maker. Then, saith the Lord, this covering shall be taken off, and she shall be seen as she is. See another beautiful expostulation to this effect, Jerem. ii. 19.

12 And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

13 And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts. Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts.

Reader! do not fail to remark, how the Lord, by the same process of grace, carries on his merciful designs towards his people, in all ages. He visits their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges. He sends trouble among them, and calls to weeping and prayer. But if, instead of spiritual humblings, they seek to deaden sorrow by carnal enjoyments, and bid defiance as it were to the rod; the affliction is but the more encreased. The Prophet interpreted the incurable wickedness of such, to be beyond the reach of all the sacrifices of the law. Reader! what a sweet testimony by the way do we discover here, of the vast and infinite importance of the blood and sacrifice of Christ! If the Reader wishes to enlarge his meditations on this subject, I would refer him to Levit. xxvi. 14, to the end. See also Hosea, ii. 6, to the end.

15 Thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Go,

get thee unto this treasurer, *even* unto Shebna, which *is* over the house, *and say*,

16 What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, *as* he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, *and* that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock.

17 Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

18 He will surely violently turn and toss thee *like* a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory *shall be* the shame of thy lord's house.

19 And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

The removal of *Shebna* from the office of treasurer, no doubt, took place in the history of Judah; perhaps in the event of the invasion. But the introduction of the subject here seems to have reference to what the Prophet had in commission to deliver concerning a greater than Shebna, in the close of the chapter. *Shebna*, therefore, is the representative of every man, who setteth up his rest on this side the land of promise; who takes confidence in any thing short of Jesus. Oh! for grace to make a better choice!

20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

23 And I will fasten him *as* a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

24 And they shall hang upon him all the

glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

25 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that *was* upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken *it*.

The Prophet gives, in these verses, a very pleasing account of the character of *Eliakim*, and of the Lord's approbation of him. I confess myself inclined to drop all considerations of the servant, to look at the master; for very certain it is, a greater than *Eliakim*, the son of *Hilkiah*, is here typically represented. I venture to set this down as a fixed and certain thing, because the Lord Jesus himself, when making himself known to his servant John, and sending him to communicate what he saw and heard to the churches, declared who he was by this very insignalia, of the key of David, Rev. iii. 7. And, Reader! do observe how the outlines of the Redeemer's office-character, are sketched in those of *Eliakim*. *I will call my servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah*. And who was it that called the Lord Jesus to the service of redemption, and placed him as lord-treasurer over his house? The Holy Ghost expressly tells the church, that *Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, but was called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. v. 4, 5. See Isaiah, xlii. 1—6. Matt. xvii. 5. And if *Eliakim* was invested with the robe, and the girdle, and all the government put into his hand, so as to be made a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the house of David; if *Eliakim* had power to open and shut; and shut, that none should open; if *Eliakim* was fastened as a nail in a sure place, and became a glorious throne to his father's house, so that all glory should rest upon him; can we refrain a moment, from having our very souls led, instinctively as it were, to all precious, all-glorious Jesus; whose robe of salvation is the everlasting clothing and glory of his redeemed; and whose girdle the faithfulness of the whole covenant, for his people to lay hold of, and hang by in time, and to all eternity? Who but Jesus hath indeed the key of the house of David? Who can open, if he shuts, or who can shut if he opens? *Eliakim* had but the doors of entrance or exclusion in the palace, or the church, to command; but our *Eliakim*, the Son of God, hath the key of all hearts, the key of his word, the keys of heaven, death, hell, and the grave. Precious consideration to the believer, and not to be parted with for a thousand worlds. He is a nail indeed, and in a sure place: for on him, Jehovah, our God and Father, hath fastened all the persons, mercies, appointments, blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal, of his church and people, from all eternity. And on the earthly *Eliakim* the whole was but hung; it was not his own, neither could he long keep it; for himself and all his appendages had but a day of duration. But with the *Eliakim* came down from heaven, all the glory which was put upon him, was his own before. For as the Son of God, being one with God, every thing which constitutes the Godhead

was his, essentially so, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost: and as God-man Mediator, all power and glory was and is his, both by purchase and by gift, and must be so for ever. Surely then, all his people, all his redeemed, will joyfully, and with the most lively acknowledgments of love and praise from the lowest vessel of mercy, to the highest flaggons of servants, who minister before him, hang upon Jesus all the trophies of redemption; crying out with the church, both above and below, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honour, and glory, and power, and majesty; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood!* Rev. v. 9. And as the chapter closeth, when in that day, the nail fastened in a sure place shall be removed, cut down, and fall; and the burden also upon it, fall together with it; oh! what blessedness is discoverable, in this sweet relation also. For who doth not see in this prophecy, all the great leading characters of redemption by Jesus? He who another prophet saith, was to be *anointed as the most Holy, and to be cut off, but not for himself, when finishing sin and transgression?* Dan. ix. 24, 25. Precious Lord Jesus! thou didst bear the sins of thy people in thine own body, on the tree; and when thou wert cut off, and hadst made *thy grave with the wicked, and with the rich in thy death*; then was that blessed promise to be fulfilled; *to see of the travail of thy soul, and be satisfied; and as thy Father's servant, to justify many in having borne their iniquities!* Isaiah, liii. 9—12.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! I pass over every lesser subject, and every lesser object, to fix mine eyes on thee, oh thou excelling excellence of all perfection! *The burden indeed of the valley of vision.* It is the Lord, who for thine own people, thine Israel and Judah after the flesh, hath brought thee forth, as the glorious Eliakim, over thy Father's house, and for the covering of Judah which was by sin uncovered, and for repairing the many many breaches of David, which transgression had opened; thou, and thou only, couldst be competent to perform! All our own attempts, and every aspiring exertion of man, were found but as the pride of *Shebna*. Nothing could restore what sin had taken away, until thou, the Lord of life and glory, came from heaven, to bring back the waste heritages, and to restore the desolations of many generations. Hail! thou glorious almighty Jesus. Blessed be God our Father, who hath called thee over his house, and committed all government into thine hand, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*

Help us, Lord, to hang all the stress of our salvation, both our being, and our well-being, wholly on thee. And do thou, Lord, for thou only hast the key of David to do it, open thy treasures of wisdom and knowledge to our raptured view, and open our souls to the enjoyment of them. Open thy word, and open our eyes to see it, and our hearts to enjoy it, our ears to hear, and our tongues to proclaim the wonders of redemption. And oh, Lord! shut out all thoughts that would arise, to rob us of our delight in thee, and our whole dependance upon thee. Let every faculty of our souls, by the almightiness of thy power, be resolutely shut against every thing but Jesus. Drive, Lord, every buyer and seller out of thy temple, which is our bodies;

and let nothing open our souls to receive ought but thee. Say to our hearts, to our affections, Open, ye gates, that the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, may come in, in the daily, hourly influences of his grace, until he finally and fully open the everlasting gates of heaven, to take us home, to the enjoyment of glory in Jesus for ever. Amen.

C H A P. XXIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet here describes the overthrow of Tyre, and in characters of great misery. Promises are made in the close of the chapter, of a change.

THE burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

2 Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.

3 And by great waters the seed of Sihon, the harvest of the river, *is* her revenue; and she is a mart of nations.

4 Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, *even* the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, *nor* bring up virgins.

5 As at the report concerning Egypt, *so* shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.

6 Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle.

7 *Is* this your joyous *city*, whose antiquity *is* of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

It is remarkable that this prophecy was delivered at a time when Tyre was in the height of prosperity, and resting to the full in the enjoyment of flourishing trade and merchandize. For long after this, the prophets *Ezekiel* and *Zechariah*, both of them, took notice of the pride and greatness of Tyre. Ezek. xxviii. 1 to the end. Zech. ix. 3, 4. But of what avail is the pomp of nations, where the love of God is not? Of what avail is worldly prosperity to individuals unsanctified by grace!

8 Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning *city*, whose merchants *are* princes,

whose traffickers *are* the honourable of the earth?

9 The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, *and* to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

There is hardly a passage in the whole prophecy of Isaiah, more full and comprehensive than what is contained in these verses, to set forth man's nothingness, and the Lord's all-sufficiency. The Prophet puts forth the subject in the form of a question; as if, speaking after the manner of men, nothing can be competent to overthrow a people, whose very merchants are princes. Yes, saith the Prophet, answering his own question; the Lord of Hosts, who razed *Tyre*, can and will destroy it. Reader, take home the precious instruction, from the history of nations in their rise and fall, to your own individual instance, in all the circumstances of life, and learn from it that solema truth of Jesus, in the interesting question he put, and which answers itself: *What is a man profited though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?* Mark, viii. 36. Luke, xii. 16—21.

10 Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: *there is* no more strength.

11 He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant *city*, to destroy the strong holds thereof.

12 And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.

13 Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, *till* the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof; *and* he brought it to ruin.

14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.

Here we are brought acquainted with the means the Lord will make use of, for the overthrow of *Tyre*. The *Chaldeans* shall be the Lord's instruments; and what adds to the aggravation of *Tyre's* sorrow, to humble her pride still more, is, that she shall be brought down by a power, which, like a mushroom that springs up in a night, was nothing in the days of *Tyre's* grandeur. The *Chaldeans* were not, until the *Assyrian* founded the nation: it was but a wilderness. Reader, it is distressing to the proud, both of empires and individual persons, to be brought low; but when the Lord makes use of contemptible instru-

ments to humble them; this is humbling indeed. And is it not so now? In the contentions of nations do we not see it? In the bringing down the lofty looks of a sinner, is it not done frequently by humbling providences, such as sickness, poverty, and the like? See a beautiful illustration, Jerem. xxxi. 18—20. And another, Luke, xv. 13—19.

15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

16 Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

17 ¶ And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

18 And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

It is worthy remark, that *Tyre's* captivity was appointed by the Lord, to be of the same length as Israel's, and under the same government. Was this designed, (I only ask the question, not determine) that the children of *Tyre*, by mingling with God's Israel in captivity, might become acquainted with Israel's GOD? Certain it is, that after *Tyre* began to recover from her ruin, and commenced trade again, there was a friendly intercourse between *Israel* and *Tyre*. In the days of *Nehemiah*, certain men of *Tyre* lived in *Judah*, for the holy man of God complained of their profaning the sabbath in selling their fish on the Lord's day, *Nehem.* xiii. 16. And it should seem, by what our Lord saith of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, that he had his eye upon it for good; *Matt.* xi. 21, 22. And in the after-age, when Christ had finished redemption, and was returned to glory, the apostles, in their general dispersion of preaching the gospel, found disciples in *Tyre*, *Acts.* xxi. 4. Reader, who shall say, but that for the conversion of the men of *Tyre*, in bringing the Lord's heritage that were among them to the knowledge of Jesus, the overthrow of *Tyre* was appointed? Who shall calculate to what extent in the present hour the Lord is accomplishing his purpose, in the commotions of the earth, among kingdoms and people, in order to gather his dispersed to himself, from all the varieties of the earth? Oh, what a subject of this kind will open in heaven, when the Lord shall have brought home his

whole Church! Then every tongue will break out in that voice of praise, in singing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!* Rev. xv. 3.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, how truly blessed is it to see, in the rise and fall of nations, that the Lord is carrying on his own gracious purposes; that all the events of nations, kingdoms, and empires, are but ministering to that little handful of people, whom *God hath formed for himself, and to shew forth his praise!* The mind is lost in amazement, when beholding the love, and care, and the watchings over of the Lord upon his Israel. It was said of them, as a distinguishing feature of character, that *they should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.* And uniformly through the Bible, we find this to be the case. In God the Father's purpose they thus have all along moved on. In Jesus' love, and grace, and favour, every thing is made to minister to them. And in the mercy, teachings, and influences of the Holy Ghost, all his tendencies are towards them. So that if the overthrow of nations shall promote Israel's welfare, the Lord overthrows them. If the prosperity of nations become necessary to humble Israel, the Lord brings this to pass also. In all things, and by all means, Jehovah is forwarding his gracious designs for his Church, and the final happiness of Zion, and of the redeemed of the Lord, is at the bottom of all the dispensations and providences going on throughout the world. Reader, think of this; carry the thought with you wherever you go; bring it into recollection whatever history you read, of the nations that are past, or of the nations now existing; and while the solemn thought is deeply impressed both upon your mind and my own, oh! for grace to inquire and search diligently, whether we are of the true Israel of God? If we are not of this world, but Jesus hath chosen us out of the world, what have we to do with its customs, and its pleasures and pursuits? Surely we cannot have a more decided testimony, than when sitting aloof from all its unnecessary concerns. If Jesus be our portion, then our intimacy will not be great with those, who have their portion only in this life. O how sweetly doth Jesus call to his hidden ones, who *dwell* indeed, but do not *belong*, to the men of *Tyre*, and of *Zidon*, in the present day: *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

CHAP. XXIV.

CONTENTS.

Solemn judgments are here set forth, in a general way. Towards the close of the chapter, the subject brightens in the prospect of the coming of Christ.

BEHOLD, the LORD maketh the earth empty,
and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside

down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

Some of the old copies read the word earth, *land*, and confine the sorrows to the house of Judah. But it should seem from what follows in the after-parts of the chapter, where the same subject is spoken of as *the whole world languishing*, to be more general, yea, universal. And when we consider that, *by the sin of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*, there can be no reason for limiting the consumption of human nature, and the sorrows of mankind to the house of Judah. Reader, do not fail to observe, that in the waste here spoken of, the disease is epidemic, and spares neither age, sex, nor situation. *Here, the servant is as his master.* Rom. v. 16. Job, iii. 19.

4 The earth mourneth *and* fadeth away, the world languisheth *and* fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh.

8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

10 The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

11 *There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.*

12 In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

Here is but little variation from what went before. The representation is as if taken from the prophet's vision; the roll is written within and without, and the contents are *lamentations, and mourning, and woe*; Ezek. ii. 10. One verse is in the midst to explain the cause, *It is the curse which devoureth the earth*; Gen. iii. 17. Reader, think what would have been the sorrow and misery for ever, had not Jesus *redeemed us from the curse of the law, in being made a curse for us*; Gal. iii. 13. And never fail to connect with this subject, that scripture, 2 Cor. v. 21.

13 ¶ When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, *there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.*

14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, *even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.*

How blessed and gracious this comes in! In the worst of times, *there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* If the Lord, indeed, had not left us, and did not still leave us, *a small remnant we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.* Pray turn to those scriptures, Rom. xi. 5. Isaiah, lxxv. 8. How suitable is it, as the prophet speaks, that this remnant should lift up their voice, and sing redemption! For if the plague be so general, what must be the mercy to escape it? If the world be universally gone to putrefaction, how blessed must it be to be *the salt of the earth!* Matt. v. 13. Daniel, iii. 27. Acts, xvi. 24, 25.

16 ¶ From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, *even glory to the righteous.* But I said, *My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.*

17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, *are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.*

18 And it shall come to pass, *that* he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

19 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones *that* are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

God's people feel their leanness, in times of general calamity. And no doubt, sorrow for sinners, as well as the distress they feel in themselves, have a great tendency to waste, and lower the spirits. When the Lord's judgments are in the earth, the righteous cannot but tremble. *Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake*; Heb. xii. 21.

22 And they shall be gathered together, *as* prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Here is a most precious conclusion, and full of gospel mercies. Jesus was called by the Father purposely to bring the prisoners out of the prison, and them that sat in darkness out of the prison-house. And when we observe the promise here given, that though shut up, yet after many days they shall be visited; what a sweet testimony is this of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Consult those scriptures, Isaiah, xlii. 6, 7. Zech. ix. 11, 12. Luke, iv. 14—20. Reader, ask your own heart, must not Jesus in such a day, and in the display of such mercies as are here said to be shewn by him, in visiting his people *after many days*, must he not be truly glorious, in the eyes of his redeemed? Yes! the moon shall look pale, and even the sun blush, and hide his diminished head, as overawed and having lost all lustre, in being eclipsed by his Maker and his Lord!

REFLECTIONS.

READER, while reading this Chapter, and beholding the miseries of the world, in consequence of sin, may we not exclaim with the Psalmist, *Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth?* Oh! the incalculable sorrows, by reason of sin, and the distresses in all ages! It deluged the world by water; it destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; it hath produced death in all the circumstances of mankind! But to see the awfulness of sin in its strongest colours, we must look at *Golgotha*, and behold Jesus dying for sin, *the just for the unjust, to bring sinners to God.*

Reader, do not forget to whom it is owing, that the earth still stands! Look unto Jesus! and so look, until the eye affect the heart. Oh! it is blessed to have such views of the Lamb of God, that shall drive away all other considerations, and make all things blush, like the heavenly bodies in the presence of their Lord, in having the whole heart and affections centered in him. Precious Jesus! be thou my one glorious object, and all leanness of soul will be forgotten, yea, done away.

CHAP. XXV.

CONTENTS.

This is a most precious chapter, containing promises on the part of God, and praises on the part of the Church. It is all over gospel; and as suited to the present hour of the Church, as to the time in which it was delivered.

O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things: thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

The Prophet, in the name of the Church, begins the song of praise. And without all doubt, it is a gospel song, in which redemption is celebrated. Probably with reference to the ruin of Babylon, which, though the captivity of the Church in Babylon was not then begun, much less finished; yet looking to the close of it, under the teaching of the Spirit, the prophet blesseth Jehovah for bringing his people out of it, and destroying the Church's enemies. But we lose the whole beauty of this hymn, and the design for which it is handed down to us, if we do not see in it the faithfulness and truth of Jehovah, in the accomplishment of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ. Here the Church sings and triumphs, and every redeemed soul shouts aloud, *O Lord!*

thou art my God. I will exalt thee, for thou hast indeed done wonderful things. Reader, think what wonders in redemption! what wonders in *thy* redemption!

4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall.

5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers; as the heat in a dry place; *even* the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

Reader! look at Jesus, while reading these verses. Behold him as all this, and infinitely more: and what a rich enjoyment do those views in Him, and by Him, and from Him, afford the soul, under any, and all the exercises here spoken of; when we not only find a fence, and a strength, but refreshment and comfort; not only see ourselves sitting under his shadow, but tasting of his fruit; and not only enjoy his salvation, but find him to be himself the whole of our salvation! See those scriptures, Song, ii. 3, 4. Isaiah, xxxii. 1, 2. Psalm, xxvii. 1—6.

6 ¶ And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

I do not say but that the Prophet had an eye to Israel's joy, in returning, after their captivity, to their own land; and in the first sense of these verses, to the end of the chapter, the words may be so referred: but it were sadly to read those precious things, were we not, now they are unfolded to us in gospel days, to read them principally and fully, as pointing to Jesus, and the rich feast of salvation brought by him, in the holy mountain of his Church. Here we have a feast, indeed, and a feast of fat things. The Lord of Hosts, even Jehovah, in his threefold character of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, hath made it. And it is made for all people; not merely the house of Israel only, but for us poor Gentiles, who were *aliens and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel*. And he that made the feast, hath called us to the feast, and sent to us in the lanes, and streets, and highways, to bring us in, though poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind. And we have found, that our unworthiness hath proved no obstacle to the receiving the bountiful provision of the Lord. It is the feast of a king, yea, the heavenly king; and they that are the highly privileged partakers of it, do partake of it, *without money and without price*. Precious Lord Jesus! have I found *thy flesh to be meat indeed, and thy blood to be drink indeed?* Then if so, Lord, to my soul's salvation, these things become as marrow to the body, and as the strongest bodied wine to the animal spirits, which, by resting upon the lees, both gets out all the strength of the grape,

and becomes refused, by remaining long unshaken; so, Lord, would I feed and rest on thee! Matt. xxii. 2—4. Prov. ix. 1—5. Luke, xiv. 16—24.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

Was not this blessed promise faithfully and fully completed, when, at the hour of Christ's death, by an invisible hand, *the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom?* Mark, xv. 38. Before this, the veil of ignorance, the veil of enmity, and the numberless veils of separation, which stood, and must for ever have stood, between a holy God and unholy sinners, kept all people back from the smallest possible communion with God, and totally covered all people and all nations. But now, blessed Jesus, by thy blood, thou hast opened *a new and living way* for thy people, and art entered thyself within the veil, to cause thy redeemed to follow thee, that *where thou art, there they shall be also*; Heb. vi. 19, 20. Let the Reader compare such blessed views as these of our Lord Jesus, with what is said concerning Moses, and learn therefrom the felicity to which believers are called, in the removal of all coverings in their drawing nigh to the Lord; Exod. xxxiv. 33, 34. 2 Cor. iii. 10 to the end. Heb. x. 19—25.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the LORD hath spoken it.

This verse, if there were no other in the chapter, would at once decide that somewhat infinitely more important than the mere temporal deliverance of the Church from Babylon, was intended in this blessed chapter. And who is it but our Jesus, of whom, and by whom, it could be said, that *death should be swallowed up in victory?* How should tears be wiped away from all faces, until Jesus had first taken away all sin, which is the sole cause of tears, by his blood? Who are the people here spoken of, but Jesus's people? And how, to all eternity, could the rebukes of sin, the rebukes of God's broken law, the rebukes of God's justice, the rebukes of all God's creation; yea, the rebukes of their own guilty consciences; how could all these be taken away, but by Jesus becoming both *sin and a curse for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him?* Blessings on thee, thou Lamb of God, for the accomplishment of all these precious things! And praised be the Lord Jehovah, our God and Father, that his mouth hath spoken it, and his covenant faithfulness hath confirmed it. Reader, do not pass away from this most blessed verse, until thou hast read the following scriptures: Hosea, xiii. 14, compared with 1 Cor. xv. 54—57. Heb. ii. 9—15. Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

9 ¶ And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will

save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

There is a very great beauty in this verse, as well as great glory; and the believer enters into the proper apprehension of it, when what is here said by the Church at large, he knows, and can, and doth make application of to himself. There is now no question as to whom redemption is wholly owing, in that precious soul's experience, who, from knowing and feeling, under the convincings of the Holy Ghost, the plague of his own heart, hath fled to Jesus, and found him a full, all-sufficient, and complete Saviour. And what holy triumphs will be his portion in that day, that blessed glorious day, when, closing the eye of the body in death, the eye of the soul opens to the view of Jesus, and in him, to all the glories of eternity! Oh! the blessedness of the long waiting, yea, the long exercised soul, when this day breaks in upon him! I detain the Reader with a short observation more upon this verse, just to remark that the word *save*, he will *save* us, is derived from the same root as the word Jesus, a *Saviour*, is derived; as if to direct the Church to his identical person: this is our God--this is our Lord! It is blessed to observe this!

10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.

11 And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth *his hands* to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.

12 And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, *and* bring to the ground, *even* to the dust.

Reader! I must not swell my Poor Man's Commentary: I only, therefore, detain you, to observe on these verses, that the Lord hath uniformly, through all the Bible, connected the subject of destruction to his foes, and the foes of his Church, with the salvation of his people. And however men may amuse themselves with hopes, like the spider's web, that peace and safety shall be their portion; yet the enemies of God, and of his Christ, must be found liars. When Jehovah first made known, what had lain in his bosom from all eternity, the setting up his dear Son as the Head of his Church, the devil set up his kingdom against him: all, therefore, that oppose Christ are taking part with that apostate spirit, and, if living and dying in his service and kingdom, can have *no inheritance in the kingdom of God, and of his Christ*. All, therefore, of this description, will be trodden down, *as straw is trodden down for the dunghill*. Awful consideration!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! how shall we close our meditation on the gospel subject contained in this chapter, in better terms than in seeking grace to catch the Prophet's note, and blessing God, and exalting his holy name, as he did, for such mercies as are here recorded, and with which the Lord comforted his Church and people, in days remote from the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! Think, Reader! how gracious the Lord is, and was, and ever will be, that he will have his people made happy in the expectation of blessings, as well as in the enjoyment of them! So that by faith, our fathers in the Church, gone before us, lived upon Christ, and feasted on the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, as the souls of his redeemed now live and feast upon him since redemption-work hath been completed; and all, with one heart and one mouth, glory the same God and Saviour, for the same precious salvation. Hail! holy, gracious, almighty God and Father! let the souls of all thy people bless and praise thee, in and through the person and work of our adorable Mediator; that from thine own free and everlasting love it is, that thou hast made a feast of fat things in thy Church, thy holy mountain! Yea, Lord, it is thou who hast given us Jesus, thy dear and ever blessed Son, and with him thou hast given all things.

Hail! thou blessed Immanuel! thou art strength to thy poor, a feast to thy hungry, a garment to thy naked; yea, every thing, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity! It is thou, blessed Jesus, who in our nature hast conquered sin and all its dreadful consequences, and fully, and finally, and completely taken away their rebuke, and wiped away all tears from off all faces.

Hail! thou blessed and eternal Spirit! by whose gracious teachings these precious things are made known to us, and by whose divine influences our hearts are brought both to believe and to rejoice in them! Blessed be thy holy name, for the discovery that *the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it!*

Lord! add one blessing more to the numberless blessings contained in this chapter, if agreeable to thy holy mind and will; and cause the heart of him that writes, and him that reads, to know their own personal interest in the blessings themselves. Oh! for grace here, that in glory hereafter, we may join that rapturous song: *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation!* Amen.

CHAP. XXVI.

CONTENTS.

This is another joyful song, and a gospel song, full of the praises of Jehovah for redemption, interspersed with reflections on the wonderful deadness of the souls of God's people, in the view of their mercies.

IN that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Reader! do not fail to observe how the prophet continually harps upon *that day*, that glorious day, the gospel day, when the Lord will bring again Zion. And though some have thought that the deliverance of the Church out of Babylon might well call forth this song, of praise; yet even then, every child of God, even Israel thus delivered, could not but celebrate that temporal salvation as typical of a spiritual and eternal salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. The deliverance of the Church from Egypt, was a type; and consequently the deliverance from Babylon is the same. And as this song was to be sung in Judah; was it not as a representation of the Church of Jesus? See those scriptures, Jerem. xxiii. 5—8. Heb. viii. 8—12. Isaiah, lx. 18.

3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength:

The first of these verses is a blessed promise; and the second is the foundation of the enjoyment of it. Some read the last phrase of it (and indeed the margin of our old Bibles preserve the reading so) “the Lord Jehovah is *the rock of Ages*.” Now as the Holy Ghost taught the Church, through Paul the apostle, expressly so, that the rock which followed Israel, was indeed Christ; we do no violence to the words, but on the contrary, express more fully what they themselves express, when we say, “for in the JAH JEHOVAH is CHRIST.” And what saith the Holy Ghost elsewhere? *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself*; 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 Cor. x. 4.

5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, *even* to the ground; he bringeth it *even* to the dust.

6 The foot shall tread it down, *even* the feet of the poor, *and* the steps of the needy.

7 The way of the just *is* uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

These are plain, but very gracious expressions. The Lord's people may be, indeed the Lord's people will be, humbled, and brought under humbling providences; but Jesus weigheth out to them in measure all that is needful for them, and no more. And as to their oppressors, Jesus seeth them all, and knoweth them all, and keeps an account of all their malice. And woe unto them when God ariseth to punish. Psalm xii. 5.

8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD,

have we waited for thee; the desire of *our* soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments *are* in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, *yet* will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

Here is a sweet view of a gracious soul in particular, and of the Church in general, in the silent, humble, waitings on the Lord, as well in providence as grace. I hope the Reader is brought acquainted with these things. A life of God in the soul cannot be kept up without it. If we have union with Christ, we cannot but have communion with God; and devout souls know what it is, in night visits from Jesus and to Jesus, as well as in daily approaches, both public and private, to his court, to enjoy *fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*; 1 John, i. 3. Psalm v. 3. Song, iii. 1. Psalm cxxx. throughout. Indeed it is this which marks their character from that of the ungodly who know not God.

11 LORD, *when* thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: *but* they shall see, and be ashamed for *their* envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

13 O LORD our God, *other* lords beside thee have had dominion over us: *but* by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

14 *They are* dead, they shall not live; *they are* deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed *it* far *unto* all the ends of the earth.

16 LORD, in trouble have they visited thee,

they poured out a prayer *when* thy chastening *was* upon them.

17 Like as a woman with child, *that* draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, *and* crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD.

18 We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

How strikingly is the conduct of wicked and unregenerate men here marked! If the Lord's hand be lifted up in judgments; though they see the judgments; yet as the Lord's judgments they see them not. And though the Lord's hand be fallen down in punishments; though the punishments they feel; yet the Lord's hand in them they regard not. Here again, as in the former verses, the contrast is set forth between the righteous and the wicked; between *him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not*; Malachi, iii. 18.

19 Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

I do not presume to decide; but I humbly ask the question. Is not this verse the address of Christ to his Church, or of the Father to Jesus, in the first part of it; and of Jesus in the after-part of it? Surely as God the Father engaged to his dear Son, when giving him as a covenant to the people, to bring him up from the grave, and his people with him, there can be no impropriety in beholding God the Father as thus again confirming his covenant promises to Christ, and saying, *Thy dead men shall live*; first in grace, and then in glory. See those scriptures, Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14. Rev. xx. 6. Founded on this promise, may we not suppose Jesus to be then speaking of the means how this great event shall be accomplished; *Together with my dead body shall they arise*. John, xi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. xv. 20. John, v. 25—29. Then may we not suppose, after the promise comes the accomplishment, and Christ calls to his people, *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust*. 1 Cor. 15, 45. John, v. 21. The figure of *the dew of herbs*, to illustrate the doctrine of the resurrection, is uncommonly beautiful and interesting. For the herbs of our gardens, during the winter, are but like dry sticks. Their buddings, therefore, in the spring, are altogether new, and like a resurrection. The dew of the spring, therefore, is the source of their revival. And such will be the dew of Jesus upon the bodies of his people, in making the earth cast forth her dead, as the earth casteth forth the spring-herbs. And upon the souls of his people Jesus is in every instance, the same as a dew from the Lord, that waiteth not for man, neither tarryeth for the sons of men. It is wholly

by virtue of our union with Christ, that both the resurrection of grace, and that of glory, is, and will be accomplished. Job, xiv. 7—15. Micah, v. 7. Romans, viii. 11.

20 ¶ Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Oh! what blessedness is contained in these words! and what a blessedness have thousands now in glory, found in them, when upon earth! If I mistake not, here are all the persons of the Godhead inviting the children of Christ; yea, taking them by the hand, to come into God's pavilion; and as the Lord once said unto Noah, *Come thou and all thine house into the ark*; so he saith now to all who by faith, like Noah, *prepare an ark*, in Jesus, *to the saving of their house*. And he that takes by the hand, and leads them; the same almighty hand *shuts them in*. See Gen. vii. 1—16. Heb. xi. 7. But what are these *chambers*, which are here spoken of, and which the Lord calls the Church's chambers? Hath the Lord indeed built for them some secret enclosures, into which the righteous may run and be safe in times of public or private calamity, when the Lord's judgments are in the earth? Oh! no; in the event of common *providences*, God saith, *I will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked*; Ezek. xxi. 3. In things of nature, Solomon remarks, *All things come alike to all*; Eccles. ix. 2; that is, the fever, or the sword, will, if commissioned by the Lord, destroy all. But the feelings, and supports from the Lord, even in those exercises, will still mark the godly from the sinner. But what then are these chambers into which the Lord brings his people? Surely the chambers of his covenant of redemption, in which are found all the attributes and perfections of God the Father; all the fulness of right and interest in the person, blood, righteousness, and grace of God the Son as Mediator; and all the precious comforts and influences of God the Holy Ghost. All the chambers of his love, promises, grace, and mercy. Here they find repose and shelter from all evil; and, Noah-like, ride out the storm in the ark, Christ Jesus; while, like the deluge, the indignation of God's wrath against sin is poured down upon the Christless and the ungodly. Oh! for grace to enter into the chambers, and to see the Lord's hand both shutting our souls *in*, and every enemy *out* by which danger might be introduced. Precious Jesus! may it be my portion, in thee to have peace, while in the world there is nothing but tribulation! John, xvi. 33.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! canst thou sing this gospel song of salvation, which the Lord said should be sung in Judah? Surely that sweet note is thine

Thou hast a strong city; for Jesus is both the foundation, and the walls of it; yea, Jesus is the all in all of it; for upon all the glory, he is the defence. Jehovah thy God and Father hath founded his Church upon Jesus, and Jesus is both the husband and king of his Church, and hath by his Holy Spirit opened the gates to the nation made righteous in his righteousness to enter in. And surely, Lord, I shall be kept in peace, yea, perfect peace, while kept in thee, and by thee, and living upon thee. Oh! for grace to trust in my Lord God for ever: for in my Lord God Jehovah, there is Christ the Rock of Ages.

And Lord, I pray thee, that amidst all the circumstances of my passing pilgrimage, by night, or by day, when thy judgments are in the earth, and when by thy sweet ordinances thou art leading thy people to the enjoyment of thyself, in every state, and under every change in me, my soul may desire to rest in thee who art unchangeable; and who *having loved thine own that are in the world, thou lovest them to the end.* Oh! let it be the language of mine heart, that *with my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me have I sought thee early.* And do thou, Lord, bring me into thy chambers. Give me to see that in thy covenant-engagements to my glorious Head I am secure from all danger. All thine attributes, all thy promises, thy word, and thine oath, do secure to me salvation with all its blessings. Surely, Lord, while thus blessed, and thus redeemed in Jesus, I may well sing the song of salvation in this house of my pilgrimage, neither shall any stop me in my triumphs in Christ Jesus. Every day, and all the day, will I chaunt aloud, *The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

CHAP. XXVII.

CONTENTS.

Here is the same delightful subject continued, and carried on, through the whole; namely, the Lord's care of his church, and the destruction of his enemies, and this united subject runs through the whole chapter.

IN that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan that piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

2 In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

3 I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

4 Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

In the opening of this chapter, the Prophet begins it, if not in the same words, yet at least to the same amount, as the Psalmist doth one of his Psalms, when he saith, *I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing*; Psalm, ci. 1; for here is mercy to the Lord's Church; and judgment to the Lord's enemies. The Prophet is using figurative language, when, under the image of a serpent and a dragon, he would represent the enemies of God's Church and people. The scripture hath explained both, and in the victories of Jesus plainly shewu to whom they both refer. The arch-apostate spirit is uniformly known in the word of God, as the *dragon, and the old serpent, which is the devil*, Rev. xx. 2. The Church is very frequently represented under the similitude of a vineyard, and a garden; and the red wine is the choicest wine, intimating that all choice things are given to the Church; Isaiah, v. 1. &c. Matt. xx. 1, &c. Song, vii. 11, 12. But what a sweet promise is here of the Lord's keeping his vineyard: how gracious, how constant, how unceasing is the Lord's watchfulness over it! And Reader! do observe: the Lord not only keeps it, but waters it; not only defends it from without, but blesses it from within; not only keeps off evil, but is himself her chief good! Song, iv. 12. And observe how gracious the Lord is in the intimations of his love and forbearance. There is nothing of anger or resentment in him towards his people. If there were, every thing opposed to the Lord, would be but as briers and thorns, which the fire of his fury would instantly consume.

5 Or let him take hold of my strength, *that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.*

I place this verse alone, in order that the Reader may consider it somewhat more particularly. It is Jehovah the Father who is here speaking, and therefore it may be supposed that he is speaking, in the first sense, of the person of our glorious Mediator. And the words will then be as if Jehovah said, "Let him, as God, for such he is, and as such he is able, let him take hold of me. For having both natures, as God and man in one person, he is able, by virtue of both, to take hold of both parties, God and man, and in the strength of Jehovah, make peace between both, "by the blood of his cross." And if we regard the words as the direction given to the Church, though still with reference to Christ; the direction is, "Let the poor sinner in every state, and under every exercise, take hold of Christ, my strength, and rest upon him by faith, in a firm dependence upon his salvation; and he shall find peace with me." Reader! what a precious promise, founded on a precious Saviour!

6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

7 ¶ Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? *or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?*

8 In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this *is* all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk-stones, that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

10 Yet the defenced city *shall be* desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

All these are so many different expressions, to intimate that the Lord's mercy to his people is all of grace, and not for their deserts. The Lord watcheth over them for good; but it is for the exaltation of his free grace.

11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, *and* set them on fire: for it *is* a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

I detain the Reader over this verse, just to remark, that though, in the first view, the doctrine may seem harsh, yet the proper apprehension presently clears it up, and stops such a conclusion. The sense of the passage will not be far to gather, if we consider who, and what are meant *by a people of no understanding*. It doth not mean persons born with weak or no intellect: this is not what is meant in scripture language, when speaking of persons of no understanding. Job explains it at once, when he saith, *Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding*; Job, xxviii. 28. Hence, therefore, by the people the prophet here speaks of, which have no understanding, is meant men that do not, and will not, depart from evil; who know what is good, but do what is evil: who hear of Jesus, but reject and despise him. Concerning such, this scripture saith, *He that made them, and he that formed them, inasmuch as they reject Christ, which is the mercy of God, will shew them no favour*.

12 ¶ And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

13 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

The chapter closeth most graciously. There is a day promised, when Israel shall be gathered, yea, individually gathered. And when the gospel proclamation, in the jubilee trumpet, shall be blown, the saving effects shall be known. Poor sinners, ready to perish, from all the countries of the earth, shall come, outcasts from Assyria and Egypt; and all the Lord's people, shall be united together, and be one fold under one shepherd; for Jesus shall be all in all. Jeremiah, xxxiii. 13. Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! while Jehovah is thus singing to his Church, and commanding his people to sing unto her also, a vineyard of red wine: let you and I join the holy song, and beginning in Him, who is the chief musician, and the whole cause of our song, and who alone can string our hearts, and tune them to his praise; let us consider the blessedness of this vineyard of the Lord, and how he hath formed it for himself, and for the shewing forth of his glory. Did not God the Father form this vineyard? And did not Jesus, his dear and ever-blessed Son, purchase it from his Father, at infinite cost and pains, even with his blood? And did not God the Holy Ghost gather the stones out of the hearts of his people and form them as trees of his own right hand planting? And do not all the sacred persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless this vineyard, and with their sweet and gracious droppings of dew and rain, and all the blessed influences of heaven, visit it, and watch it, and water it every moment? And if so, who but would sing the song of salvation to this vineyard, so favoured, so blessed, and so kept, by sovereign and almighty grace! Oh! Lord! grant that there may be no blasted fruit, no withered branches in thy church and vineyard; but let the gracious cultivation flourish and bring forth fruit to the praise of thy name! And, Oh! precious Jesus! do thou come into thy garden, and eat of thy pleasant fruit! Oh! suffer not *the wild boar out of the wood to root it up, nor the wild beast of the field to devour it*. But do thou enable all of thine to take hold of thy strength, and in thy righteousness to be eternally secured. Be thou, Lord, the security of thy vineyard, and both the glory and the defence thereof: for then we shall be indeed strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and unceasingly sing of the Lord's redemption of his vineyard, the Church, upon earth, and the everlasting glories of Jesus and his Church in heaven Amen.

C H A P. XXVIII.

CONTENTS.

Amidst many threatenings to the people for their rebellions, this chapter contains some most glorious descriptions of the person of Christ, and the wonders of salvation in him.

WOE to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the LORD hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up.

We shall find the best illustration of the things here spoken by reading with it the prophecy of *Hosea*, who had delivered the greater part of his prophecy somewhat about fifty years before this part of Isaiah's ministry. *Ephraim*, which represents the ten tribes, being settled in *Samaria*, a rich and flourishing country, waxed fat and kicked, and perverted the Lord's bounties into occasions of sin. The Lord therefore was now preparing an instrument to humble his people, and, in the king of *Assyria*, was about to bring up a *mighty and strong one*, as the Lord is pleased to call him, which should bring them down. Reader! what a sad thought, but how true it is, that from the propensity of our fallen nature, *that* which should restrain from sin, is made by us the very means of indulging in sin; and because a gracious God pours out a greater fulness of his blessings, we take therefrom a greater freedom to offend!

5 ¶ In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

How blessed do these verses come in, after such views as the former held forth of man's sin, to afford relief, in the contemplation of God's glory. I hope the Reader is too well taught by the Holy Ghost, to need any other information of who is here meant, by the crown of glory and a diadem of beauty. Surely none but Jesus the Mediator can come up to this character. And if the Reader will turn to the sixty-second chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, verses 2 and 3, he will there find Jehovah's promises to the Lord Christ, as the Head of his Church, under those very characters. And when the Reader hath done this, if he will turn to the fourth chapter of the same prophecy, he will find no less instruction concerning this Spirit of judgment and of burning, by which the Lord carries on his purposes of grace in the hearts of his people. I only detain the Reader to remark yet further on this passage, that by what is here said of *the residue of his people*, probably is meant the kingdom of Judah, or, if not, some of God's *hidden ones* in Ephraim, who might be alarmed in the times of general calamity. Reader! it is blessed to see, that in the worst of times, there is a *seed* remains. And it is further blessed to see, that the Lord knoweth and watcheth over them that are his. Psalm, xxii. 30. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Isaiah, xxvii. 3.

7 ¶ But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

9 ¶ Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

Here is another solemn charge, and more pointed than the former. Errors are not only found in Ephraim, but in Judah; not only among the carnal, but the professor. Yea, God's ministers, both prophet and priest, are said to have erred through strong drink! Precious Jesus! is it possible that we can behold thee drinking *the cup of trembling* to the very dregs; and that any who minister before thee, and in thy name, can be found drinking *the drunkard's cup*? Well might Isaiah cry out, and exclaim, *Whom shall he teach knowledge?* It should seem from

the whole of this passage, that the people bantered at what was spoken, and turned it into laughter. Some have rendered the word, which we translate *stammering* lips, *ridiculous* lips; and this idea seems to render the thing probable. And if the priest and the prophet indeed erred through strong drink, it is more than probable, they became ridiculous in what they preached. Alas! alas! to what a state is our nature fallen!

12 To whom he said, *This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*

This is a blessed verse, which comes in like some precious cordial to a dying man, who had been fainting before under afflictions all around. But, Reader! who is the person here spoken of, *to whom he said?* Who is the *He* here meant? I do not presume to determine, but I venture to believe, that it is He who guided the prophet Isaiah's pen, even God the Holy Ghost. And who, and what, is *the rest* to whom the prophet was to direct the people; and at a time when their own prophets and priests, by their errors and drunkenness, could not teach knowledge? Who could this be, but thee, thou blessed Jesus, who in the days of thy flesh didst invite to come to thee, *the weary and heavy laden, and they should find rest to their souls?* Matt. xi. 28, 29. Reader! do you know Jesus, under this character? Have you come to him, and found him indeed the refreshing? Oh! how blessed, under all the storms and disquietudes of life, to say, with one of old, *Return unto thy rest, unto thy Jesus, my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!* Psalm, cxvi. 7.

13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

14 ¶ Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem.

15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

These are very awful verses, and enough to make the ears of every one that heareth them to tingle. And what must the end be of scorers, mockers of God's word, and despisers of his threatenings?

16 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried

stone, a precious corner-*stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

I cannot begin to offer a single observation upon this most precious verse, before that I have first desired to bend the knee of my heart before the throne, to bless the Lord for it. And at the same time I would no less desire to adore the riches of his grace, in that the Lord God would not leave so blessed a portion to our conjecture, concerning whom it referred to, but by his servant the apostle Peter, hath done it to our hands. Let the Reader therefore, when he hath again and again read what the prophet here saith, turn to the Epistle of Peter; 1 *Peter*, ii. 6—8. Reader! think how gracious our God and Father is, thus to lay the foundation of his Church! think how firm, immovable, blessed, and eternal, is Jesus Christ, the rock on which his Church is built? And oh how safe and secure must they be in their everlasting interests, who are built upon him, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. Oh! precious, precious Jesus! whatever stone of stumbling, or rock of offence thou art to those that know thee not, be thou to me the rock of salvation; *for blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in thee!* Reader! think it not troublesome to turn to those several scriptures; Matt. xxi. 42. Psalm, cxviii. 22. Acts, iv. 11, 12. Zech. iii. 9. Dan. ii. 34, 35. Rom. ix. 33. Ephes. ii. 20, 21. Rom. x. 11.

17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.

18 ¶ And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

19 From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.

20 For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*.

21 For the LORD shall rise up as *in* mount Pe-razim, he shall be wroth as *in* the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the

Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

I have often thought, that among all the unpromising appearances of things around, when men sin with a high hand, in slighting and despising both God's judgments and God's mercies; the most unpromising are among those that mock at God's rich plan of redemption by Christ. There is somewhat so truly awful in this, as should seem to carry with it features of peculiar danger. Blessed be God, there are instances of the sovereignty of grace in the recovery of all characters in the vast catalogue of sin, so as that none should despair, while none presume. Nevertheless there is somewhat in the malignity of the mocker, which, like the son of the bond-woman, peculiarly marks the hatred of the mind, and makes one very apprehensive of such being given up to a reprobate mind. How solemn is this last verse: *Be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong!*

23 ¶ Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

24 Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?

26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him:

27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing-instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

28 Bread-corn is bruised; because he will not be ever threshing it, nor break *it with* the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it *with* his horsemen.

29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, *which* is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

The chapter ends very graciously, in shewing the Church, under the similitude of the husbandman, how the Lord takes care of his household. And as Jesus hath sweetly set forth the same blessed truths, under the same imagery, we cannot be at a loss to apprehend the whole of the instruction. *Ye are God's husbandry*, said the apostle; and Jesus himself saith, *I am the vine, ye are the branches*. Oh! for grace to be thus favoured, and to know that we are brought into the vineyard,

the Church of the Lord of hosts. Isaiah, v. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 9. John, xv. 1, &c.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! what a wonderful history doth the Church of God hold forth in all ages! Never was there a people so favoured as Israel! Never surely a nation so degenerate. In whatever period we look at the account, the contemplation is the same. *Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?* Was it ever known that any people under heaven, when once they had taken up with an idol, because they knew not the true God, ever put it down again for another? *But*, saith the Lord, *my people Israel*, to whom I have made myself known in blessing them; *my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*

Reader! pause over this, and then behold what a wonderful God is our God! Are we, like Israel, prone to lay down any thing, yea, nothing that is, or can be durable and solid, for a foundation to build upon for eternity? Hear what the Lord saith; *I will lay in Zion, for a foundation a stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation!* Blessed God and Father! precious Lord Jesus! holy eternal Spirit! cause our souls here to build, and on this rock to bottom all our hopes of heaven and happiness. Oh! for grace to try thee, thou blessed Jesus, as God the Father hath tried thee, and found thee faithful. Never, never, shall I be ashamed or confounded while I trust in thee, and rest upon thee, in life, and death, in time, and to all eternity!

CHAP. XXIX.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here reprovng Jerusalem, and shewing their folly. Towards the close of the Chapter, the Lord gives some sweet promises to the house of Jacob.

WOE to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt: add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

2 Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

We might have been at a loss to know what the Prophet meant by *Ariel*, had he not himself explained it, by adding, *the city where David dwelt*; consequently Jerusalem. The word itself is taken from a root, signifying the *Lion*. But the Chapter opens with a woe upon it; and it should seem, from the manner in which the sacrifices were offered, it was on this account; probably in those sacrifices, the people did not join faith in Christ, and hence, all sacrifices without an eye to Christ, must be followed with a woe.

3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and will raise forts against thee.

4 And thou shalt be brought down, *and* shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

5 Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones *shall be* as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

7 ¶ And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.

8 It shall even be as when an hungry *man* dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, *he is* faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against Mount Zion.

9 ¶ Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this,

I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

13 ¶ Wherefore the LORD said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Here are the same, or similar denunciations, as have been before noticed. God's judgments for men's rebellion. And what makes the whole most awful, is, that those judgments and punishments remain un sanctified. The people did indeed, when the Lord's afflictions were upon them, call upon the Lord; but it was in form only, not in heart. Lip service, not soul affection, constituted the whole of their religion. Reader! look narrowly over your own heart, under this particular: rottenness begins there. Ezek. xxxiii. 30—32. Jer. xii. 2. Matt. xv. 8.

14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid.

15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potters' clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

All spiritual visitations which the Lord makes upon his people, are among the heaviest of his judgments. And in what an awful instance was this prediction fulfilled, and is still fulfilling, on Israel, in their rejection of Christ, the Lord of life and glory!

17 *Is* it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

18 ¶ And in that day shall the deaf hear the

words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Here the Lord comes in with sweet promises, for the Lord still favours his people, and will have mercy upon Israel. Hence, therefore, here are blessings of fruitfulness promised; blind eyes are to be opened, deaf ears to be unstopped, and humble souls shall be made joyful in the Lord. And who doth not, or will not see, in all this, the outlines of the coming of Jesus? Compare chap. xxxv. 5, with Matt. xi. 5, and then ask whether words can be plainer?

20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

21 That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

This prophecy surely had its accomplishment also, when the Scribes and Pharisees sought to entangle Jesus in his talk; Matt. xxii. 15—22. Luke, xix. 20.

22 Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.

23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

24 They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

Reader! above all things, do remark how gracious the Chapter closeth. The Lord will be friends with Jacob, notwithstanding all his rebellion. The cause is assigned, the Lord redeemed Abraham, that is, in the covenant of redemption founded in Christ; and in the promise to Abraham, Jacob's seed was included. Oh! the grace of God in Christ! Isaiah, xlii. 24, 25, and immediately followed with Isaiah, xliii. 1—7.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! learn from Jerusalem's transgressions, and from Jerusalem's sorrow, how to form proper conceptions of thy unworthiness, and the

Lord's chastisement of thy sins. Surely, as in a mirror, mayest thou behold thy features, and learn from both, the sweet instructions of thy God. Well mayest thou take up the language of the Apostle, and say, *What then, are we better than they? No, in no wise: for he hath proved both Jews and Gentiles all under sin.*

Blessed Lamb of God! it is thou, and thou only, that art the burden-bearer of thy people's sins, and hast taken them away by thy blood. Oh! for grace to behold thee as the sole cause of Jehovah's pardoning love, *having made our peace by the blood of the cross.* And oh! for grace to plead in thee, and by thee, the whole blessings of the covenant promised to Abraham, that no faces of Israel's true seed may gather paleness. It is in thee, blessed Jesus, that all nations shall be blessed. Out of thee, there can be no blessing; but in thee, all blessings to Jacob's seed abound. May my soul live upon thee and thy fullness, and may all the redeemed *sanctify thy name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel.*

CHAP. XXX.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter, like the former, contains reproofs mingled with promises. The graciousness of God to his church is tenderly set forth, and there is much of Christ in this sweet scripture.

WOE to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt *your* confusion.

4 For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.

5 They were all ashamed of a people *that* could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

Reader! remark amidst all the rebellions of Israel, how the Lord still calls them *children*. And though chastisement must and will follow their disobedience, yet, the very chastisement proves the Lord's design to recover them. And the method the Lord takes to accomplish his purpose, manifests his gracious intention. For, do they seek strength from foreign

alliances? then shall those alliances be the rod to their own punishment. Do they seek to Pharaoh instead of the Lord? and trust in the reed^s of Egypt, when the Rock of ages would have supported them? they shall shame and a reproach be the consequence. Reader! it surely distinguisheth a divine hand, when our confidences prove our ruin!

6 The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence *come* the young and old lion, the viper, and fiery flying serpent, they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people *that* shall not profit *them*.

7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength *is* to sit still.

These are parts of the same burden, and not unlike what was said before concerning Egypt, under the figure of *the land shadowing with wings*, chap. xviii. 1.

8 ¶ Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

9 That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD:

10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:

11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

14 And he shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the

bursting of it, a s'herd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water *withal* out of the pit.

It should seem that *Isaiah* wrote to them, as well as preached to them. And as Israel's rebellion descended, like the blood in the veins, from father to son, there needed a standing memorial on the subject; for what the Prophet said to one, suited all. It is an awful thing when the preachers of the word accommodate what they deliver, to the false tastes of their hearers!

15 For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

17 One thousand *shall flee* at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

How the Lord raiseth up instruments to punish his children from their own pursuits, and, like *Jonah's* gourd, maketh a worm to come forth from the root of it! The Lord had assured his people, that if they would rest upon his power, he would protect them. But they thought a banded army of men would be better, and, therefore, as they valued Egypt's strength more than heaven's security, they should find, to their cost, that that strength should profit them nothing.

18 ¶ And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD *is* a God of judgment: blessed *are* all they that wait for him.

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

20 And *though* the LORD give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

21 And thine ear shall hear a word behind thee,

saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

Reader! observe the workings of grace, and how the Lord's love breaks out, before the weapons of sin in the rebellious child's hands fall down. And do observe, in this sweet scripture, not only the waitings in the Lord to be gracious, but to be *very* gracious; not only his bowels yearning to pardon, but to take into favour. And though, in outward providences, the Lord seemed to frown, in the hard and coarse fare of bread *in adversity*, and water *in affliction*, yet love was in all, and at the bottom of all. And, as a proof of it, whereas in times past, the Lord's prophets and teachers had been prohibited from speaking to the people, in the name of the Lord; yet now the people should not only hear and see them, but feel the power of grace upon their hearts, accompanying the word. They should have *the hearing ear and the seeing eye*, yea, they should not only hear the word behind them, but feel it in them, and have Christ *formed in their heart, the hope of glory*. Reader! do you know any thing of this?

22 Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth: thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

23 Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

24 The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.

25 And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers *and* streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

26 Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

How very sweetly and blessedly doth the Prophet describe the sure effects of grace, in the hearts of those, where God's words, like the good seed, have fallen into good ground! Every thing that is filthy, they desire to cast away; and every thing that is holy, they desire to follow. And the Lord goeth on to bless such souls, and to water the word sown in their hearts, with the continual dew of his blessing: there shall be *rivers and streams of waters*, Song, iv. 15. Psalm, xlvi. 4. And as all creation groaneth by reason of man's sin, so shall the inferior creatures be made fat and full, by reason of man's recovery by grace. Yea, so blessed shall be this day, that light, life, and joy shall burst forth, compared to former darkness, death, and sorrow, as the light of *seven days*, a fulness of glory. Reader! is it not so in the soul, when Jesus, the *morning star*, hath arisen, and a light, never more to be darkness, is made by almighty grace, in the circumstances of every poor sinner?

27 Behold, the name of the LORD coming from far, burning with his anger, and the burden *thereof* is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:

28 And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity; and *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws of the people causing *them* to err.

29 Ye shall have a song, as in the night *when* a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.

30 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lightning down of his arm, with the indignation of *his* anger, and *with* the flame of a devouring fire, *with* scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, *which* smote with a rod.

32 And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, *it* shall be with tabrets and harps; and in battles of shaking will he fight with it.

33 For Tophet *is* ordained of old; yea, for the

king it is prepared; he hath made *it* deep and large: the pile thereof *is* fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

I hope that the Reader is, by this time, so well acquainted with scripture, as to need not the remark how, all along, the Lord is for ever blending judgment with mercy. Here we have, as in many other places in the word of God, the horrible punishment of the despisers of God and of his Christ; while we have been comforted with the blessings of those that love and fear him. And in all periods of the Church we find these united predictions constantly and faithfully fulfilled. And the people of God are called upon to bless God, when the Lord puts down their enemies before their face. They have *a song as in the night*. Witness the case in *Egypt*, Exod. xv. 1, &c. Witness the same in *Babylon*, Psalm cxxxvii. 8, 9. And the final triumph of God's people is described the same, when standing on the sea of glass, and singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb: *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy? For all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest!* Rev. xv. 2—4.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord! rebellious as I am, and unworthy of the least of thy mercies, yet, Lord, for thine own great name's sake, let my covering be the covering of thy Spirit; and let me never seek strength from the Egypts of this world, in an arm of flesh, or the false confidences of the heart. Oh! precious Lord Jesus! be thou my strength, and salvation, and my sure help in every time of need! And let that sweet promise of thine, everlastingly stay me; *the Lord waiteth to be gracious*; waiteth, not only to give the mercy in the best time, but to prepare his people for the best, and most timely enjoyment of it. Let this be my case, O Lord. Do thou prepare me for the true apprehension of thyself, and of all thy mercies. And when my Lord hath made room in my poor soul for himself, by driving out every other thought, and affection; then may my God and Saviour, come and take the entire possession, and reign and rule there, the Lord of life and glory!

Most gracious Lord! how ought my soul to praise thee, for thy graciousness to Zion, in the present hour; that amidst all the languishing state of thy Churches, thou art still merciful in preserving to us our ordinances. Yea, Lord, thou hast not, as our backslidings have deserved, removed our candlestick out of its place. Our sabbaths, we still enjoy. Thy holy word is still in our houses. Our teachers are not shut up in a corner. Oh! for grace to see our mercies! and oh! for the Lord's blessing upon them, that they may be rendered blessings indeed to us, and our souls made blessed in the use of them! But is there not, O Lord, cause to fear, that since, in the present day, the light of gospel truth, compared to former times, is *as the light of seven days in one*; if the nation that is called by thy name, loveth *darkness rather than light, because her deeds are evil*, that thine indignation, as

this chapter sets forth, *will burn as a devouring flame?* Is there not reason indeed to dread, that *the Lord will put a bridle in the jaws of the people causing them to err?* And as they persist in despising this Christ, and *do not like to retain God in their knowledge: the Lord will give them over to a reprobate mind?* Almighty God! in reading thy judgments, mingled with mercy, I would rejoice indeed, but *rejoice with trembling.* Oh! give to my soul *songs in the night.* The present hour is an hour that needs such mercies. Do thou, Lord, impart them to thy people, as in the days of old. And now, while thy Church standeth as upon a sea of glass, let the song of Moses and of the Lamb be the song of all thy redeemed: *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints.*

CHAP. XXXI.

CONTENTS.

This chapter is to the same purport as the former. The prophet setteth forth the folly of all human confidences. Some gracious promises are given towards the close of the chapter.

WOE to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are many*; and in horsemen, because they are very strong: but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

2 Yet he also *is* wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fall together.

Reader! we shall find scriptures, such as the present, truly profitable, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, if we make application of what is here said in history, concerning Israel's trusting in Egypt, to ourselves, and the people of God, in spiritual things. Is it not an unnatural alliance for men in grace, to seek comfort from the men of the world? If at any time the waters of the sanctuary run low, will the cisterns of worldly enjoyments supply the place? Oh! the folly of God's people in mingling with the carnal! Surely it is impossible for one to touch pitch and not be defiled: and surely equally impossible is it for gracious minds to go among the worldly and the vain, and not wound the soul. Oh! for grace to be always

remembering those scriptures, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Isaiah, lii. 11. Rev. xviii. 4.

4 For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion, and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, *he* will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them; so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver *it*; and passing over he will preserve *it*.

Here the Lord condescends to make use of two beautiful similitudes, to point out his watchfulness over his people. The strength of the lion, and the solicitude of the bird, are brought in view in proof of it. Will the lion, hungry, and seeking for prey, be dashed with the appearance of poor timid shepherds, how many soever they are, who are anxious to save their lambs? Or will the birds, in their flying over their young, defend their lives at the hazard of their own; and shall not he that gave strength to the one, and tenderness to the other, abound both with strength and affection towards his people? Reader! seek grace to preserve alive in the soul that well founded confidence, which rests wholly upon Jehovah's own free, sovereign love and grace, and mercy towards his redeemed in Christ. Isaiah, xlix. 15, 16. Matt. 23, 37.

6 ¶ Turn ye unto *him from* whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

7 For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you *for* a sin.

8 Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man: and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

9 And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire *is* in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

It is blessed to observe how the Lord's precepts are frequently accompanied with promises; and his commands to his people to return to him, with giving the ability to return. See a beautiful illustration, Jerem.

xxxii. 18—20. And the provision for returning is blessedly set forth by another prophet, in reference to the blood of Christ, Zech. ix. 11, 12. And when these divine properties are wrought in the heart by grace, and the Lord hath prepared his people for his mercy; then the mercies prepared for them are given, and, as these other verses set forth, idols are thrown away, and all enemies, like the *Assyrian*, are considered as nought.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! pause over this chapter, and behold in it a confirmation of all the great and leading truths of God! All human strength is like the strength of Egypt; of no dependence in the hour of need; and all confidence therefore in it, will assuredly disappoint. Oh! how forcibly therefore doth this chapter, and indeed the whole scriptures of God, proclaim in our ears, *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherem is he to be accounted of?*

Blessed Lord Jesus! let every renewed view of man's nothingness, and of thy all-sufficiency, tend yet more and more to endear thee to my heart. Truly, Lord, I see that in vain is salvation looked for from the hills, or from the multitude of mountains. It is thou, and thou alone, O Lord, in thy blood and righteousness, that art the salvation of Israel. Do thou, blessed Jesus, as this chapter graciously sets forth, enable me, at all times, to pass by all other considerations, and get above all fears, and pass over to thee the strong hold of all thy redeemed. In thy Zion, thy Church, thou art, and ever will be, a wall of fire round about; and the furnace in Jerusalem, both for trying and purifying thy people. Lord! purify my soul among the sons of Levi, and let all my poor offerings be in thee, and by thee, that I may offer to the Lord an offering in thy righteousness.

CHAP. XXXII.

CONTENTS.

The prophet is soaring high in this chapter, and looking far into the blessed things to be brought to pass in gospel times. Under the reign of Christ's kingdom, he foretelleth the glorious events of it!

BEHOOLD, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

2 And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

In some of our old Bibles, the reading is rendered more strong, by defining the person to whom this refers. Behold *the* king. What king? Surely him whom Jehovah himself saith, *he hath set upon his holy hill of Zion*, Psalm, ii. 6. And the same copies read, and *that*

man? What man? Surely he that is to reign in righteousness when *the man that is God's fellow*, Zech. xiii. 7. We sadly enervate scripture, when we mix up human things with divine. Some have supposed that this scripture is a prophecy concerning the reign of the good king Hezekiah; but how then could this be a *prophecy*, when it was delivered at the very time of Hezekiah's reign? Was it needful to tell the people by prophecy, of the goodness of a reign, when they were enjoying it? Moreover, those who fancy it hath the smallest allusion to Hezekiah, should shew the fulfilment of it. So far was the reign of Hezekiah from being a fence and a security to the people, that the poor man himself was thrown into a terrible fright when the enemy came up to invade his land, *chap. xxxvii. 1.* And add to all these considerations, it must be confessed, that after all that can be said of the worth and goodness of Hezekiah, never could such things be said of him, nor indeed of any one among the fallen sons of men, as are here said of that king, whose reign was to be in righteousness. I hope I shall be forgiven if I err, but I cannot but conclude, that all the blessed events which are here spoken of, are wholly to be looked for under him, and his auspicious reign of grace in the hearts of his people, whose name is the **LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**; Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6. Zech. ix. 9. Psalm, xlv. 1—6. And if we wholly set aside all thoughts of Hezekiah, and view JESUS, then we shall enter by faith, and under the leadings and teachings of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to glorify the Lord Jesus, into a sweet enjoyment of what is said in this precious chapter. Then we shall see that this righteous King, this holy Man, is reigning indeed now, in the present hour, and his reign of grace is come. In his spiritual kingdom, he is a refuge against all the wind of spiritual temptations, persecutions, afflictions, and the like. And he is no less a fountain of waters, and streams from Lebanon, in the consolations of his Holy Spirit amidst all the dry and thirsty frames of his redeemed. Song. iv. 15. Psalm, xlvi. 4. John, vii. 37—39.

3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

4 The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly:

5 The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said *to be* bountiful:

6 For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

7 The instruments also of the churl *are* evil: he

deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

8 But the liberal deviseth liberal things: and by liberal things shall he stand.

It would enlarge this *Commentary* to an extent indeed, were I to analyze the several verses here brought together, and say the half of what might be said in the paraphrase upon them. But all the blessed effects here spoken of, may be well supposed to result from the Redeemer's kingdom in the hearts of his people, when Jesus reigns and rules there, the Lord over every passion. Reader! what I would particularly desire you to do while reading these verses, is the same conduct as I pray for grace to observe in my own instance, I mean, to ask and inquire whether our eyes be no longer dim; if our ears be hearkening; and if, with heart and tongue, we are blessing him who reigneth in righteousness? For if we truly belong to his kingdom, then hath he opened our eyes, and unstopped our ears, and formed both our hearts and tongues to speak to his praise. See what the prophet said was to mark the æra of his reign, *Isaiah*, xxxv. 4—6; then turn to the gospel in proof of it, *Matt.* xi. 5; and then once more look within, and mark well if there be a suitable correspondence there!

9 ¶ Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.

10 Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.

11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird *sackcloth* upon your loins.

12 They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.

13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:

14 Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

16 Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings; and in quiet resting places ;

19 When it shall hail, coming down on the forest ; and the city shall be low in a low place.

20 Blessed *are* ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth *thither* the feet of the ox and the ass.

I include the whole of these blessed verses under one reading, for the sake of shortness. How very gracious is this call to all careless and inconsiderate persons ; and how strikingly doth the Prophet set forth the awful judgments which must fall upon those, that slight the invitation to mercy ; while, at the same time, he sets forth the security and happiness of those that accept it. Reader ! the Lord grant, if consistent with his mind and will, that you and I may be among the number of those, the Prophet pronounceth blessed, from sitting round those rich waters of grace, beside which *the great Shepherd of Israel feeds his sheep ?*

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL ! thou King of righteousness ! whom Jehovah hath set for his own King in Zion ! Let my soul trace thee, and feast on thy glories, while I behold thee on thine holy hill ! Truly, Lord, by thine own right, as one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, thou art Jehovah, Lord of all ! But let me view thee in that softened and endeared light, as Christ the Mediator, King of kings, and Lord of lords. For here, Lord, I behold thee as possessing all power, in heaven and on earth. And in the special government of thy spiritual kingdom, let me behold the righteousness, judgment, and peaceableness of it. Almighty Sovereign of thy people, do thou take to thyself thy great power, and reign and rule in the hearts of all thy subjects. Surely, Lord, it belongs to thee, for the kingdom is thine, by gift, and by purchase ; by conquest, and by surrender, to order, arrange, appoint, and regulate all the administration of it. And surely it is no less thy sole prerogative, to bring down all thine enemies under thy feet. To thee it belongs to pardon the penitent, to be bountiful to the needy, to comfort the distressed, and to hold forth the sceptre of mercy to the guilty. Yea, Lord, all grace is thine in thy kingdom here ; and the glory will be thine, in thy kingdom for ever. Oh ! Lord Jesus ! be thou all, and more than all, that this sweet scripture represents thee ; *an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.* Let thy people, as thou hast said, *dwell in peaceable habitations* : yea, Lord, let them dwell in thee, and then *the work of thy righteousness will be peace, and the effect of thy righteousness will be quietness and assurance for ever.* Amen.

CHAP. XXXIII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains a mingled subject of divine judgment and divine mercies. The enemies of God and his Church are threatened, and his people comforted.

WOE to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; *and* when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

If this denunciation be directed, as it should seem to be, being personal, to any particular character or nation, the Assyrian must be the one evidently intended. In proof, let the Reader consult 2 Kings, xviii. 11. and xix. 35, 36. And for the full ruin, See Dan. iv. 28, to the end.

2 O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

What a sweet, though short prayer! And if it refers to the former history of the invasion of Samaria, by the king of Assyria, how speedily was it answered.

3 At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.

4 And your spoil shall be gathered *like* the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.

5 The LORD is exalted: for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.

6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, *and* strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD *is* his treasure.

7 Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without; the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.

8 The highways lie waste, the way-faring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.

9 The earth mourneth *and* languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed *and* hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness: and Bashan and Carmel shake off *their fruits*.

10 Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.

11 Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you.

12 And the people shall be *as* the burnings of lime: *as* thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

If the Prophet be here speaking of general things, the whole will be suited to all times, in the Church. God's faithfulness is the same: the efficacy of Christ's blood and righteousness, the same: and the blessed effect of both, the same, on the minds of the people. When Jehöovah ariseth in grace upon the hearts of his redeemed, how is he exalted in glory to their view!

13 ¶ Hear, ye *that are* far off, what I have done; and, ye *that are* near, acknowledge my might.

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

If temporal judgments, like those which God wrought upon the *Assyrian* army, had such effect upon the sinners in Zion, what will be the terror and dismay of transgressors, in the prospect of the everlasting judgments of God? And, Reader, do not fail to remark, that these things are here said, not of sinners in general, but Zion's sinners more especially; the Christ-despising sinners, who count *the blood of the covenant* an unholy thing. Jerem. xii. 5. Heb. x. 29.

15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of brides, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

16 He shall dwell on high: his place of defence *shall be* the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him: his water *shall be* sure.

17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

What a string of rich promises are here, like so many pearls for the believer's neck! What is it to walk righteously, but to walk in Christ, and with Christ? Coloss. ii. 6. And what is it to despise the gain of oppressions and the like, but, under the sweet influences of grace, to live as becometh the gospel of Christ: *to put off the old man which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?* See the portrait at the full, Ephes. iv. 21—25. And what will be the consequence of this life of faith? *He shall dwell on high;* in Jesus out of the reach of danger. Being one with Christ, he is saved in Christ. No arrow from the shaft of the enemy shall touch him. *No weapon formed against him shall prosper.* But these blessings are not all. His place of defence shall be *the munitions of rocks.* He shall be hid out of sight, out of reach, out of danger, in times of general calamities, when *the sinners in Zion are afraid.* And though in rocks, and retired corners, yet *his bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure.* Precious promises! And as full and sure, in spiritual things, to the people of God, as in temporals. For though hid from men, his eyes shall see *Jesus in his beauty.* And he will be to him both the *bread of life and the water of life:* all he needs in time, and all his blessedness to all eternity. John, vi. 35.

18 Thine heart shall meditate terror, Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers.

19 Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, *that thou canst not understand.*

20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle *that shall not be taken down;* not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the chords thereof be broken.

21 But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a place of broad rivers *and* streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

22 For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our law-giver, the LORD *is* our king, he will save us.

23 Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.

24 And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein *shall be forgiven their iniquity.*

These precious things are said, to carry off the minds of the people from the terrors of the approaching captivity, to the prospect of gospel times, which should be accomplished by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The *Assyrians*, and those which would lead Israel into bondage, would be a fierce people, and of a language the Hebrews could not understand: But, saith the Lord, let Zion be comforted in the prospect of his coming, whose advent shall be in righteousness, and who bringeth salvation for ever! Oh! how truly blessed is it to read those rich promises, with an eye to Jesus! And now we who live in gospel-times have seen them accomplished; what unspeakable mercies have they all found, who have truly found them in Jesus, and Jesus in them! In him and his complete salvation, we are indeed come to that blessed climate, where sickness, sorrow, and death, in the final consequences of it, are done away; and we hear him, in his glorious character, proclaimed, JEHOVAH ROPHE, *I am the Lord that healeth thee*, Exod. xv. 26.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord! I would pass by all other reflections, profitable as they might otherwise be, if I had not thee in view, to look at my Lord Jesus, under some of those most sweet and precious revelations which thy servant the Prophet has given of thee in this chapter. Here I see thee, Lord, the true, the lawful king in Zion! Here I behold thee, the glorious Lord in the midst of thy people! Yes, blessed Jesus, thou wilt be indeed, and thou hast been in all ages, *a place of broad rivers and streams*. For what though thy Church, like Jerusalem of old, hath no navigable seas, nor gallant ships, nor frontiers of her own, to keep her from the common foe; yet if Jesus, in his own person be all these, and more, who shall attack, or dare approach to hurt? What proud galley with oars shall row to the hurt of thine anointed, while Jesus is himself the broad river, and streams of waters? Oh! precious Lord! how eternally secure must they be, who have a God in Christ for their judge; a God in Christ for their lawgiver; and a God in Christ for their king! Take me, dear Lord, under thy protection, and be thou to me, Jesus: for then I shall no longer say, *I am sick*, when thou hast forgiven, and taken away all iniquity, and *cast all my sins into the depths of the sea!*

CHAP. XXXIV.

CONTENTS.

In this chapter we have the Lord's judgments declared, which shall finally and fully take place on all out of Christ. Explained and illustrated by the gospel standard, it becomes the same, as all the sacred writers of the New Testament declare, concerning the final judgments of God.

COME near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken,
ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is

therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

2 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and *his* fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

4 And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig-tree

The manner in which the Lord, by his servant the Prophet, opens this chapter, is very striking, and not unsimilar to other places on the same subject. When the Lord speaks, well may man hear; Ezek. ix. 1. Micah, vi. 2. It is only for the Reader to turn to those scriptures, to discover, how both prophets and apostles agree in this same thing; 2 Peter, iii. 10. Matthew, xxiv. 29, 30. Rev. vi. 12—14.

5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

7 And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

8 For *it is* the day of the LORD's vengeance, *and* the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

I pass over the several particulars in these verses, which mean one and the same thing, of God's judgments, differently set forth, to call the Reader's attention to that striking one folded up in them of *the Lord's sacrifice in Bozrah*. Is there not in this an allusion to the same person and sacrifice, as the prophet in a vision relates to us in the sixty-third chapter? I beg the Reader to turn to it, and pause over the sub-

ject. Who but Christ, is the sacrifice of Jehovah? Who but Christ was seen coming from Bozrah, in his dyed garments of blood? And was not this *the day of vengeance, and the year of the Lord's redeemed?*

9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

11 ¶ But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

12 They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none *shall be* there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

13 And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, *and* a court for owls.

14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

15 There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

If we read these scriptures through the medium of the gospel, and drop the similitudes in the realities, we shall find an exact description of the human heart, void of grace; and the dreadful condition of all such as live and die in an unregenerate state.

16 ¶ Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.

17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they

shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

Here the Lord seems to refer to the prediction, when the fulfilment arrives. As if the Lord had said, "Let such as behold the desolations here spoken of, look back, and mark how I predicted them, and now faithfully my word is accomplished." It is a solemn truth, though but seldom regarded as it ought, that the very name of JEHOVAH ALOHEIM, (*God in covenant*) implies, that the Lord is, and will be, equally true to his threatenings, as to his promises: for all shall prove him *the faithful God*; Deut. vii. 9, 10.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! here is a very solemn chapter, full of awful threatenings, from beginning to end. And, as we read what is here said, may we not, though from the mouth of one, who while professing a knowledge of God, in works denied him, take up the same language, and say as he did, *God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

Almighty Lord! may my soul lie low in the dust before thy divine majesty. And although looking up with humble hopes of acceptance in, and through the person, blood, and righteousness of thy dear Son; yet, Lord, my very flesh trembleth when I think of thy judgments. Thou hast said, and sure it must be accomplished, thou wilt be a *swift witness*. And oh! how exact, how unanswerably true, must be thy testimony! Not one action can be unknown to thee; not a thought escape thy notice. Oh! ye sons of men! think, ere it be too late, how tremendous will be the judgment of all that slight or despise the only possible means of escaping the wrath to come. What everlasting paleness, dread, and horror, will be upon all faces who have rejected Christ, the one only ordinance of Jehovah for salvation! *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

CHAP. XXXV.

CONTENTS.

This chapter is as full of blessed promises to God's church, as the former was full of threatenings to God's enemies. Under the richest similitudes, is set forth the auspicious era of Christ's reign: every verse in it is full of gospel.

THE wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall

be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God.

Under the figure of a barren land, and a wilderness, is set forth the ruined state of man's nature by the fall; than which, nothing can be more forlorn. The prophet represents it as most desolate. But by the coming of Christ, who ariseth as the sun, with healing in his wings, fruitfulness, gladness, and joy, take place of the barrenness and poverty. The Hebrew expression is very strong, it shall *flourishing flourish, or blossoming blossom*. I do not presume to say so, and speak decidedly upon the passage, but I humbly conceive, that a *flourishing flourish* means 'the graces of the Church shall be so much in Christ, and from Christ, in the union and oneness between him and his people; that the *blossoming blossom* will be unceasingly kept up, and remain alive in him, as the branch in the vine.' And if the Hebrew expression be supposed to imply this, the Reader will observe, that there is more in it, than in all the most flourishing circumstances of a church or people, where the source and cause is not from within in Jesus, but from without, from any other auspicious circumstances. Colos. iii. 3, 4. John, xv. 4, 5. I only detain the Reader to remark, with what holy joy ought we of the Gentile Church, to read this blessed scripture, which hath a peculiar reference to the poor wilderness state of the heathen world! Song, viii. 5. Acts, xi. 18.

3 ¶ Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

4 Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come, *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence: he will come and save you.

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6 Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

How delightfully the prophet preacheth consolation to the Old Testament saints, in the prospect of their coming Saviour! This was the one source of holy joy, to which the holy men of old were uniformly directed, when at any time exercises arose. *He that was to come* became the running verse of the faithful's song. Matt. xi. 2, 3. Luke, ii. 25—32. And under the New Testament dispensation, what is it but the same, to give strength to the hands that hang down, in the assurance that he that is to come brings with him the credentials of his commission, in performing the mighty miracles here described, as should be accomplished; Matt. xi. 5. Mark, vii. 32. I pray the Reader not to overlook the glories of his person, of whom these things

are said, and in the power of his Godhead, by whom they were to be wrought! And with these impressions upon his mind, let him turn to the gospel, and see Jesus, the Lord of life and glory, accomplishing wonders, in nature and grace, both on the bodies and souls of his people!

7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it: but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

9 No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk *there*:

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

See how the blessings of redemption, in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are beautifully set forth, under the similitude of rivers and streams of water. And when that Holy Spirit came down, agreeably to our Lord's own blessed promise, on the day of Pentecost; and ever since, when he comes down on the souls of his people, is not the Spirit poured out from on high, which makes every plant in the garden of Jesus to flourish? What is that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, but God in his threefold character of persons; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; from whom, as from an ocean, all the streams of spiritual life, grace, comfort, and consolation, flow? I pray the Reader to consult some of the numberless scriptures where these truths abound; Psalm, xlvi. 4. John, vii. 37—39. Isaiah, lv. 1. John, iv. 10—14. Rev. xxii. 1, 2. Reader! do not fail to remark, how full of blessings this chapter is, in promises to the redeemed. The close of the chapter forms indeed a short, but comprehensive description of the safety and felicity of the Church, until grace is consummated in glory. There shall be a *way* for the redeemed to come; and this shall be an *highway*; a way not to be mistaken: in which there shall be no lion nor ravenous beast. Every redeemed soul shall travel it; the unclean shall not pass it; but the wayfaring man shall not err in finding it, however weak in other things his understanding may be. And the whole ransomed shall pass it, and sing the song of redemption, with everlasting joy, when sorrow and sighing is done away for ever. And who doth not see in all this, the whole outlines of redemption plainly marked? Jesus is *the way, and the truth,*

and the life. And as none cometh to the Father but by him; so all and every one that doth come, *he will in no wise cast out*, John, xiv. 6. and vi. 37. And Jesus is the highway, and *the way of holiness*; for the holiness of his redeemed is in him, and by him. And what is an highway, but a way open to travellers? Every poor traveller to Zion can go no other way; neither will the king of it, even Jesus, suffer such as are asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, to err in the way. *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* They shall hear a voice behind them, saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.* Neither shall that roving lion, the devil, overcome, nor even exercise the travellers in this way unnecessarily. Jesus hath conquered him for them; and will finally conquer him in them. One perpetual song belongs to the redeemed; and, saith this scripture, they shall sing it in their coming and return. Reader, by way of confirmation, turn to those scriptures, Jerem. 1. 4, 5. Song, iii. 3. Isaiah, xxx. 21. 1 Cor. x. 13. Rev. vii. 9 to the end.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! was there ever a sweeter scripture of description, concerning the blessings of Jesus and his salvation, than what this chapter affords? Behold how the mind of Jehovah hath been occupied from everlasting, and in all ages, to comfort his Church in the prospect of the coming Saviour? Think of the infinite love of Jehovah, in not only providing redemption, and in such a way; but also in preparing the minds of his redeemed for the full enjoyment of it, when the Son of God should come. Under these impressions, look into the gospel, and behold how minutely every feature of the Lord Jesus corresponded to the prophet's prediction. And then, above all, as it concerns your own everlasting welfare, look narrowly, whether all the blessings here spoken of in Jesus, and by Jesus, be indeed *your* portion. My brother! do, I beseech you, bring home the general mercies of redemption to your own personal and particular state and circumstances. Hath the wilderness of your own fallen state by nature, been made by grace to blossom as a rose? In the dry parched soil of your own corrupt heart, hath the Holy Ghost been poured out by his regenerating influences, and made the streams of his renewing fruitfulness to abound? Have your blind eyes been opened, and your deaf ears unstopped? Healed by Jesus, is your lameness done away, so that in his name and righteousness you can, and do now leap as an hart; and your tongue, that was once dumb, can, and doth speak of his salvation plainly?

Oh! ye chief of sinners! who are blind, and ignorant of the way of righteousness, behold Jesus is the way, and the highway, in which none that are found walking shall ever err! Oh! ye who have spent your strength for nought, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, hearken diligently to the Prophet's call. He is commanded to say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong; behold your God shall come and save you! Precious Lord Jesus! do thou come and save, come and bless, come and guide thy redeemed home to thy Zion which is above! Help all thy redeemed to sing now the song of redemp-

tion, in this house of our pilgrimage: and ere long to sing it for ever before thy throne of glory, *in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* Amen.

CHAP. XXXVI.

CONTENTS.

In this, and the three following chapters, the prophet is relating somewhat of the history of the Church, and not delivering a prophecy. He relates in this chapter, the descent of the king of Assyria upon Judah; and dwells largely upon the arrogant blasphemy of his general, Rabshakeh.

NOW it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.

2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.

3 Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Helkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son the recorder.

4 ¶ And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

5 I say, sayest thou (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war; now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

6 Lo, thou trusteth in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.

7 But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God; is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?

8 Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give

thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

9 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

10 And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

11 ¶ Then said Eliakim and Shebua and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall.

12 ¶ But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? *hath he not sent me* to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you.

13 Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.

14 Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you.

15 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

16 Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make *an agreement* with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;

17 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

18 *Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria.

19 Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

20 Who *are they* among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

21 But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

22 ¶ Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

As the great object of this Commentary is to bring the scriptures in a way of explanation to the humblest capacities, and at the same time to suit the scantiest pockets; I think it unnecessary to say more on this chapter, than to make reference to what hath been already offered on this same history, in the Poor Man's Commentary, on the Second Book of the Kings. If the Reader will consult what was said on the 18th, 19th, and 20th Chapters of the Kings, he will find what I hope the Lord will bless to his perusal; to that scripture, therefore, and the observations upon it, I refer him: I only beg him to remark the importance of the scripture itself, as a history, in the Church of God, which cannot be more evident than from this one circumstance, that God the Holy Ghost hath caused it to be *twice* recorded. My motive for passing it over here, without further observations, I hope the Reader will not mistake; it is to avoid unnecessary repetitions, and rather to lead to the seeking of divine teaching. May the Lord, again and again, bless the perusal of it, both to Writer and Reader, to the divine glory, and to our furtherance in salvation.

CHAPTERS 37, 38, 39.

AND it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

2 And he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

3 And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth.

4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that is left.

5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

6 ¶ And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 ¶ So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

9 And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and thou shalt be delivered?

12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of Eden which *were* in Telassar?

13 Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

15 And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,

16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

17 Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.

18 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid wast all the nations, and their countries.

19 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD, *even* thou only.

21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:

22 This *is* the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to

scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

23 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy One of Israel.

24 By thy servants hast thou reproached the LORD, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, *and* the choice fir-trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, *and* the forest of his Carmel.

25 I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.

26 Hast thou not heard long ago, *how* I have done it; *and* of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities, *into* ruinous heaps.

27 Therefore their inhabitants *were* of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the house-tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up.

28 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

29 Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

30 And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat *this* year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards; and eat the fruit thereof.

31 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:

32 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion; the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

33 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.

34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

35 For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

36 ¶ Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.

37 ¶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

38 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisrock his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,

3 And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good* in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

4 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,

5 Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

7 And this *shall be* a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken.

8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun-dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

9 ¶ The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

10 I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.

11 I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

12 Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a Shepherd's tent; I have cut off like a weaver my life; he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.

13 I reckoned till morning; *that*, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.

14 Like a crane, *or* a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with looking* upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done *it*: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

16 O LORD, by these *things men* live, and in all these *things is* the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

17 Behold for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it* from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death can *not* celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do* this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

20 The LORD *was ready* to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.

21 For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay *it* for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover.

22 Hezekiah also had said, What *is* the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD.

CHAP. XXXIX.

AT that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.

2 And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious

ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

3 ¶ Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, they are come from a far country unto me, *even* from Babylon.

4 Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that *is* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

5 Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:

6 Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

7 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

8 Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

CHAP. XL.

CONTENTS.

At this Chapter, the Prophet begins a sermon, and a most blessed one it is, which continues to the very close of his prophecy. It is all pure gospel from beginning to end. The Holy Ghost commands the Prophet to comfort his Church with proclamations of the Redeemer's coming, and the blessed events of his reign.

COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

Reader! do not fail to remark the Lord's gracious commands for comforting his people; he *doubles* it. Not that we are to suppose there was any reluctance on the part of Isaiah to perform this blessed service; but certain it is, that the most forward of God's servants, in becoming sons of consolation, are not half so earnest in this employment as the Lord is. And do not fail to remark yet further, that, let the world say what they please, there is a people whom the Lord owns, and whom he will have comforted; yea, and he will be himself their comfort. And must it not be a blessed service, to be the ministers and instruments, in the Lord's hand, to this, the Lord's employment? And will not the Reader be anxious to remark how, and with what comfortable words, the Lord commands his people to be comforted? Let him pause over what is here said, and read the words again. Jerusalem, the guilty city, the bloody city, yea, the city of slaughter, where the butchery of all the prophets took place, and where the Lord of the prophets should, in after-ages, die upon the cross; this place, this people, shall have all her sins pardoned! And, agreeably to this, immediately upon the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, when he gave his final commission to his disciples, to go forth with the offer of salvation to all the world; Jesus commanded them to *begin at Jerusalem*, Luke, xxiv. 47. One should have thought, (speaking after the manner of men) that Jerusalem would have been excepted in the general grant; and that there, if any where, the Lord would have said, Go not. But, *the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither his ways our ways*. One thought more on this most blessed passage: what doth the Lord mean by Jerusalem having *received double for all her sins*? Surely it means, what is literally true, that in the person of her Lord, the atonement he made for sin was of such infinite value, that it not only compensated for all the evil done by sin, but, over and above, left such a redundancy of merit, as might be well called double, and such as will never be accounted for in the blessings of pardon, and peace, and glory, and happiness to all eternity. Reader! I beseech you, often, yea, very often, turn to this sweet scripture, and think of Jesus!

3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

All the Prophets, with one voice, proclaimed the coming Saviour; but John the Baptist was eminently pointed out as the immediate herald and harbinger of our Lord; Matt. iii. 1—3. Mal. iii. 1. If the passage be read, as undoubtedly it should be read, spiritually, the humbling principles of grace, in preparing for the cordial reception of the Saviour, will fully explain the lowering of mountains, and making straight the crooked. And how is the *glory* of Christ revealed, in accomplishing those things in the hearts of his people? Precious Jesus! let every thought be brought low, that thou, and thou alone, mayest be exalted! 2 Cor. x. 5.

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the godliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field.

7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it, surely the people *is* grass.

8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

In these verses of the Prophet's sermon, he draws a striking contrast between the fading, dying purposes of man, and the incorruptible and never-ending counsels of God! And the Apostle Peter makes a beautiful comment upon it, 1 Peter, i. 23—25.

9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength: lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

10 Behold, the Lord God will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs, with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead these that are with young.

This is a most beautiful address to Zion, the gospel church of Jesus, and to Jerusalem the beloved city. Some have thought that it had an allusion to the proclamation made by Cyrus, for the people in Babylon to return from their captivity; but certainly the grand and leading object was, to tell poor captive sinners in Zion, of their recovery from sin and Satan, by the Lord Jesus. For here are the well known character-offices of Christ. Will enemies oppose them? the Lord's strong arm shall cast them down. Are Jesus's sheep weak and tender? His compassion will be suited for them. The lamb unable to walk, he will carry in his bosom, John, x. 11. I must not forget to observe, that

some have read the passage of *Behold the Lord 'God will come with strong hand; Behold the Adonai shall come against the strong one; meaning the devil; and his arm shall rule for him; they have rendered, shall rule over him.* And if the words be accepted in this sense, as well as the other, they are not only most blessed, but agreeable to all the divine truths. Our Lord himself beautifully illustrates the doctrine, under the figure of *a strong man being overcome by a stronger.* Luke xi. 15—22. Isaiah, xlix. 24—26. John, xii. 31. Coloss. ii. 15. Heb. ii. 14. 1 John, iii. 8. Reader! do not fail to remark the blessed views this short but sweet passage gives of the Lord Jesus. He is described as destroying all his and his Church's enemies, as a King; while feeding, nourishing, and protecting his people, with all the tenderness of a Shepherd.

12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?

14 With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

15 Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

16 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

17 All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

18 To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

Some have thought that the person of God the Father is here spoken of, because the Church is taught to look up to Him with peculiar reverence of character, as the Creator. But, as the church is never taught to look up to God the Father, in this glorious distinction of character, to the exclusion of the other persons of the Godhead, but always in conjunction with them, I see no reason to break the connection of the chapter, by supposing that what went before, and which is evidently spoken of the person of Christ, as Mediator, is not continued through this passage also. In all the acts of creation, as well as of redemption,

the word of God tells us, that every-manifestation of Jehovah is in and through the person, offices, and character of our Lord Jesus Christ; Heb. i. 1, 2. And if we read this sublime description in the person of the Lord Jesus, as the glorious Head of his Church and people; and while we read it (and which seems to have been the design for which it is given) recollect our interest in him; oh! how blessed doth every word then come home to the soul, to comfort, to encourage, and to give confidence to every redeemed sinner. Reader! read again and again these verses. Recollect what was said before of Jesus's tenderness as a Shepherd, and here see how *great* he is, who was there said to be so *gracious*. Blend both views in one; then say, how safe, how eternally safe and secure, must that redeemed soul be, however poor, however little and insignificant in himself, who is truly one with Him, whose *power* takes up the isles as a very little thing; whose *wisdom* measures the waters, and meteth out the heavens; and to whom the nations are *but as the drop of the bucket*? Reader! have you an interest in this omnipotent Jesus, in whom are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*? Make this the subject of inquiry, as one of the most blessed improvements of this scripture, and then you will enter into a full apprehension of what the Prophet saith: how impossible is it to find any to whom to liken Jesus, and how impossible it is to enrich him by any services of his creatures, before whom Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. And how truly blessed is it, moreover, to contemplate this sovereignty of our Lord Jesus, in the *new* creation of the soul, while reading such sublime instances of the *old* creation in nature!

19 The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

20 He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree *that* will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved.

21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

22 *It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in;

23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown; yea, their stock shall not take

root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Who but must feel humbled to the very dust of the earth, while reading, in these verses, the sad state to which man is reduced by the fall? We see man so prone to idolatry, that if the poor creature be so poor, that he cannot have a *golden* image to fall down to, he will be content with a *wooden* one, nay, any dunghill-god, rather than the true God. Reader, be not offended with the remark, for, depend upon it, it is founded in truth: Every son and daughter of Adam is equally disposed, by nature, to the same folly: It is grace makes all the difference. For even those whose pride would seem to revolt at the idea, owe their preservation from idolatry to the teaching they have received from the very scriptures of God; which yet, through the pride of reason, they believe but in part. See, in proof, a just but melancholy portrait of human nature, drawn by an apostle, Romans, i. 18, to the end.

26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth.

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding.

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

As the Prophet's commission opened, so the chapter is closed, in giving a special comfort to the Lord's people. It is impossible to conceive in the whole compass of language, any thing more gracious, more affectionate, or kind, than what is here said, in the Lord's love, to Israel.

Every glorious perfection of Jehovah, and all his covenant relations, seem here to be brought forward, to give confidence to his people, in the security of his promises. It would be to injure the blessed passage, to attempt any comment upon it. Every word is so plain, so sweet, and so gracious, that he who is taught of God, can not possibly mistake the meaning; and the soul that is under the influences of the Holy Ghost, must receive the comfort of it. And how very tender is the Lord's manner of expostulating with his people, on the unreasonableness of their timidity! *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel?* Reader! may the Lord give you and me grace to enjoy the full blessedness of what is here said. Thousands, who are gone to glory, have been, while on earth, refreshed by it; and thousands there are still to be supported by the same, during their pilgrimage state below. Oh! for the Lord, who gives the scripture, to give to you and to me, by his holy Spirit, the enjoyment of the Lord in his scripture, and then shall we rest in the supports of a God all-sufficient and all-gracious in Christ, to rise above all the changeable circumstances of creatures in us, and about us, until we come to lie down in the everlasting arms of our Lord, in the kingdom which is above.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! hear what thy Lord saith in this blessed chapter, and behold how he hath both commanded his people to be comforted, and provided every means for their comfort. Precious Lord Jesus! in thee and thy great salvation, I do indeed see a most blessed and suitable provision for pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; yea, Lord, in thy full and finished redemption, I do behold how Jehovah hath received more than an equivalent, yea double for all the sins of thy people. And shall not my soul rejoice and be comforted in the consolation? Shall not my very heart leap for joy, and my poor tongue, that was dumb by nature, be ready to sing plainly? Yea, Lord, I will sing, and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, and thou art become my salvation. I will call upon all within me, and all without me, to join in the joyful service. I will say, with the Prophet, *Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*

But chiefly shall my note of praise be directed to thee, O Lord. While I enjoy the gift, I will bless the Giver; and in the moment when I feel the blessedness of salvation, I will feel yet more the blessedness that Jesus himself is my salvation. Oh! thou gracious Shepherd of thy people! here I behold thee, in all the tenderness of that office; and how truly delightful is it to my soul, that while I read of thee as revealing thyself under such graciousness of characters, I know thee in the full realization of every one of them in my heart, as the great Shepherd of my soul. Never suffer me to lose sight of thy love, O Lord, nor of the power and wisdom which thou possess-est, and by which all the necessities of my soul must be answered. No, Lord, suffer me not to suppose, even for a moment only, that my way hidden from the Lord, or my judgment

passed over from my God. I know, Lord, that thou seest me, and knowest me, with every minute circumstance belonging to me; yea, Lord, it is thou who orderest, and appointest, and regulatest, and will finally bless all. Help me then to wait always upon thee, that, like the eagle, I may renew my strength. For, sure I am, my Lord never faints himself, nor is he weary of helping his poor ones. And, while I am waiting upon Jesus, and looking after him, Jesus, I know, hath been before hand with me, and is looking after me. Precious Lord! comfort me with thyself, and I shall be strong indeed, *and never weary: I shall walk and not faint!*

CHAP. XLI.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet continues his sermon through this Chapter, which he had begun in the former. The chief points here dwelt upon, are the proofs of God's power and grace, in testimony of his Godhead, both in creation and redemption, in opposition to all the idols which the corruption of man's fallen nature hath set up.

KEEP silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew *their* strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

It should seem that this verse forms an immediate inference from the last verse of the former chapter. Silent waiting upon the Lord, at his footstool, when drawing nigh, in and through Jesus, being the way to renew the spiritual strength; it were to be wished, that this humbleness of soul, and waiting for the Lord's preparation to approach his throne, were more considered than it is; for it is very awful to rush into the presence of the Lord, as the unthinking horse rusheth to the battle. See those scriptures, Eccles. v. 2. Prov. xvi. 1. James, i. 17. and Psalm lxii. 1. as the margin renders it, *silent* before God.

2 Who raised up the righteous *man* from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made *him* rule over kings? he gave *them* as the dust to his sword, *and* as driven stubble to his bow.

3 He pursued them, *and* passed safely; *even* by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet.

4 Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; *I am* he.

In these verses, Jehovah challengeth the inquiry into his sovereignty and power, that the eternity of his nature, and the graciousness of his purposes in redemption, may be fully proved. And, in the instance of

Abraham, the great father of the faithful, as it should seem, is meant, the righteous man. See Gen. xv. 6. Rom. iv. 3, 11. The *Chaldee* paraphrase renders the words, *who brought Abraham publicly from the East*. And it should seem that the Lord refers, in Abraham's instance, to the slaughter of the kings; Gen. xiv. 14—16. But what is yet more particularly to be regarded, in the illustration of these verses of the Prophet, is that Jehovah seems to point to the sovereignty of his distinguishing grace, in the call of Abraham. Who was it called this righteous man? And what righteousness was it he had, but the righteousness of faith in the promised redemption by Christ? And who gave him this faith? Oh! how truly blessed is it to trace the Lord's hand as the first and predisposing cause, in all dispensations, whether of providence or grace? But while we behold Abraham, let us not overlook Christ. Who raised up Jesus, the Holy One of Israel, in his mediatorial character, and gave nations before him, and made him universal Lord of angels and of men? Here is the sum and substance of the scripture, to which the whole points, and in which the whole centres. Christ is indeed the Christ of God. Acts, iii. 26. Luke, ix. 20.

5 The isles saw *it*, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.

6 They helped every one his neighbour; and *every one* said to his brother, Be of good courage.

7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth *with* the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, *It is ready for the soldering*: and he fastened it with nails, *that* it should not be moved.

It is enough to read the account which the Lord here gives of idolatry, to behold the folly of it to the full. One sinner encouraging another, is among the devices of Satan, to blind the eyes of all. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

8 But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

9 *Thou* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, *Thou art* my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

10 ¶ Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

I beg the Reader to pause over these blessed verses, and inquire, with me, whether it be not the Lord Jesus that is here spoken to by Jehovah, when beholding him as the Husband and Head of his Church and people? There can be no doubt that such is the case in that similar passage, Isaiah, xlix. 3. for there the Lord Jesus is surely the Speaker. And, indeed, those blessed promises which follow, must confirm it. For all the promises of the Bible are first made to the Person of Christ, and then in Him, they are all *yea and amen to his people*. And, if we accept the passage in this delightful view, what beauty and glory do we discover in it? Reader! think what condescension there must be in thy Lord, that there should be a communication of names between Christ and his people, as well as an union and interest in all that Christ hath, as Redeemer. Was it not enough, thou dear Lord, that thy Church should be called by thy name; but wilt thou be called by her's? *Is this the manner of men, O Lord God?* No, surely! It is indeed customary for women to take the name of their husbands, but it is peculiar to the love and condescension of our Jesus, to call himself *Israel*, to shew his love and oneness with his spouse, the Church; 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19. When the Reader hath duly pondered the gracious promises, made by Jehovah, to this glorious Israel of ours, even our Christ, to whom they were certainly made, and in whom they were certainly fulfilled, with all their precious *yeas* and *amens*: (see some more of the same kind, Psalm lxxxix. 20—29; and then see the reasons for them, Heb. v. 7—10.) when the Reader has satisfied his mind on this grand point, let him then remember, for his personal comfort and interest in the same, that what is given to Christ, as the Head of his Church, is given also to his people in him, as his body; and from an union with him, they are interested in every one. See in proof, 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. 2 Cor. i. 20.

11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, *even* them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Read the gospel, and behold the confirmation of these promises, for there needs no more; John, xviii. 4—6.

14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt

thresh the mountains, and beat *them* small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, *and* shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

If the Reader will observe, he will find that all these blessed promises are made to one individual person; and, to whom could these things be said, but to the person of our Lord? As Christ himself is the great promise of the Bible, so every promise is first made to Him, and then to his people in Him. Without an union with him, there can be no pretension to a single promise. The charter of grace is: *Men shall be blessed in Him*; Psalm lxxii. 17. The Reader will not see any objection to this doctrine, from Christ's being called *Jacob*. That difficulty will be at once removed, from what was offered in the observations on the preceding verses: Christ not only condescends to call himself by his Church's name; but God the Father (graciously to his people) beholds him, and speaks to him, under this same name; chap. xlix. 3. And the Reader will find a farther confirmation of this blessed doctrine, if he will consult what Christ said of himself, under the spirit of prophecy, by his servant David: *I am a worm* (said that holy and lowly Lamb of God) *and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people*; Psalm xxii. 6. Oh! how truly refreshing to my soul is it, in the moment of writing, to trace Jesus in these most blessed scriptures, under such precious views, as tend to endear Him more and more to the heart. And, Reader! be not hurt, nor let your faith stagger, that such promises were needful for Christ to receive, and to have fulfilled. For the human nature of Christ, though united to the Godhead, continued human nature still, and, as such, required communications of strength, for the work of redemption, from Jehovah. And hence it was one part of the covenant, that what the Father called him to undertake, he would enable him to perform. See Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4. 19—24. Isaiah, xlii. 6—8. xi. 1, 2. John, iii. 34. I detain the Reader one moment longer on this most beautiful and interesting passage, just to remark the very great loveliness of the similitude chosen by the Lord, to represent the lowliness of our Jesus, and the almightiness of his victories. The *worm Jacob* threshing the mountains, is one of the strongest figures, to set forth how Jesus, in his apparent weakness, overcame strength; for on his cross were all his triumphs accomplished. He was, as his servant, the Apostle, expresseth it, *crucified through weakness, yet he liveth through the power of God*; 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Never, surely, was Jesus more glorious than in the humiliation of the cross, never more triumphant, than when, in that memorable day, he threshed the mountains of leopards; when *spoiling principalities, and powers, and nailing all that was against his redeemed to his cross*; Coloss. ii. 14, 15. And how the Lord Christ gloried in his Father at that hour, the Reader will discover by consulting those scriptures of his agony in the garden, and on the cross, John, xvii. 1, 2; xii. 23; xiii. 31, 32. Now read the garden scene, Luke, xxii. 39—44; then either of the Evangelists' account of the crucifixion; and say, did not our glorious Head *rejoice in Jehovah, and glory in the Holy One of Israel?*

17 *When* the poor and needy seek water, and *there is none, and* their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, *and* the pine, and the box tree together:

20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

Now, Reader, having given to our glorious Head the honour due unto his holy name, in having beheld him as the individual Person spoken to, in the promises before; we shall now be the better prepared, through grace, to enter into the proper enjoyment of these sweet promises which here follow, and which, if we are Christ's, are all our own: 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. Gal. iii. 29. And here again remark, that as all the former promises were made to one certain person, even to the *worm Jacob*: so here they are all made to *many*, even to all who are poor and needy, *who seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst*. Mark, I pray you, the striking difference in the persons spoken to; and, I think under divine teaching, it will be impossible but to see Christ in the one, and his people in the other. And do not overlook the Father's love in all, and the many, many blessed things here promised, which, when spiritually interpreted, are most full and blessed indeed. For what are the rivers here spoken of, but rivers of grace? And what is the wilderness, but the barren, dry, and lifeless state of our poor fallen nature? And oh, how truly blessed is it, when we see Jehovah's hand in all, and acknowledge him all! Ephes. i. 3.

21 ¶ Produce your cause, saith the LORD: bring forth your strong *reasons*, saith the King of Jacob.

22 Let them bring *them* forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they *be*; that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them: or declare us things for to come.

23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye *are* gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold *it* together.

24 Behold, ye *are* of nothing, and your works of nought: an abomination *is he that* chooseth you.

Here is a solemn and unanswerable appeal to the despisers of God and his Christ, to shew cause wherefore such mercy, as is in the covenant of redemption, is slighted? What the Apostle closeth one of his sermons with, is to the same amount; and, without all doubt, the final condemnation of such men will be on this very account. Acts, xiii. 38—41.

25 I have raised up *one* from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.

26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, *He is* righteous? yea, *there is* none that sheweth, yea, *there is* none that declareth, yea, *there is* none that heareth your words.

27 The first *shall say* to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

28 For I beheld, and *there was* no man: even among them, and *there was* no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

29 Behold, they *are* all vanity; their works *are* nothing: their molten images *are* wind and confusion.

What a blessed view is here again given of Christ, and the glorious events of his coming! It seems as if our God and Father delighted to be for ever calling upon the Church to notice him. The *north* is perhaps an allusion to our Lord's being called out of Nazareth; for this lay north of *Canaan*. Some have thought that *Cyrus*, as a type of Christ, was alluded to; and it is true, indeed, that in a subsequent part of Isaiah's prophecy, things are spoken of Cyrus by name, and many of them are, no doubt, typical of Christ. But we lose the beauty and glory of Scripture in all instances, wherein we make use of persons or things, which are typical, any farther than the mere type becomes necessary.

When they are useful as mediums to convey to the mind the great objects to which they minister, I would very thankfully use them, as I would a carriage to convey me to a friend I longed to see, when, without this means I could not well, in my own strength, perform the journey. But when I arrived at the spot where my friend was, and I saw him, and embraced him, I would spring at once from the carriage, and leave it for ever to fly into his arms. Reader! if you and I behold Christ in this and other scriptures, let us do by types as we would by carriages, and make Christ what the Father hath made him, so to love him, as to give all things into his hands: John, iii. 35. I do not detain you to remark how much of Christ and his gospel are contained in this short but sweet passage, for the gospel is full of nothing else, but to shew his person and righteousness, and the vanity of all beside. It is Jesus who first speaks to Zion, and bringeth good tidings to Jerusalem; and God the Spirit confirms the message in the hearts of his redeemed, that God is true; Isaiah, lxxv. 1. John, i. 36.

REFLECTIONS.

HOLY Spirit! I beseech thee, by thy gracious influences, enable me to keep silence, and in humble waitings to distinguish thy divine leadings from my own carnal reasonings, when I draw nigh the throne of grace, in and through the Lord Jesus. Then shall I indeed come properly prepared, and renew my spiritual strength. Holy Father! I bow with reverence at thy footstool. I have access to the mercy-seat in and through Christ, but it was thou that didst call Jesus to be my High Priest, and gave him dominion over the people. Yea, Lord, thou art indeed the first and the last, Jehovah from the beginning. Precious Lord Jesus! I see in thee Jehovah's counsel, purpose, grace, and will! To thee were all the promises made, in thee are they all fulfilled, and from thee thy people derive all interest and right in them. Jesus hath threded the mountains, and in him shall all his people be more than conquerors. Yea, Lord, thou hast subdued sin and Satan for us; and it is thou, and thou alone, that wilt subdue those powers in us. Oh! Lord! how are the souls of thy redeemed already made joyful in the assurance of victory, and both rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel. Blessed, almighty Father! blessed for ever be thy name, that thou hast opened in the wilderness, to the thirst of poor sinners, fountains and rivers of waters! Thou hast planted *the Plant of Re-noun!* Thou hast given *the Tree of Life!* Thou hast, as the husbandman, made Jesus as the vine, and his people the branches. It is thou, even thou, that hast called him from the north, and made him blessings to the people. Oh! then, when my soul, which is poor and needy, shall at any time seek water, and there is none, when all within me and without me is failing for thirst, oh! be thou to me, blessed Jesus, as rivers and streams from Lebanon; yea, be in me, a well of water, springing up to everlasting life, so shall I drink and live for ever!

CHAP. XLII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet prosecutes the same glorious subject through this Chapter, as in the former. We have a blessed sermon indeed; God the Father

is the preacher; Christ, the Mediator, is both text and sermon; and God the Holy Ghost is opening and making application of the blessed contents to the Church in Christ.

BEHOOLD my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Had we any doubt whether the Prophet were speaking of himself, as God's servant, or of some other man, the Evangelist would decide the inquiry; for in the account he gives of the Person and ministry of the adorable Jesus, he expressly saith, that *this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophet*; and he then quotes the very words contained in these verses; see Matt. xii. 17—21. But, Reader, I pray you attend to the gracious manner in which God the Father introduceth his beloved Son, as well as to the matter which he speaks concerning him. He first calls to the church to behold *him*, both as his *servant* and as his *elect*, in whom *his soul delighted*. Christ, as Mediator, is Jehovah's servant; for, as such, *he took upon him the form of a servant*; Philip, ii. 6—8. And Jesus is not only God's dear Son, and his *only begotten Son*, and as such, *one with the Father* in the essence of the Godhead; but he is also God's *elect* in his office as Mediator, and for which he is truly God's *delight*. Therefore, saith Jesus, *doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again*. Oh! how much must the redemption of our nature have been upon the heart of Jehovah from everlasting, when he that from all eternity lay in the bosom of the Father, is chosen to come forth for the salvation of his people; and God the Father speaks of him as loving him with his whole soul, for this great undertaking; John, x. 17, 18. And, Reader, do observe, in these verses, how blessedly the Father speaks of him: his love and delight in him: the blessedness he hath put upon him: the spirit he hath put in him: the meek and tender qualities he shall be known by: and the success of his mission. Do not fail to remark all these blessed things, which in these few verses, God the Father speaks of Christ, and then turn to the gospel, and behold how the original corresponds with the portrait here drawn of him.

5 ¶ Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that

spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.

8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

In the former verses, Jehovah was speaking of Christ; here we find him speaking to Christ: and a most blessed discourse it is. The Lord opens it with a sublime preface, in asserting his own divine authority, as the fountain of all being, giving existence to all his creatures, and incessantly supporting the life he hath given. Reader, is it not most blessed to your mind, to behold the source of the believer's hope in Christ? Oh, what a divine warrant and authority is here for faith to act upon, in the accepting, receiving, and resting the whole of our salvation upon Christ, when we behold how God the Father's hand is in the whole appointment! Having prepared the Church for the cordial reception of Christ, by asserting his own supremacy in the ordination of Christ to the office of Mediator; Jehovah goeth on to address Christ, his chosen, by opening the great mystery of redemption in the covenant, and giving Christ his commission. The Lord begins with calling him; *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness.* Christ came forth voluntarily to the service, but did not come uncalled; see *Heb. v. 4—6. Psalm xl. 7, 8.* Next, the promises come in: *I will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.* The human nature of Christ needed support in the vast work of redemption; and it was a grand part of the covenant, that the Father should give it to him: *Psalm lxxxix. 19—23.* Next come in the glorious object of this call of Jehovah, and his support of Christ in his services: *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* Here is the momentous cause of the whole; that Jesus should be the representative of his people, and the whole of the covenant for them, acting in their name and stead, in all he did and suffered. This is at the bottom of all our hopes and assurances of redemption by Christ's blood. Then follow the blessed and gracious effects upon his people, by virtue of his undertaking and accomplishment: *To open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth the prisoners out of the prison-house; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.* And oh, how truly blessed is it, not only to see, but feel, the gracious effects wrought in our own hearts by the Holy Ghost, in confirmation of this most precious doctrine! *Isaiah, xxxv. 4—6,* compared with *Matt. ix. 35.* And, Reader, do not overlook the blessed verse with which this passage is closed: Jehovah, who declares his jealousy of his own name and glory to be such as that he will not give his glory to

another; yet, as if to shew his oneness in nature and in glory with his dear Son, here gives him the whole glory of the covenant. He is to *open blind eyes*: and who less than a God could do this, and have the glory of it? What a decided testimony doth this become, and from God the Father himself, that Christ is God? Indeed, none but God could be competent to the work, or to the honour of redemption. Reader, I pray you cherish the blessed thought (for it is most blessed) which this verse fully gives, as an unanswerable evidence in the soul, by the Spirit's confirmation, against all the heresies of the present day; 2 *Peter*, ii. 1.

9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

10 ¶ Sing unto the LORD a new song, *and* his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

11 Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up *their voice*, the villages *that* Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.

12 Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.

13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

14 I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, *and* refrained myself: *now* will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

Here are the joyful consequences induced by the Redeemer's acts of grace and mercy, as before described. Surely all must sing the new song, which God puts into their mouths, when their souls are new-strung with chords of grace in Jesus! And when the Lord goeth forth conquering and to conquer, souls will be born to Christ, to be the travail of Jesus's labouring pains, in bringing forth to his satisfaction; *Isaiah*, liii. 11.

15 I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.

16 And I will bring the blind by a way *that* they knew not; I will lead them in paths *that*

they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Nothing can be more blessed than these promises, when we behold them as our own, from a conscious oneness with Christ, and when we live upon them, from living upon him. Then we see that he who thus undertakes to be every thing to his people, doth and will fulfil; and though we cool and tire in our love, the Lord never falters in his; *Zeph. iii. 14—17.*

17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, *Ye are our gods.*

18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

19 Who *is* blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger *that* I sent? who *is* blind as *he that is* perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant?

20 Seeing many things, but thou observest not: opening the ears, but he heareth not.

21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable.

22 But this *is* a people robbed and spoiled; *they are* all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

23 Who among you will give ear to this? *who* will hearken and hear for the time to come?

24 Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

25 Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle; and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid *it* not to heart.

Here, as in the former chapters, the contrast is drawn between the Lord Jehovah, and the idols of the nations around; and the striking difference which marks the several worshippers is made between them

that *serve the Lord, and them that serve him not.* And in the midst, a beautiful allusion is also made to the person of Christ. And who that reads the Prophet's account, and compares it with the Evangelist's, but must be struck with the wonderful agreement? *Isaiah*, l. 4—6; *Matt.* xxvii. 28—31. The chapter closeth with tracing up the desolations of our ruined nature to the source and origin of that ruin in man's own apostacy and rebellion. The Lord is justified in all the righteous acts of his government. By the entrance of sin, misery followeth: and what can rescue and redeem from present and everlasting woe, but his righteousness, who hath thereby *magnified the law, and made it honourable!*

REFLECTIONS.

LORD! help both him that writes, and him that reads, to attend to thy call; and while Jehovah is proclaiming concerning his dear Son, and describing him as a most blessed Saviour; O for grace to answer with *hosannas, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!* Yea, Lord, on our bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, we would pray for grace to receive the ever blessed Jesus as the Father's first, and best, and most comprehensive of all blessings; and to make use of Christ, as the Father hath intended, to our salvation; and his glory!

We bless thee, O Lord, for thus holding forth Jesus to the Church. He is, indeed, every thing that is lovely in himself, and every thing that is gracious for his people. *He is meek, and having salvation;* a full and all-sufficient Saviour; an able and well-qualified Saviour; a kind and tender-hearted Saviour. Yea, precious Jesus, thy people know thee, and have proved thee, that thou art all this, and more; for never hast thou, in any one instance, broken *the bruised reed, or quenched the smoking flax.*

But while we praise thee, almighty Father, for what thou hast said to us, concerning our glorious Head, and for our encouragement to come to him, we still find cause to bless thee yet more, for what thou hast said to him for us, and as our covenant Head; that he is thine *elect, in whom,* as the Church's Surety and Mediator, *thy soul delighteth.* Oh, the blessed assurance, that Jehovah is well pleased for his righteousness's sake! O the unspeakable felicity, that Christ, in our own nature, hath magnified the law, and made it honourable! And O the well-grounded hope, that as Christ is given of our God and Father, as a covenant of the people, and accepted as such; all his people must be found in him, be accepted in him; and be everlastingly secured in him, from all possibility of danger, in life or death, in time and to all eternity! Remember, Lord! we would humbly say, thy Word, wherein thou hast caused us to hope. Look upon the face of thine Anointed, and do as thou hast said: *I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever,* are thine own words, O Lord; and therefore, as thou hast sworn unto our David, so let his seed be established for ever, and do thou *build up his throne unto all generations!* Blessed be God for Jesus Christ! Amen.

CHAP. XLIII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter is a continuation of the former, in which the Lord comforteth the church with assurances of salvation. An allusion is made to Babylon, but still with reference to the rich purposes of grace in Christ.

BUT now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou art mine.

If we connect this verse, and indeed the whole opening of the chapter, with what went before, (and certainly, though we divide into chapters, the original preaching or delivery of the prophecy was not so) how surprizing is it, to behold the Lord's ways with his people. The last chapter ended as if the Lord and Israel had parted in anger; but here God begins in grace and mercy, as though nothing had happened. Reader, do not fail to observe how all tenders of reconciliation begin on the part of God. Though the Lord gave Jacob to the spoiler, and Israel to the robbers, yet the Lord will be gracious again.

2 When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

3 For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Mark well the causes of the divine love; Jacob and Israel are the objects of God's care, from every consideration: Jehovah *created* them, and hath *newly created* them in Christ; he hath *redeemed* them also, and he hath *called* them. He is their God in covenant; and so dear are they to him, that he hath given all nations for them. They are the gift of his love, the purchase of Christ's blood, the subjects of his grace; and therefore they are, and must be most precious in his sight: so that all the elements of nature, so far from proving noxious to them, shall be made to minister to his glory, in their welfare. Reader, think of these precious things; and if thou canst find in thine experience testimonies of redemption by Christ, ask thine heart, what can be wanting to endear a poor sinner to the Lord, whose precious blood must be infinitely more costly and valuable than all the riches of *Ethiopia* and *Egypt*.

5 Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring

thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

7 *Even* every one that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

What a blessed provision do we find in these divine promises, for the recovery of God's ancient people, the Jews! Neither the north nor the south shall be able to detain the seed of Jesus, when the hour of their deliverance shall come. There is *a set time to favour Zion*; and, as in grace, so in glory, the Lord will finally call home his people, from the four winds, from *the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven*; Isaiah, lix. 20; Matt. xxiv. 31. I pray the Reader not to overlook the cause of all, in the person of the Lord Jesus, evidently and plainly spoken of, in the last of these verses. He it is, as Jehovah's servant, and to whom, for the purpose of redemption, *a body was given*, that is the sum and substance of all that is here said; *Psalm xl. 6, 7.*

8 Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified, or let them hear, and say, *It is truth.*

Some have supposed this to be a challenge to the worshippers of idols; but I humbly conceive, that as these verses follow the account of Him, of whom Jehovah speaketh so gloriously, it is rather a demand, in reference to gospel days, to bring forth the blind and the deaf, spiritually considered, to whom the Lord Jesus would give the restoration of their faculties, in virtue of his great redemption: and as the heathen world are called in to behold the testimony, is not this a plain allusion to the conversion of the Gentiles? *Isaiah, xlix. 6.*

10 *Ye are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

11 I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange god among you:

therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God.

13 Yea, before the day *was* I *am* he; and *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

How truly blessed are these verses in relation to the witnesses of Jehovah! The people saved by the Lord are his witnesses, his prophets are his witnesses, and yet, above all, the Lord Christ, as Jehovah's servant, is his witness. So Jehovah declared him to be, when he said, *I have given him for a witness to the people*, Isaiah, lv. 4. Reader, what saith your experience to these divine truths? Are *you* the Lord's witness, that he hath brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light? And, on the other hand, while you witness *for* the Lord, doth the Holy Ghost witness *with your spirit*, that you are *a child of God*? Romans, viii. 16. Oh, it is blessed and precious indeed, when we can and do *set to our seals that God is true*, since none but a self-existing and almighty God, in covenant in Christ, could save the soul of a poor sinner!

14 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; for your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry *is* in the ships.

15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your king.

The title which, upon this occasion, the Lord takes to himself, is most gracious: for as the Church was about to be led into Babylon, nothing could more tend to keep up the spirits of the people during their captivity, than the recollection that still Jehovah was their Redeemer! And, Reader, is not the same view always precious to a child of God, when the enemy seems to triumph with a high hand? *Isaiah*, lix. 19.

16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters:

17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power? they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

It is worth observing how often, under the Old Testament dispensation, the Lord reminds the Church of that wonderful deliverance which he wrought in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, by way of teaching the people, in the review of past mercies, to be looking for renewed manifestations; *Micah*, vi. 4, 5.

18 ¶ Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

19 Behold, I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth: shall ye not know it? I will even

make a way in the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert.

20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

21 This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise.

The last of these verses gives a full answer to the inquiry, wherefore the Lord so favoured Israel? All is for the divine glory; and all that glory is in Christ; *Ephes. i. 10. Rev. iv. 11.* Oh, how truly blessed, to behold all glory given to our glorious Head, Christ Jesus, that all may terminate in Jehovah's glory, and open a source of never-ceasing praise to the Father, Son, and Spirit, in and through the Mediator, Christ Jesus! *John, xvii. 1.*

22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings: neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

Reader, do not fail to overlook the very great tenderness of this expostulation, which the Lord makes with his people. What did the Lord look for, and expect in his people? Evidently, from what is here said, the Lord was jealous of their not calling upon him: Jacob, father of the Israelites, was remarkable for keeping up acquaintance, by prayer and communion with the Lord. And the Lord had never said to the *praying seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain.* But it seems the children did not turn after their father; they neglected to come to the mercy-seat; they grew shy of the Lord; they brought not the tokens of love in sacrifices and offerings. Reader, doth not the blush of shame tinge our faces, while hearing God's charge against Israel for this neglect, under a consciousness that we are equally guilty? Precious Jesus, how truly humbled do I feel my soul in the very moment that I read of Israel's inattention, under a deep sense of my own! Is it possible that so much love in Jesus can be requited with so much indifference? Yes! for I feel it, and groan under it; *Romans, vii. 24, 25.*

25 I, *even I, am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

What a verse of mercy, grace, and goodness is here! One might justly have been led to expect, after what the Lord had said in the preceding paragraph, that for such baseness and ingratitude, punishment and correction would have followed. But *God's ways are not our ways; nor our thoughts his thoughts*: truly, as the apostle hath said, *Where sin aboundeth, grace doth much more abound*, Romans, v. 20; and all the ways of grace are of this kind, and constrain every soul that is made a rich partaker of it, to cry out, with the Prophet, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?* Micah, vii. 18, 19.

26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.

28 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

The Lord still dwells upon the subject of his grace, and Israel's unworthiness, by way of pointing out his long-suffering, and the necessity of their soul exercises. And, Reader, in this charge, you and I may, equally with Israel, plead guilty. In all ages of the Church, it will be found the same. It is our rebellion which brings upon us the necessary chastisements of a kind Father. Both in original, and actual transgression, we have *all sinned and come short of God's glory!*

REFLECTIONS.

LISTEN, my soul, to what the Lord speaks, in this most blessed and precious chapter, to Jesus, as the Head of his church, and to his redeemed in him. Read first, the promises, every one of them, as made to the Person of thy great Surety and Saviour; and then, from thy union and interest in him, take them all, in Jesus, and with Jesus, for thy portion. Say, my soul, hath not the Lord created thee, and formed thee; not only in the original creation of nature, but in the new creation by grace? Hath not the Lord called thee, redeemed thee, and declared thee to be his own, both by the purchase of his blood and the conquests of his grace? And is it not true that while the Lord saith, *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise*; thou art earnestly longing to praise and glorify him for all the tokens of his distinguishing grace? Take then the comfort of all these sweet promises, and let neither fiery flames nor stormy seas, in the most tribulated path yet remaining for thee to go through, distress; for Jesus (he saith it himself) is with thee, and will conduct thee, and carry thee safely through them all. Oh! thou gracious Lord of all my mercies; thou Holy One of Israel, my Saviour!

But, my soul, pause over the blessed view which this chapter opens to thy contemplation, of the price thy Jesus gave for his Church in redemption. He saith, it was *Egypt* for her ransom, and *Ethiopia* and *Seba*. Yes, thou bleeding Lamb of God! thou didst indeed make a dear, dear purchase of thy Church, and didst buy her, out of the hands of infinite justice with a sum perfectly incalculable. All the riches and treasures of *Egypt*, and all the pearls and gold of *Ethiopia* and *Seba*, sink to nothing, in comparison of the infinite, and never-to-be-fully compensated in value, blood of Christ. Oh! how precious must have been thy Church in thy sight, thou dear Redeemer, when neither Jesus stopped short in giving himself for her, nor God the Father kept back the Son, the only Son of his bosom, for her redemption? My soul, never lose sight of this; but, in the blessedness of the contemplation, continually say with the apostle, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

Be humbled to the dust, my soul, while, in the view of such divine goodness thou callest to mind thine own undeservings. Oh, thou kind, thou tender, thou compassionate Lord Jesus! Have I caused thee to serve with my sins, and wearied thee with mine iniquities? Do I remit my visits to a throne of grace, and seldom go there unless necessities constrain me? Is it so, my honoured Lord, that there is a backwardness in my very nature to the love of thee, and the desire after thy company? Lord! how is it, that I am every day condemning what I every day again trespass in; and find occasion still to mourn over, what still again marks my conduct? Oh, precious Jesus! undertake for me; and deliver me, Lord, in thine own time, which is the best time, from the body of sin and death, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Jesus will make me free, and I shall be free indeed! Amen.

CHAP. XLIV.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter is but a continuation of the same subject as that of the former. The Lord is comforting and encouraging his church; and pronouncing judgment against her enemies.

YET now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:

2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, *which* will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

4 And they shall spring up *as* among the grass, as willows by the water courses.

5 One shall say, *I am* the LORD's; and another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe *with* his hand unto the LORD, and surname *himself* by the name of Israel.

Nothing can be more lovely or blessed than what is contained in these gracious promises, if read, as they are evidently designed, as made, first, to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator; and, secondly, to all his seed in him. I hope the Reader is, by this time, so well acquainted with his Bible, as not only to hear Jesus called Jehovah's servant, without being offended at the Son of God's humiliation; but also to see and enjoy a blessedness in the name. Had not the Lord Jesus, when he took our name and nature, put himself into covenant engagements to stand in our law-room and place, as Jehovah's servant, never would our redemption by his blood and righteousness, have been accomplished. But now, in fulfilling all righteousness, and coming down to the lowest state of humbleness, for the purpose of obedience, he hath been *made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; 2 Cor. v. 21. Philip. ii. 6, 11. And how truly blessed is it to behold, in all things, and in all offices, what the Lord Jesus became, as the sinner's Surety and Saviour, by God the Father's own appointment! All the promises here made to the Head of the Church, and his people, are by Him who made and formed the human nature of Christ, when giving him a body for the purposes of redemption, and engaging to help him through the whole of the vast undertaking; see Psalm, xl. 6. lxxxix. 19—24. cxxxix. 13—16. Heb. v. 4, 5. Then follow the promised blessings to Christ and his seed; and oh! how truly blessed is it to see the barren, dry, and wilderness state of poor perishing souls, made flourishing and fruitful, in and through their union with Christ Jesus? And when God the Father remembers his everlasting covenant with his dear Son, and pours out his Spirit from on high; then all those blessings follow, which are here described. One saith, another confirms it, and all deliberately make a voluntary surrender of themselves to be the Lord's, when once the Holy Ghost hath brought them to see and know who Christ is, and what Christ is, and hath made them *willing in the day of his power*? Song, ii. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

6 Thus saith the LORD the king of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; *I am* the first, and *I am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.

7 ¶ And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.

8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it*? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is* no God: I know not *any*.

What sublimity is in these verses! How truly delightful to see the Lord Jehovah claiming his rightful sovereignty, and revealing himself under such glorious and distinguishing characters! There needs no comment upon what the Lord here saith of himself. Reader! let us be humbled to the dust in the contemplation of Jehovah's glory.

9 ¶ They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

10 Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that* is profitable for nothing?

11 Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed; and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; *yet* they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together.

12 The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water, and is faint.

13 The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he maketh it out with a line; he fitteth it out with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and marketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the forest: he planteth an ash, and, the rain doth nourish *it*.

15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself: yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god- and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou *art* my god.

18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; *and* their hearts, that they cannot understand.

19 And none considereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?

What a fine contrast does this view of the dung-hill god of a man's own creating, form with what went before, in which the glory of Jehovah is so sublimely set forth! If there were not facts existing to prove it, would it ever be credited, that any man, much less multitudes of men, should be found weak enough in intellect to form an image of wood, and fall down before it in worship? But, Reader! remark from it, to what an awful state is man reduced by the fall. Oh! how truly blessed is it here again, as in every other instance, to behold the mercies which Jesus brought in by redemption. *Jeremiah*, ii. 11.

21 Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou *art* my servant: I have formed thee; thou *art* my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

22 I have blotted out, as thick as a cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Reader! methinks I can never say enough in calling up your attention, with my own, to observe in what endearing terms the Lord is pleased to recommend his grace, and love, and mercy to his Israel! And do not forget that what is here said, is said, to the person of our Lord: first *to* him, and then, *in* him, to all his people. And be not hurt that the promise is, of *blotting out as a thick cloud his transgressions*; for when Jesus stood as Israel, and, as such, the surety and representative of Israel, his Church; he stood as clothed with the filthy garments of our poor fallen polluted nature. He saith himself, by the

spirit of prophecy, that his *iniquities were gone over his head, as a heavy burden too heavy for him*, Psalm xxxviii. 4. And is it not the express doctrine of the Bible, that *Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of all his people?* Indeed, had this not been the case, how would our sins have been taken away? See, I pray you, those scriptures in confirmation, and may the Holy Ghost give both you and me a right understanding in them: *Isaiah*, liii. 4—6; *Gal.* iii. 13. And hear the holy Jesus, in his cries under the weight and burden of our sins, *Psalm* lxi. 1—4. When you have duly pondered this solemn, but most blessed of all subjects, then look well for your own interest in these promises of Jehovah, from your oneness and union with Christ, and see that you have *redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of all your sins, according to the riches of God's grace*; Ephes. i. 6, 7.

23 Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

How beautiful and lovely comes in this hymn of praise, after the review of what went before of redemption by Christ. And how beautiful and lovely is it to observe, that the Lord takes the whole glory and praise of it to himself. He is the Author and Finisher; the Orderer, the Contriver; for in his wisdom, and love, and counsel, and purpose, the whole originated. And observe, it is Jehovah himself that here calls upon all creation, both animate and inanimate, to join in the song of redemption. Oh! Reader! what a song will redemption be in that day, when the Lord Jesus shall come to gather up his jewels!

24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself:

25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

28 That saith of Cyrus, *He is my shepherd,*

and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.

Here is a renewed instance of Jehovah's claiming the distinguishing prerogative of his sovereignty; and a most blessed one it is. And when we consider the reasons for which the Lord thus reveals himself, in holding it forth for the confirmation of his love to his people, nothing can be more blessed, both as it serves to display the divine glory, and to encourage the minds of the people. The Lord here first introduceth *Cyrus* by name, who in after-ages was to be raised up for the deliverance of his people: concerning whom the succeeding chapter speaks more largely.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us not dismiss this blessed Chapter (for it is a very blessed one), until we have first looked up for grace to gather the several improving reflections it affords; and also looked within, into our own hearts, for the discovery of our personal interest in it.

And first, blessed Immanuel! my soul would desire to behold thee, as the glorious Head and Representative of thine Israel; unto whom all these precious promises are given, and in whom they become *yea and amen* to thy redeemed in thee. Yea, Lord, thou hast condescended to become all that is here said for thy Church, thy body; and therefore, in thee, and by thee, and from thee, would my soul alone look for all the blessings of the covenant.

And shall I not plead thee with thee, my God and Father in Christ Jesus, for his righteousness sake, that thou wilt do as thou hast said? Did Jehovah promise our glorious Surety, to *pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground*? And is not my soul athirst for those waters of Bethlehem; and longing for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, more than the hart panteth for the water-brooks? Oh! for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, to be poured out from on high on my soul, *until the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water!* And oh! for grace to give, and to be continually giving the same full testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, that I may call myself the Lord's, and fully and unalterably subscribe with my hand and whole heart, that *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine!*

Blessed Lord! would I say, while the heavens are singing salvation, and the lower parts of the earth are sounding praise, let my poor lisping tongue join the charming chorus, that *the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!*

CHAP. XLV.

CONTENTS.

Much is said in this chapter of Cyrus, king of Persia: but much more of Jesus, King of Zion. It is spoken by way of prophecy in

the first relation to Babylon, but in the more direct reference to the redemption by Christ.

THUS saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, *am* the God of Israel.

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

This is a most remarkable portion of the holy scripture, and very highly merits our attention. The Lord here speaks of a man, and a stranger too, not one of Israel, and calls him by his name, at least 200 years before the events predicted of him were to be fulfilled. In the history to which this portion of the prophecy refers, we find the conquest of Babylon exactly answering. Profane historians relate that *Cyrus* entered Babylon, by means of a subterraneous passage, opening from the river by two-leaved gates, and at a time when from the strength of the city and its walls, the king was carousing in full confidence of safety. Sacred history also bears testimony to the same in the corresponding account; See *Daniel*, v. 1—6 and 30. But what is yet more important for us to remark, is what the Lord saith concerning the cause of this ruin. The Church's salvation was the one sole object, and in the very moment that the Lord raised up Cyrus, as his instrument for this purpose, Cyrus himself knew not the Lord. I pray the Reader to make this the practical improvement from this scripture; and never to lose sight of the Lord's design, in the Lord's appointment of men and things. How often, in the present hour, are men made the unconscious ministers of God for good to his people, although their heart thought not so, neither did they intend it. Think, Reader, from such a view as this, and which is every day going on in the world, how dear to Jesus his Church is!

5 ¶ I *am* the LORD, and *there is none else, there is no God beside me*; I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

6 That they may know from the rising of the

sun, and from the west, that *there is none beside me.* **I** am the LORD, and *there is none else.*

7 **I** form the light, and create darkness: **I** make peace, and create evil: **I** the LORD do all these *things.*

It is most blessed to read those scriptures, in which Jehovah takes to himself his supreme sovereignty. A believing soul finds great delight in the contemplation. For, in the first place, the self-existing and eternal nature of Jehovah becomes the security of the Church in Jesus; and, in the next place, those divine attributes become the pledge and assurance for the fulfilment of all the divine engagements to the Church in Jesus. And, Reader! do not overlook the sweet spiritual instruction given to us in those relations of Jehovah: if the Lord be alone the self-existing and eternal Jehovah; and if both light and darkness are of his creation; to whom shall we look for spiritual light, to illumine the darkness of our poor souls, blinded by the fall, but to him who alone can command the light to shine out of darkness! Oh! thou, who at the first creation saidst, *Let there be light, and there was light,* command the light, in the new creation of the souls of thy people, to shine out of darkness in their hearts, to give *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; **I** the LORD have created it.

Is not this the Lord's command? And ought not the faithful to form their earnest prayers upon it? Reader, I would say, for myself and for you, doth a gracious God in Christ command grace to drop as the dew upon the souls of his redeemed, and is Jesus himself come down as rain upon the mown grass? Oh! then for grace to say, "Lord, be it unto us according to thy word! Come, Lord, with all thy blessed influences upon our souls, and be thou to us all we need; *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all our glorying may be in the Lord!*" Psalm lxxii. 6. Micah, v. 7. 1 Cor. i. 30. James i. 17.

9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! *Let* the potsherd *strive* with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

10 Woe unto him that saith unto *his* father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What has thou brought forth?

How beautiful and striking is this figure of the potsherd, to shew the folly and danger of finding fault with God. Earthen vessels, struck one against another, will break; contentions among men are foolish; but contention against God, in any of his dispensations, of nature, providence, or grace, is madness itself. Equally senseless would be the expostulation of a child to its parent, concerning its being. What can a sinful father beget, but a sinful child; or a polluted mother bring forth, but pollution also? *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Precious Jesus! how blessed dost thou appear in every view, when, in the consciousness of our corrupt state, we feel the need of that fountain which the soldier's spear opened in thy side, *for sin and for uncleanness!* Zech. xiii. 1.

11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

Perhaps in all the Bible there is not a passage equal to this for shewing the Lord's graciousness at his mercy-seat. The expression seems as if the Lord had thrown the reins of government into the hands of his people, that they might not only ask, but command. We meet with very many passages, wherein the highest encouragement is given to poor petitioners in Jesus's name; but here the Lord saith, *Command me!* It is indeed a most blessed and high proof of the gracious manner with which God in Christ treats his people on his throne, and ought to be our constant encouragement, now we have such an advocate as Jesus with the Father, whom the Father heareth always, that we may come boldly to the throne of grace, to *obtain mercy, and find grace to help, in all time of need.* But, Reader! do not overlook what characters they are, of whom this is said, and to whom it is spoken: it is *concerning my sons*, saith the Lord. Yea, Lord! it is because, in Jesus, thy people are sons, that thou hast sent forth the Spirit of thy Son into our hearts, crying, *Abba, Father!* When a father, and especially God our Father, hears the voice of his child in prayer, calling in Jesus's name, what will he withhold? *John*, xiv. 13, 14, xvi. 24. *Gal.* iv. 6. *Heb.* iv. 16.

13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

Was there ever a more blessed and gracious proclamation made by God the Father, concerning the person, work, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, than what is contained in these words? To read this verse with reference to *Cyrus*, as some have done, is to enervate the passage sadly, and endanger the mind to overlook the one great object intended. For after allowing all that may be said of *Cyrus*, as God's

instrument and servant, in delivering the Church from the oppressions they underwent in Babylon; still the temporal mercies then shewn are so inconsiderable, compared to the everlasting and eternal redemption from sin, death, and hell by the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are not worthy to be mentioned. And surely it is to this, all along, that God the Father refers as the one great object of all salvation, which is to glorify his dear Son. Reader! keep, I pray you, your eyes steadily fixed upon the glorious person of Jesus. Hear what God the Father, even the LORD of hosts saith, in this blessed verse; that it is he who hath raised him up, called him, appointed him, anointed him, and blessed him, as thy Redeemer. He, Jehovah alone, directed, ordered, and crowned with success all that Christ did in salvation. Behold the Lord Jesus, in all this, building his Church, and delivering all his people; and all *without money and without price*; and then fall down on thy knees, crying out, with the Apostle: *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift*; 2 Cor. ix. 15.

14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, *saying*, Surely God is in thee; and *there is none else, there is no God*.

As the former verse contains the proclamation of Jehovah concerning the person and work of his dear Son, God-man Mediator; so in this, he as graciously proclaims the blessed consequences of his offices and labours. And we have lived to see in part, and to partake also in the blessings of this grace, when, as Gentiles, we have been brought by sovereign grace to call Jesus our Lord. And the hour is hastening, when *the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever*. Rev. xi. 15. Malachi, i. 11. Psalm lxxii. &c.

15 Verily, thou *art* a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together *that are makers of idols*.

17 *But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

What a beautiful contrast is here drawn, between the Lord Jehovah, in his plan of grace and salvation, and the trumpery of idol-worship. Reader! you and I shall do well to keep in remembrance what the Lord saith in this sweet promise, of his people's salvation: *Israel shall be saved*. Put this down as a truth, eternally settled and fixed. Next,

mark the endless and unceasing nature of it, like the Lord himself who hath promised: it shall be *with an everlasting salvation*. Next, take special notice of the cause and method: Israel shall be saved *in the LORD*. Not in Israel's worth; not in Israel's labour; salvation is wholly *of* the Lord, and *in* the Lord. Lastly, behold the confidence which a conscious interest *in* Jesus, and salvation *by* Jesus, must beget: *Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end*. Was there ever any thing more gracious! Did ever any thing attach itself more earnestly to the very souls of men? What *four* huge volumes for a poor redeemed sinner are here given to him in a short verse, to read to his own heart, and to preach to other poor sinners around, for ever? Blessed be Jehovah the speaker! Blessed be Jehovah the fulfiller! And blessed be Jehovah the Creator of faith in the heart of the hearer, in giving grace to believe the record that *God hath given of his dear Son*. See again the 5th and 6th verses. *Philip. i. 29.*

18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: *I am the LORD*; and *there is none else*.

19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

It is blessed to observe, when God is at any time proposing mercies to his people, how the Lord introduceth his gracious promise with the declaration of his own glorious character, lest the greatness of the blessing proposed should overwhelm the mind and excite fear, as if the promise were too great to be believed. In this place, to encourage the seed of Jacob, who are always supposed to be a praying people, against any apprehension, and lest their conscious sense of sin should keep them back from the throne of grace; Jehovah takes to himself his own glorious distinction of character. He that originally created all things, will create grace in the heart of his people; and the prayer that he awakens in grace, he will hear, and answer in mercy. The Prophet, under the spirit of prophecy, describes the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh, as proving this blessed truth; *Psalms xxvii. 8. Heb. v. 7—9.* Reader! never lose sight of this in all your approaches to the throne.

20 ¶ Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations; they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a God *that cannot save*.

21 Tell ye, and bring *them* near: yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me: a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me.

I have often read, and I hope with increasing pleasure and profit, the blessedness of the union here made, and by Jehovah himself, of his own glorious attributes, as manifested in the work of redemption: *A just God and a Saviour*. Here is, at once, an everlasting distinction made between the true God, and the whole tribe of dunghill-deities. Nothing in all the code of idol-worship, proposed such an assemblage, as that of blending justice with salvation: and it is only in the person and work of Jesus, that such views are discoverable. In him, *mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, Psalm lxxxv. 10. So that the justice of God is strikingly set forth in punishing sin; and his salvation as blessedly set forth in pardoning the sinner. Reader! what comfort is there in this view of God in Christ, to a poor perishing sinner, under all the alarms of a guilty conscience! And how true is that scripture, which saith, *God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*, Romans, iii. 26.

22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

24 Surely, shall *one* say, In the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

If this gracious invitation of Jesus, to look unto him, were proclaimed every day from the house-top, yea, from heaven itself, it would not be more sure, nor certain, nay, not so much so as now it is, in the blessed word of God's grace. And yet who is there that regards it? God the Father commends it, *Isaiah*, xlii. 1, &c. The Son of God commends it, *Isaiah*, lxxv. 1, 2. God the Holy Ghost commends it, *John*, i. 29. But, alas! we may take up the words of the Prophet, and say, as he did, *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* *Isaiah*, liii. 1. Precious Jesus! give to him that writes, and to him that reads, the hearing ear and the seeing eye, that we may hear the voice of the Son of God, and live; *John*

iii. 14, 15. And what a blessed consequence is said in this scripture to result from such lookings unto Jesus, and living upon him: *Surely, shall one say*, yea, every one whom the Lord the Spirit hath brought off from all legal frames and self-righteousness; none but such *will* say it, and every one of this character *must* say it: *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*. Yes; for it is *in* the Lord, and not in myself that I have it. For I have it not in any natural, not in any spiritual, not in any acquired strength: I have it not in any thing wrought by me; not in my zeal; not in my endeavours; yea, not what is wrought *in* me; but wholly *in the Lord*. Oh! blessed distinction, between what some injudicious persons would fondly call *inherent holiness*, and the *Lord's righteousness*. Jesus is indeed made of God to his people, *wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption*; but still it is Jesus that is all these, and is so made to his people; and not in themselves or their own attainments. Oh! the preciousness of Jesus, whose very name is *as ointment poured forth*. Lord! be it my portion, with all the seed of Israel, to be justified in thee, and by thee: and be thou my glory, that *I may go forth in thy strength, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only*. Psalm lxxxix. 16, 17. lxxi. 15, 16.

REFLECTIONS.

PONDER over this lovely Chapter, my soul, again and again, nor dismiss the sweet meditation, until the Holy Ghost hath written the blessed contents of it in thine inmost affection. Behold the Lord's love to Israel, in preparing the Church, during so many years, for their temporal deliverer; and calling him by his name, Cyrus, before Cyrus was even born. Then turn thy thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ, and contemplate the grace of God the Father, in the appointment and proclamation of him, the glorious spiritual deliverer of his redeemed, from all eternity. Thou, O blessed Jesus, hast indeed opened the two-leaved gates; yea, the everlasting gates of heaven and salvation, and made thy people joyful, and the loins of thine enemies to be smitten asunder! Thou hast made known thy sovereignty and power, and manifested that thou art God, and that there is none else beside thee, *a just God and a Saviour!*

And now, thou blessed Lord! having made peace by the blood of thy cross, to reconcile all things to thyself, dost thou open a new and living way by thy blood, and ever livest to keep it open by thine intercession? Yea, precious Jesus! dost thou so endear a throne of grace to thy people, as to assure us, that the works of thine hands are subject to the prayers of thy saints: that whatsoever shall be for thy glory and their good, they may command, and it shall be done! Oh! for grace to lie lower and lower in the dust before God, in proportion as the riches of thy grace are made manifest to the soul, that while the Lord exalts his people, they may humble themselves.

I dare not, Lord! dismiss this precious chapter, without first seeking for grace to convert thy command into a prayer, that while thou biddest me to look unto thee, my soul may feel the grace going forth into lively exercise, so to look to Jesus, as to have mine eyes enlightened, and to rest by faith upon Jesus, until my whole soul be warmed *into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Jesus*

Christ! Blessed Lord! I do pray, that mine eyes, mine heart, my whole soul and body and spirit, yea, all the faculties thou hast given me, may bow in love, and grace, and praise, and prayer, before thee. Let all the earth witness for me; yea, all the powers of heaven, that to thee my knee bows; before thee my whole nature joyfully bends. Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. In the Lord do all my powers find justification, and glory, in Christ here, and in Christ to all eternity. Amen.

CHAP. XLVI.

CONTENTS.

The prophet here draws a fine contrast between the idol-gods, and the Lord God of Israel; and thence takes occasion to invite the people to the love of God, and confidence in him.

BEL boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages *were* heavy loaden: *they are* a burden to the weary *beast*.

2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

Bel and Nebo were the names of two of the gods of Babylon. Probably from thence, one of the kings of Babylon took the name of Belshazzar, and another that of Nebuchadnezzar. But perhaps the former is a contraction of the word Baal, the well-known name generally given to an idol; and hence the Lord declared that he would take that name out of the mouth of his people. And, as if to endear himself still more, the Lord said he would be called not Baali, which signifies lord; but Ishi, which means husband. And was not this an allusion to gospel times, when the Lord of life and glory would take our nature, and become the husband of his people? Hosea, ii. 16, 17.

3 ¶ Harken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne *by me* from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

4 And *even* to *your* old age I *am* he: and *even* to hoar hairs will I carry *you*: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver *you*.

The Lord having, in the preceding verses, shewn the wretchedness of idols, utterly unable to help themselves, and consequently incapable of helping others; in these blessed words, calls upon his people to behold him; and most blessedly sets forth the tokens and evidences of his godhead, in grace and love, from the womb to the grave. Reader! do not hastily pass away from the meditation of what this sweet scripture teacheth, as it concerns yourself, and the Lord's

dealings towards you, both in a way of nature and of grace. Did not the Lord carry you from the womb, yea, did he not form you there, and make all your members to be written before your creation? And when coming forth from the belly, was it not he that preserved you alive, and sustained the life he had formed; yea, and hath preserved it to the present hour? Think in how many providences, through how many dispensations, and how many dangers, he hath brought you? And, if you are able to trace the wonderful subject in grace, as well as in nature, think who it was that formed thee in the new creation in Christ Jesus, and now maintains and keeps alive, and will keep alive, the incorruptible seed, unto ripeness in glory, by Christ Jesus! Oh! who that knows the whole, in nature and grace, but will be ready to ascribe all to Him, to whom alone the glory is due; and thankfully make Jesus, what he is, the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all; in creation and redemption? And oh! how sure it is, that the same Lord who has carried from the womb, both of nature and of grace, will carry on to old age and hoary hairs; and when heart, and strength, and powers, all fail, he will be the strength of his people's heart, and their portion for ever! Psalm lxxiii. 26.

5 ¶ To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

6 They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith: and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.

7 They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

Amidst all the folly of idolatry, there is one feature, in which the worshippers become a reproach to us: I mean, in that they spared no expense in their religious rites. This scripture saith *they lavished gold out of the bag*; and yet how many have I known, who not only *profess* the pure gospel of Jesus, but really and truly *possess* the power of it, who through the remains of indwelling corruption, cannot help being sparing in their bounties to their poor brethren! It is strange that it should be so: but the fact is undeniable. Lord! keep the heart of him that writes, and him that reads, from a covetous spirit! Oh! for grace to delight in refreshing the bowels of the saints with the nether and the upper springs of Jesus's bounty; while Jesus gives us both liberally to enjoy. Reader! had not the Lord's word said so, could it ever have been supposed possible, that man's fall would have so far blinded his reason, as that he should first make an image, and then fall down to worship the image of his own making? Was there ever a folly so great and glaring? Precious Jesus! to what a state was our nature universally sunk, when thy mercy prompted thee to come, and seek and save that which was lost!

8 Remember this, and shew yourselves men; bring it again to mind. O ye transgressors.

9 Remember the former things of old ; for **I am** God, and *there is none else* : *I am* God, and *there is none like me*,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and **I** will do all my pleasure :

11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country : yea, **I** have spoken *it*, **I** will also bring it to pass ; **I** have purposed *it*, **I** will also do it.

See, my soul, how Jehovah pleads with his people, and what sweet and condescending appeals he makes to their understanding, when enlightened by his grace ! And do not overlook this precious account, which the Lord gives of himself, in the bosom of this scripture. *His counsel must stand.* Blessed be God for this ! Embrace this solemn truth, in an especial manner, as it concerns the gospel of Jesus. Here, the Lord hath by *two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie*, given to the heirs of promise strong consolation. *He will do all his pleasure* : yea, he hath not only commissioned a man, like a bird of prey, and called him *Cyrus* by name, to execute his purposes in the deliverance of his people from Babylon, but he hath called the Lord Jesus Christ for all the purposes of salvation, in delivering his people from hell, death, and the grave ; and will deliver them with an everlasting salvation, world without end. Isaiah, xlv. 13. Heb. vi. 17, 18.

12 Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that *are* far from righteousness :

13 **I** bring near my righteousness ; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry : and **I** will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

I beg the Reader to ponder over these verses, and keep them in remembrance. Here is God's call to the unhumiliated in Zion, the unawakened, unregenerate of his people, if I mistake not : and this is the first class the Lord speaks to in this sermon. In the successive chapters, he speaks to several other characters, among his people, on the same subject. But this is to *the stout-hearted* : to these he proposeth Jesus and his salvation. And observe, that Jesus and his salvation is for Jehovah's glory, agreeably to all our Lord taught ; John, xvii. 12. If the Reader wishes to trace the beautiful connection of Jehovah's preaching on this subject, as addressed to the several characters of his Church, before he comes to the passages themselves, he may find the subject carried on in a progressive manner, by consulting the scriptures in the way I have marked them. In these verses, the appeal is to *the stout-hearted*, the unconvinced, unawakened. In the 48th chapter, verse 12, it is to *the called*. In the 51st chapter, 1st verse, it is to *the followers* after Jesus. In the 5th verse of the same chapter, it is to those who *believe in the Lord*, but who, through the

weakness of their faith, are fluctuating, and too apt to forget that Jehovah's *salvation is for ever, and his righteousness that which shall not be abolished.* And in the 7th verse of the same chapter, the appeal is to those who truly *know*, and as truly *live up to* their privileges, in having Christ formed *in their heart the hope of glory.* According to my view, I conceive that there is a beautiful gradation here pointed out in the divine life: and the Reader that is taught of God, will, I humbly believe, find much blessedness in the connection, and discover suitable directions, as here given by the Lord, for every state.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! I find it good to see the Lord's hand, in every word of the Lord's scripture. While in this chapter we trace the gracious purposes of God to his people, in setting forth the folly and weakness, as well as the wickedness of idolatry, we discover also his grace, and mercy, and love. Oh! how condescending is the Lord, in thus appealing, for the testimonies of his own truth and faithfulness, to the plainest evidences around them.

While this short, but interesting chapter, makes a general appeal to the Church at large, how blessedly doth it more immediately address the ancient believer! Methinks I would have our aged fathers in the Church very frequently peruse this precious portion, by way of forming one of their songs in the house of their pilgrimage: and as they read the gracious promises of a gracious God in Christ, compare what the Lord saith with their own experiences; until, like *Joshua's* appeal to Israel, they can, and do say, *Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord their God hath here spoken concerning them; but all are come to pass as it is this day.*

My venerable father! (if peradventure these lines should fall under the eye of one of God's ancient believers) think, I beseech you, what a rich volume of promises is here brought into one view, for you; and how sure, if you know God's Christ, the whole is *yea una amen in Jesus.* He that first called you from the womb of his grace, hath borne you to the present hour; and amidst all your growing infirmities, Jesus is *your* Jesus still. Friends may forsake you; your dearest and nearest relations you may be a burden to; yea, you may be a burden to yourself; but hear what Jesus saith, *Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you.* The same that Jesus was when he called you, the same is he now to you, and for you; and the same will he be for ever. Oh! the preciousness, amidst all the changes in us, and by us, to live upon an unchangeable God in Christ! May the Lord give grace and faith in lively exercise to every believer, to give God the credit of God, and to gather up the feet in the bed of death, as good old Jacob did when dying, that he may cry out, with him, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!*

CHAP. XLVII.

CONTENTS.

The subject of this chapter is the destruction of Babylon. But the Prophet, looking into gospel times, hath in view a much greater ruin than that of the Chaldean empire; even the universal ruin of Satan's kingdom, which, in scripture language, is called Babylon.

The pride, cruelty, and enchantment, here spoken of, are all typical of the great apostate spirit's behaviour towards the Church of God.

COME down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: *there is no throne*, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

2 Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet *thee as a man*.

If we read these verses with an eye to the history of Babylon, as a people, we shall find, that the threatenings here denounced were all literally fulfilled: Babylon, which had conquered all nations, was herself at length conquered. But we shall lose the whole beauty of the scripture, if our principal attention be not directed to the spiritual sense of what the Lord here delivers, by his servant the Prophet. For the sins of his people, the Lord was pleased to raise up this scourge for them in Babylon, and caused them to be led into captivity. The Lord doth so now. When his people break his laws, and keep not his commandments, it forms a part in the covenant, to visit *their offences with the rod, and their sins with scourges*. Nevertheless, they are his people still. Though in themselves rebellious, yet in Jesus, his glorious head, they are accepted. Hence the Lord will correct them; but when the correction is over, he will cast the rod away. Their enemies shall be accounted with: and in this account, Jehovah, their friend, meets their opposers, not merely with the strength and power of a man, but with that of God. Oh! how fearful the judgment to the enemies of God, and of his Christ! Oh! how blessed to the people of God, to have God for their friend!

4 *As for* our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

Here is a beautiful break of the subject, in the Lord's address to Babylon. The Church, as it were, hearing what the Lord had just before said, in his threatened judgments upon Babylon, breaks out in a devout exclamation concerning her Lord. She calls him by his name *Goel*, Redeemer; and saith of him, that he is the Lord of sovereignty; and, in his holiness, the Lord of righteousness to his people. Sweet views of Jesus! His godhead secures the everlasting and eternal efficacy of his redemption; and in his mediatorial holiness, all his people are interested. The Lord of Hosts, and the Holy One of Israel, become a suitable kinsman Redeemer, for the Church eternally to trust in, and to glory in.

5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of *the* Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms.

The subject is again resumed at this verse, and, under the image of Babylon, the silence and darkness, in which the enemies of God and of his Christ shall be finally shut up, are set forth.

6 ¶ I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

I pray the Reader to remark, with me, how graciously the Lord speaks, even when describing the degeneracy of his people. Though they had rebelled, and though the Lord was wroth with them, yet he calls them still *his people*. Precious thought! The Apostle Paul makes a blessed observation upon it, Romans, xi, 1, 2; and the Prophet Isaiah hath another, which shews the Lord's care over his people, even when in their captive state; for though outcasts, yet were they still *the Lord's outcasts*; Isaiah, xvi. 4.

7 ¶ And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these *things* to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it.

8 Therefore hear now this, *thou that art* given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, *I am*, and none else beside me; I shall not sit *as* a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

9 But these two *things* shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, *and* for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

10 ¶ For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, *I am*, and none else beside me.

11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, *which* thou shalt not know.

12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

13 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy

counsels: let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up, and save thee from *these things* that shall come upon thee.

14 Behold, they shall be as stubble: the fire shall burn them, they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame *there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.*

15 Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, *even thy merchants* from thy youth, they shall wander every one to his quarter, none shall save thee.

I include the whole of these verses in one reading, because the one great subject is the same. The enemies of God and of his Church carry with them a general feature, namely, every thing of hatred, and malignity to Christ and his Gospel. From the first forming of the Church, in Egypt, to the present hour, there is but one and the same plan manifested, and the reason is plain: the Devil's hatred to Christ and his seed is personal; so that, whatever else may mark the characters of men, the war is, on this ground, universal and unceasing. It commenced at the fall, runs through all time, and will not cease as long as the world remains. I stay not to particularize the several relations, here given, of Babylon's sin and folly: the pride, and self-sufficiency against God; the confidence of never being moved; the use of enchantments and sorceries, are all so many of the characters, which in all ages mark the enemies of Jesus and his salvation. The Reader will do well, while reading this chapter, to keep in remembrance its spiritual sense; and it will much promote his improvement and apprehension of what is here said by the Prophet, if he will read with it, and compare, what the Apostle was commissioned to deliver to the Church concerning mystical Babylon, in the close of the canon of Scripture. Those portions mutually serve to illustrate each other. See Revelations xvii. xviii. and xix. to the end of verse 9.

REFLECTIONS.

ONE of the most comprehensive improvements to be made at the close of this chapter, in the view of the very different termination set forth to the people of God, and to his enemies, may be summed up in the words of our Prophet: *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him!*

Reader! take a short view of both. Behold, in the representation of Babylon, the delicacy, splendour, pomp, and pleasure in which she rioted for a while: but behold, again, in a moment, in one day, what ruin followed! Such, but in an infinitely greater degree, is the state of all the enemies of God and of his Christ. As Jesus told some in his days, so in every age the same are discoverable: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the work of your father ye will do.* For the wretched wages of carnal honour, how unweariedly do they

drudge in his service, wear his livery, speak his language, and promote the interests of his kingdom! And what can the end be but Death? *My soul: come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!*

Behold the people of God! How often harassed and oppressed by their foes! And when, by sin and rebellion, their Babylonish enemies bring them into subjection, how heavily do they sometimes groan, being burthened. Who shall speak of their inward conflicts with sin and Satan, and an unbelieving heart? Who shall describe their outward fears? In all their pilgrimage state, what exercises do they experience from the many ups and downs through which they pass! Nevertheless, the Lord is still bringing them on, and bringing them through, and will at length make them more than conquerors, through his grace helping them. Reader! be it your portion and mine, to see that we are of this household of faith: for then we shall go from strength to strength, amidst all the Babylonian conflicts of our warfare, till we come to appear before our God, our Jesus, in his Zion!

CHAP. XLVIII

CONTENTS.

As the foregoing Chapter treated particularly of Babylon, so this hath a peculiar respect to the house of Israel. The Lord, in opening to the house of Jacob a view of their sins, plainly and fully shews, that all the blessings bestowed upon Israel were the pure result of grace.

HEAR ye this, O house of Jacob *which are* called by the name of Israel, that are come forth out of the waters of Judah; which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, *but* not in truth nor in righteousness.

2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel, the LORD of hosts *is* his name.

The Lord opens the Chapter with a call upon his people: He graciously sets forth in what light they stood among the nations. In profession, they were indeed his people, and from the covenant relationship in which they stood to God, they denominated him as their Lord, and themselves as the holy city. But, in the midst of this high profession, and these distinguishing advantages, their hearts were not right with him, they had a name to live, but were virtually dead before God. Reader! think how prone, in all ages, the people of God have been to depart from him. Do you not, in the present hour, feel what Paul felt, and groan as he did? Rom. vii. 15, &c.

3 I have declared the former things from the beginning: and they went forth out of my mouth,

and I shewed them, I did *them* suddenly, and they came to pass.

4 Because I knew that thou *art* obstinate, and thy neck *is* an iron sinew, and thy brow brass:

5 I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to pass, I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them.

6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare *it*? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.

7 They are created now, and not from the beginning, even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.

8 Yea, thou heardest not, yea, thou knewest not, yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

Reader! mark, I beseech you, what a gracious expostulation of the Lord is contained in these verses. The Lord retraces the subject from the beginning. He gives his people to see what they were, and what he is. He takes them by the hand, as it should seem, and leads ~~them~~ into retirement, to consider how gracious he hath been, and how unworthy they have proved. And in the close of this expostulation, that they might behold how magnified his grace had been, he gives them to understand that there was nothing in all this ungrateful conduct of theirs which surprised him: for from the womb he knew how very treacherously they would be found. Reader! remark, that of all the views to overwhelm the soul in the contemplation of sovereign grace and mercy, this seems the highest and the best: for it comes with the fullest tide. When the Lord gives grace, in direct opposition, as it were, to our undeservings; and *where sin aboundeth, that there grace should much more abound*; what shall we call this? And was not the Lord Jesus so given? Did our nature, universally speaking, desire a Saviour? Did we ask the blessing? Did we know we needed this unspeakable mercy? Yea, did we not, every one of us in heart and practice, if not in words, say, *We will not have this man to reign over us*? Reader! bring the subject home yet a little nearer, and make it personal: How were you engaged, when Jesus passed by and bid you live? Were you not in pursuit of

things temporal, *making*, as the Apostle speaks, *provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*. Nay, since the Lord called you by his grace, how have you manifested your sense of his grace, and your obedience? Had the Lord treated you, as you have treated him, where, even now, would have been your portion? Hath Jesus continued his love amidst all your undeservings; and still continues it; yea, doth he say to thee, as to Israel, in this expostulating scripture, *I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb?* Surely, under such views, if any where, the soul will bow down to the very dust of the earth, in admiring and adoring the riches of grace, which takes occasion from human misery, to display divine mercy, and to constrain every child of God to exclaim, with the Prophet, *Who is a God like unto thee?* Micah, vii. 18—20.

9 ¶ For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

11 For mine own sake, *even for mine own sake* will I do it; for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

Reader! as in the former paragraph I called upon you to mark the graciousness of God's expostulation with his people; so here I pray you to observe, how the whole of sovereign grace and love is by the Lord himself traced up to its source: Never, never forget that it is for Jehovah's glorious *name's sake*, that the whole creation-work and redemption-work, hath been, and is, and will be accomplished, even to all eternity. The song of heaven sets this forth most fully: and the experience of the redeemed on earth is made to correspond as fully to the same. If God pardons sin, receives the sinner, and passeth by their iniquities, the reason is assigned: *Be it known to you, O house of Israel, that I do this not for your sakes, but for my great name's sake.* Rev. iv. 9—11. Ezek. xxxvi. 21, 22. If the reader would see two remarkable instances wherein the servants of the Lord availed themselves of this distinguishing character of Jehovah, to plead for pardon and forgiveness, and prevailed, I would refer him to Exod. xxxii. 9—14, and Joshua vi. 6—9.

12 ¶ Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called, I *am* he, I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.

13 Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: *when* I call unto them, they stand up together.

14 All ye assemble yourselves and hear: which among them hath declared these *things*? the LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans.

Reader! observe what grace is, again and again displayed in every verse, as we prosecute this sweet Chapter. Though the Lord began by pointing out Israel's rebellion, and this was followed up with expostulation, yet when the Lord comes to speak of himself and his covenant relationship to his people, the cloud seems at once removed, and the brightness of his countenance comes forth in shining lustre: and when taking to himself his great name, the glorious I AM, the *First* and the *Last*, and therefore giving being to all his promises, he bids Israel to hearken: Israel was his *called*, his *chosen*. How sweet, how very sweet, are such views of the unchangeableness of him and his purposes and promises in Christ, when the soul can discover an interest in the whole from an union and interest in Jesus! Rev. xxii. 13.

15 I, *even* I have spoken, yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

16 ¶ Come ye near unto me, hear ye this, I have not spoken in secret from the beginning, from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD and his spirit hath sent me.

Though the whole passage is but a continuation of the same blessed discourse, in which God himself is the speaker; yet I stop the Reader under these two verses, to remark the peculiarity of what is said. If Jesus, under the spirit of prophecy, be here delivering these gracious truths to the Church, (as I think cannot be questioned) then will it follow, that all the three persons of the Godhead are here introduced as engaged in this blessed sermon. Jesus opened his gospel, and spoke not in secret, but openly to the people: so he received his commission, Isaiah vi. 8—10; and so, in the synagogue, he declared the Spirit of Jehovah to be upon him; compare Isaiah lxi. 1, &c. with Luke iv. 18, &c. And if Jehovah and his Spirit (as in those verses is said to have been the case) be thus sent, who will not see, as in the baptism of Jesus, all the three persons of the Godhead engaged in this act of grace, Matt. iii. 16, 17.

17 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, the holy One of Israel, I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go.

18 O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea;

19 Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off, nor destroyed from before me.

20 ¶ Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it, *even* to the end of the earth: say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

21 And they thirsted not *when* he led them through the desarts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

22 *There* is no peace saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

How gracious the preface to all these sweet promises; and how sure they become, in the name of the great Promiser! Reader! let it be our earnest study and delight to come under the teaching of this almighty Lord, whose instructions are sure to profit us. He teacheth not as man teacheth: he teacheth powerfully, for his word comes with power: his teachings are infallible, for HE, the Spirit of truth, guideth into all truth; and what he teacheth will abide with his people for ever. *I shall never*, said David, *forget thy word; for by it thou hast quickened me*; Psalm cxix. 93. But amidst all these blessed promises to the Lord's people, how solemn is the termination of the Chapter to the ungodly! There is, there can be no peace but in Jesus; and the unawakened, the graceless, and the ungodly, rejecting the counsel of God against their own souls, and despising the blood of the cross for salvation, can find it in no other; Acts iv. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! *stand still, and see the salvation of God!* Behold, as this Chapter most blessedly sets forth, *from* whom that salvation comes; *by* whom it is accomplished; *in* whom it is alone found; and *to* whom the whole glory results. The song of heaven, and the hymn of the church upon earth, are both tuned upon the same note: To Jesus the praise is given, *for he was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood.*

But oh! amidst this pleasing assurance, how painful is the thought that neither the consciousness of grace freely given, in all that is past: nor the continuance of grace in all that is present: nor all the hopes and expectations of grace for all that is to come; are found sufficient in their persuasive pleadings, to keep alive in the soul, obedience and the dedication of the heart to the Lord. Thou knowest, Lord, what transgressors thy children would be from the womb: but thy

did not stop thy bowels of love from yearning over us in our lost estate. Precious Jesus! be thou to us still Jesus. Lord, teach us to profit; lead us by the way we should go: and grant that, amidst all our unworthiness, thy grace may never depart from us: but keep us by thine almighty power through faith unto salvation. And while to the wicked there is no peace; give us that peace, in thee and thy righteousness, *keeping the heart and mind in Jesus Christ! Amen.*

CHAP. XLIX.

CONTENTS.

This most interesting Chapter contains the outlines of the covenant of redemption, in the solemn transactions between God the Father and God the Son, concerning salvation. This subject is carried on without interruption from beginning to end.

LISTEN, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people from far, the LORD hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft, in his quiver hath he hid me.

3 And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

We find here some glorious speaker, calling upon the nations of the isles to attend to him, and declaring both the authority upon which he spoke, and the subject of his discourse. And if we make application of it to the Lord Jesus Christ, as God-man Mediator, nothing can be more beautiful and interesting. He first demands attention; then speaks of the persons to whom his discourse was directed; and then of his authority, and the object of his call. And Jesus, and Jesus only, was and is all this; and of no other could it be said or spoken: God the Father is said to have given his dear Son *to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel*; Luke ii. 32. And from the womb of all eternity, was Jesus called, yea, *in the volume of the book was it written* of him. If the Reader will compare what the beloved Apostle John saith of the book of the divine decrees, which was in the hand of him that sat upon the throne, and which none was found worthy to open but the Lamb that had been slain; he will be led perhaps to the sense of the passage, and discover that the Bible itself is but the transcript, in the revealed part of it, of what was written therein: Rev. v. 1—10. Psalm xl. 6—8. And when the hour approached for the open revelation of Jesus, the angel declared his name, as we read, Matt. i. 21. But we must not stop here. God the Father, who called Christ to the work, is said to have fitted him for it. So the covenant terms ran,

Psalm lxxxix. 19—24. Perhaps the *hiding* of Christ might refer to what Paul speaks of the mystery of redemption, *hid from ages and generations*, Ephes. iii. 4—10. The *mouth* of Jesus, *like a sword*, hath reference to the power and sovereignty with which *he spake as never man spake*. The *word* of Christ is said to be *quick and powerful*, Heb. iv. 12. John v. 25. Psalm. xlv. 5. Lastly, God's *owning* him *in the work*, as well as *calling* him *to the work*, is most blessedly set forth in this passage: Christ, as Mediator and Surety, is Jehovah's servant, the Husband of his Church and people; and I hope the Reader will not overlook, what is as sweet a part as any, that Christ takes, in this passage, the name of his Church. It is an usual thing in life for the wife to take the name of her husband; but Jesus, in his unequalled condescension, here takes the name of his wife, and is called *Israel*. Precious Lord Jesus! what humility was thine!

4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain, *yet surely* my judgement *is* with the LORD, and my work with my God.

5 ¶ And now, saith the LORD, that formed me from the womb *to be* his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

What a striking resemblance doth this bear to the preaching of our Lord, when upon earth! Who that reads in the Gospel of the contempt poured upon the person and office of Jesus, but must be struck with this description, John. i. 11. And how blessed is it to behold the promised acceptance of Christ's person, however slighted by the rulers and pharisees. Reader! never forget *in* whom all redemption is: and *by* whom all acceptation is given to the persons and offerings of his people.

6. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

I do not desire to strain any passage of scripture, beyond its plain meaning: but I would humbly ask the Reader, whether these words do not seem to convey as if the very heart of God the Father was going forth in love and delight upon the person of his dear Son, as the Mediator and Surety of his people. See those sweet scriptures, Psalm ii. 8. John x. 7. And do not forget, whenever contemplating the glorious work of salvation, that Jehovah calls it *HIS*. Sweet and delightful thought!

7 Thus saith the LORD, the redeemer of Israel, and his holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship because of the LORD that is faithful, and the holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkness, Shew yourselves: they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures *shall be* in all high places.

Was there ever a more striking, and decisive passage than this, in confirmation of the greatness and glory of his person and character, to whom the words are addressed? Jehovah first gives him his own glorious and distinguishing name: *the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One*. And, Reader, do pray observe, how the Redeemer is called: *his Holy One*; that is Jehovah's Holy One; for Jesus, in his mediatorial character, is the *Christ*; that is, *the sent, the anointed of God*. I hope you know your Redeemer in this sense. Peter did, and found it most blessed, Matt. xvi. 13—17. And if we read the words, his *Holy One*, as Israel's Holy One, it is still blessed; if Christ our Redeemer be God's Christ; so is he his Church's also. Precious consideration! Jehovah next points to his wonderful humiliation; which, indeed, was such as was never before heard of: not only one man, for many despised him; but the nation at large abhorred him.

He was despised in his person, his offices, his perfections, his attributes, yea, in all things, as the most abject of men. See Matt. xxvii. 43. John ix. 29. His attributes were also contemned; though wisdom itself, yet said they, *how knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* John vii. 15. His omniscience was reviled: *Prophecy, say they, unto us, thou Christ, when they had blindfolded him, who is he that smote thee?* Matt. xxvi. 68. So again his kingly office: *If he be the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross!* And so also his priestly office: *He saved others, say they, himself he cannot save!* Matt. xxvii. 39—44. Hear also what the Lamb of God saith of himself on this subject, Psalm xxii. 6—8. But what glory doth Jehovah promise shall follow? The presence of God the Father was assured to him, in the midst of all these taunts and reproaches! the issue of the travail of his soul was certain. And the Lord Jesus, as the whole of the covenant, hath accomplished the purposes, and

*is going on to the present hour to accomplish them, on the earth. See these scriptures, Zech. ix. 11. John, xi. 42. Isaiah, liii. 10—12.

10 They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

12 Behold, these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim.

How sweetly do these verses follow what was said before: Jehovah having guaranteed to the glorious Head of the church, every thing needful for his personal safety and honour, here engageth to bless and take care of his people; and, as well through a life of grace, as in the kingdom of glory, their everlasting safety and happiness is secured. See Rev. vii. 13, to the end.

13 ¶ Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

This is a beautiful break in the Chapter, to call up even the inanimate parts of nature to celebrate, in sacred hymns, the glories of redemption: Heaven and earth shall sing of it, for both worlds take part in the triumphs of redeeming grace. Luke, ii. 13, 14.

14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

16. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands, thy walls *are* continually before me.

17 Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers, and they that make thee waste shall go forth of thee.

18 ¶ Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee: *as* I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with

an ornament, and bind them *on thee* as a bride *doeth*.

19 For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.

20 The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place *is* too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell.

21 Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone, these, where *had they been?*

The distress of Zion only makes way for the display of divine love; and if the people of God, in their several exercises (be they what they may) could but be brought to consider the unceasing and everlasting care of the Lord over his people, they would like Paul, *take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches for Christ's sake*, knowing that when *most weak in themselves*, those are the very seasons for being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. Reader! I pray you take notice, what a very tender and interesting image the Lord here makes use of, to dry up the tears of Zion; and which, I beg the Reader to remember, is as much addressed to mourners in Zion now, as it was then when first delivered: *Can a woman forget her sucking child?* The figure is carried to the highest pitch of tenderness the imagination can conceive, in order to shew the vast superiority of that love which God bears towards his Zion, his people. *A woman*, the tenderest part of human nature; and a *mother* also; yea, a *nursing* mother; and not to a child only, but to a *sucking* child, who is still hanging to her breasts, and depending upon her for every thing; can such a person forget the infant, the son of her womb, which came forth from her own bowels, and is indeed part of herself: and the very fulness of her breasts requiring discharge still urging also to remembrance? Is it possible, saith the Lord, that she can forget either the child or herself? The Lord asketh the question, and answers it himself: *Yea, they may forget!* Her compassion may give way! Sickness, a fever, with loss of senses, death, or dying circumstances, may induce it; yea, some mothers, as hath been known, have destroyed the fruit of their womb, to hide their shame; and some, as the Prophet hath described in a time of famine, have sodden their own children for food, Lament. iv. 10. But, saith the Lord, though all natural feelings may be lost, the tender compassion of God for his Zion shall never give way! And how

blessed are the promises that follow, to create faith in the hearts of his people? *Set me*, saith the Church, *as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. I have*, saith the Lord, *engraven thee upon the palms of my hands.* And how was this fulfilled when the hands and feet of Jesus were bored and fastened to the cross! Surely there can be no remembrance like this; no memento for the believer to look at, as well as his Lord, to ensure an unceasing attention to his wants, and to give every blessing that cross purchased. See Song viii. 6. Zech. xii. 10. And how blessedly do all the promises follow these divine assurances, that the Lord's mercies upon Zion shall follow every wasting time with tenfold fulness, so as to surprise the people of God with the unexpectedness, as well as the greatness of salvation by Jesus. I beg the Reader not to lose sight, that in those unspeakable blessings, what is said, is spoken, first, to the person of our Lord, as the great Head of his Church; and then to his Zion, his redeemed in him; for such views abundantly heighten every blessing.

22 Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders.

23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers: they shall bow down to thee with *their* face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

Reader! while God's mercies to the poor Gentile church are thus repeatedly brought to view, do not overlook the sweetness and fulness of them, as they respect yourself. Personal interest gives a relish to every mercy; in nothing more so, than our own interest in Jesus. And when we read these mercies, as promised to the Lord Jesus so many ages before his coming; and now feel and know them to be realized, so many generations after his return to glory; what an accumulation of evidence do they bring with them, *to the truth as it is in Jesus!* Oh thou precious Lord! both of Jew and Gentile! how fully hast thou confirmed thy promise, in thy one fold, under thyself the one true Shepherd! John, x. 16. Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

24 ¶ Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?

25 But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with *him* that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

26 And I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD *am* thy saviour and thy redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

The greatness of the blessings promised in this Chapter, being so wonderful in themselves, and so much beyond all possible expectation to the people, who were to be made happy in the possession of them, might well excite surprize, and occasion doubts how, and by what means, they should be fulfilled. If the subject be considered spiritually, both Jew and Gentile were, by nature and by practice, the lawful captives to sin and Satan; how then shall they be liberated? Poor sinners can neither purchase their freedom by price, nor by power. The Lord can only solve the difficulty: Jesus is their Redeemer, and he will accomplish the liberation of his redeemed by both. See those sweet scriptures which shew the way, and when you have duly pondered the blissful subject, recollect that the whole is for the glory of Jehovah, as the whole is accomplished by himself; Isaiah xlv. 13. 1 Peter, i. 18, 19. Heb. ii. 14. Rev. v. 9.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! I charge it upon you, as I desire to feel the full impression upon my own mind, that the subject, as well as the contents, of this most precious Chapter, be not dismissed, before all its blessed truths, under the divine teaching, be properly received and enjoyed in both our souls. The solemn transactions here recorded, of what passed between our God and Father in Christ Jesus, and our most blessed Lord, concerning the recovery of our poor lost and fallen nature, are, in fact, the bottom and foundation of all grace and mercy, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. All that we receive in pardon, in the regeneration of our nature, our adoption and high calling in Christ Jesus, our assurance of salvation in grace here, and glory to all eternity; all are the result of those covenant engagements, which this most blessed Chapter records, and which took place between the high contracting parties, before the fall of man, yea, before the foundation of the earth was laid. Pause then, and trace the wonderful subject through all its parts. Behold God the Father, in his love to our poor nature; who so loved us, as to give his only begotten Son, *to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Behold God the Son, who so loved us, as to *give himself for us.* Behold God the Holy Ghost, as testifying the same, in bringing the Church acquainted with her mercies, and not only revealing the glad tidings of salvation, but inclining the hearts of the children to the belief of the truth of Jesus, and making them *willing in the day of his power.* Oh! what everlasting praise, love, and adoration, have we now to offer, and shall have eternally to present, to the holy, undivided, Three in One, Jehovah, for these unspeakable mercies of God in Christ!

Reader! let us seek grace to receive the blessed truths contained in this Chapter, to live up to the faith, and in the enjoyment of them, during our whole continuance upon earth, until we come to realize the full possession of them in everlasting glory. Precious Jesus! may we behold thee as the whole of the covenant. All the obligations of it have been wrought by thee; all its blessings are *from* thee; and all the concerns of it, and of thy people's happiness, are entrusted to thee. Help me then, O Lord, to look more to thee in every blessing, as the author and procurer of it! There is more of thee in the most common mercies, than thy people are conscious of: thy death hath secured our life; thy cross hath purchased our crown! *To thee be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

CHAP. L.

CONTENTS.

Notwithstanding certain parts, here and there, in this Chapter, which may, at the first glance, appear to have an historical allusion to Babylon and the captivity: yet the great and evident point in the whole hath reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. His person, offices, and character, are strongly marked.

THUS saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have you sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

2. Wherefore when I came, *was there* no man? when I called, *was there* none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea: I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because *there is* no water, and dieth for thirst.

3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

The Prophet *Hosea*, whose ministry was not many years before that of *Isaiah*, hath made use of the same figure of the married state, to represent the Mediator's union with his people; and here the Prophet *Isaiah* adopts the same method. It is indeed, a very striking figure, and the Lord Jesus himself seems to delight in it. See *Hosea*, ii. *Jeremiah*, iii. 14, 15: *Matt.* xxii. 2. It may serve to teach us some sweet and precious things. By the assumption of our nature, the Lord Jesus hath shewn, that the soul is a marriageable creature to Christ, and therefore capable of an union with him, and enjoyment in him, to all eternity. What a sorrowful thought then is it, that by

sin we should at any time estrange ourselves from our Lord, our husband; and that our iniquities should act like a bill of divorcement! Precious Jesus! be thou our husband still, and perform the tender office of the husband and the friend, notwithstanding our backsliding; for the Lord God of Israel saith that he that hateth putting away, Malachi, ii. 16. I only add, that perhaps the expressions here denoted, concerning the Lord's *drying up the sea*, making the rivers a wilderness, and causing the fish to stink, hath respect to the display of his miracles in Egypt, for the deliverance of his people.

4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is weary*: he wakeneth morning by morning: he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

5 ¶ The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

7 ¶ For the Lord GOD will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8 *He is* near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? let us stand together, who *is* mine adversary? let him come near to me.

9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me, who *is* he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment: the moth shall eat them up.

I should think it an unnecessary service to point out whom this account refers to. Every thing here spoken is so directly descriptive of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, that it is hardly possible to lose sight of Jesus while reading what is here said. Of whom but Jesus could it ever be said, that he had *the tongue of the learned*? Who could say to the weary, *Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls*? Whose ear was opened, or bored, as Jehovah's servant, that loved his master, loved his wife and children, and therefore would not go out free? Of whom but Jesus could this have ever been said, to the full extent? Psalm xl. 6, 7, compared with Exod. xxi. 5, 6. Who but Jesus gave his back to the smiters, and hid not his face from shame and spitting? And Reader, do not overlook as interesting a part as any, in this representation of Jesus; namely, that it was the Lord God Jehovah, who appointed thy Surety

to all this. Oh! what strength doth faith derive from the view, when, in the sufferings of Christ, we trace the hand of Jehovah appointing to all! It was this which crowned the whole, that *Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest*: and in all he bore and suffered, it was *the Lord who laid on him the iniquities of us all*, Heb. v. 5. Isaiah liii. 6. Therefore how sure was Christ's dependence for support from the Father, to carry him through the work; and how sure is our dependence and confidence in him, for justification, as the Lord our righteousness!

10 ¶ Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh *in* darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Here is the Lord Jesus, as having the tongue of the learned, giving a word of comfort to the weary and exercised soul. Reader! pray observe how likely, yea, how proper it is, that one who feareth the Lord, may yet walk in darkness. But how blessed is the case of such an one, that, however dark his walk may be, Jesus is at the end to lighten it up, and in the mean time will be his light and salvation. Psalm xxvii. 1.

11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass *yourselves* about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks *that* ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.

We have several examples in the ministry of God's servants, who, in their animated expostulations, adopt language like this. The Apostle Paul, after finishing a solemn discourse to his countrymen, on the subject of Christ's redemption, makes use of the same, Acts, xiii. 41; and what an awful darkness will that be, in which men must lie down for ever, if they refuse all light to walk by, but of their own kindling; despising the light of Jesus, who is *the light, and the life of the world!* Oh! for grace, that it may never be the condemnation of the writer, or reader, that *light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil!* John iii. 19.

REFLECTIONS.

LAMB of God! do I not behold thee, in this representation of the Prophet, *the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief?* And though thou didst set thy face as a flint, amidst all the despisings of men, when condescending to the deepest abasement; yet, Lord, thou hadst indeed the tongue of the learned, and now, thou knowest how to speak a word in season to weary souls, as thou didst then, when thine own soul was put to grief, and it pleased the Lord to bruise thee. Oh! speak to me that sweet word, in every season, which may make me rest with full assurance of faith on thy blood and righteousness!

Why, blessed Lord, was it, that thou, who art thyself the *light*, and the *life* of men, didst walk in darkness? Wherefore wast thou deserted of the Father, when, in that unequalled season of agony on the cross, it forced dolorous cries from thy soul? Was it, dearest Jesus, that thy people might know, from thy bright example, where to look, and in whom to confide? And wast thou for a time deserted, and in darkness, that thy people might not be deserted for ever? Arise, ye poor benighted souls, who now walk in darkness! Look unto Jesus, and let him be your light, and your life, and your salvation! And while others are walking in the glow worm sparks of their own confidence, do ye behold the glory of the Lord risen upon thee, whose light shall no more go down, neither cause thee to lie down in sorrow, for the Lord Jesus shall be to thee *an everlasting light*, and *thy God thy glory!*

CHAP. LI.

CONTENTS.

*Here is another blessed Chapter, full of Christ, and the blessings of his gospel, the Lord is calling upon his people, under several en-
dearing characters, to attend to him, as the only source of their hope
and salvation.*

HEARKEN to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit, *whence* ye are digged.

2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah *that* bare you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

In opening this Chapter, and listening to the call of God in this verse, I beg to remind the Reader of the observations at the close of the 46th Chapter, for this is but a continuation of the same gracious subject. Indeed, the Prophet may be considered, from the beginning of the 40th Chapter, to the close of his prophecy, to be preaching but one and the same sermon. The text is Christ, and the whole subject is Christ, and no other. In these verses, the people, who are seeking after the Lord, are spoken to, and particularly directed, with a view to find him, to consider what they are in themselves, that they may be the better prepared to know what the Lord is in himself, and what he is to his people. This divine teaching was what Jesus told his disciples, the Holy Ghost would accomplish upon the hearts of the people. *He shall convince, said Jesus, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* And this corresponds with what is here said, of looking unto Abraham and Sarah; that is, looking so unto them, as, in their nothingness and original sinfulness, to trace our own; and to let God have, what is his most just due, all the glory of our conversion. For Abraham, the great father of the faithful, was originally an idolater; and Sarah a daughter of Eve: and both were of that stock, of whom it is truly said, *there is none that doeth good,*

no not one. Hence, therefore, when the Lord commands his people, who are following after righteousness, and seeking the Lord, to look back, and to look in, it is in order that they may look up to Him, from whom alone cometh *every good and every perfect gift.* Reader! you and I shall never be able rightly to value the Lord's righteousness, until convinced that we have none of our own: then Jesus will be indeed precious as a Saviour, when we feel, and know, and are convinced, that we are poor lost sinners. Gen. xi. 31. Rom. iv. 1—3. John, xvi. 7, 8. I Peter, ii. 7.

3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, and thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

This sweet promise comes in very blessedly, after the humbling views the Lord had bid the seekers after him to take of themselves. The Lord will give grace to the humble; and he that gives grace, gives also glory. It is He who wounds, and He who heals. James, iv. 6. Psalm lxxxiv. 11. Deut. xxxii. 39.

4 ¶ Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation; for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgments to rest for a light of the people.

5. My righteousness is near: my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people: the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Here is another gracious call of the Lord, full of mercy and love, like the former; seemingly directed to those who have not only sought the Lord, but are joined in covenant to him, and know him. The Prophet Jeremiah hath described them under these characters, Jerem. l. 4, 5. How truly blessed is the Lord's proclamation to all such! God owns them for his people: to them belong the whole of gospel privileges; and as all the promises in Christ Jesus are their own, because Christ is their own; so his righteousness is theirs, even for ever! And all these blessings are for ever; never to be forfeited,

never to be recalled. They begin in the Lord; and, like the ocean which sends out all its rivers and streams, and receives them back again; so what begins in the Lord ends in him. So saith the song in heaven, Rev. v. 9. Redemption *from* Jehovah is the first cause, and redemption *to* Jehovah is the end. Reader! doth not your heart leap for joy in the contemplation?

7 ¶ Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart *is* my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

Here is another gracious call of the Lord, in which the subject is carried to its height: for it is to such as have not only sought the Lord, and followed after his righteousness, but have also found him. And these are the people, who, according to my apprehension, both know Christ as the Christ of God, and live upon him. The Lord himself defines their characters: *The people in whose heart, saith the Lord, is my law: that is, Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth; and in whose heart he is formed, and reigns, and rules, as the hope of glory.* They walk in Christ, act every grace upon Christ, and perform every duty in the strength of Christ. Jesus is their all, for life, for strength, for grace, for salvation. Reader! is it thus *you know righteousness?* Are you of that people, in whose heart the Lord's law is? If so, every thing else is, as the Lord speaks, *moths and worms.* What are all the reproaches of men, if Jesus dwell within, and whispers peace? What are all men's despisings, if God saith, *Ye are my people?*

¶ 9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. *Art* thou not it that hath cut Rahab, *and* wounded the dragon?

10 *Art* thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?

11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy *shall be* upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy, *and* sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

This precious portion seems to be as in answer to what had been said before. The Lord had been giving exceeding great and precious promises to his people, and now his people, as with one voice, makes the Lord a thankful answer, in prayer and praise, that God would do so. It is the language of strong faith, offered up in Christ Jesus. For *the arm of the Lord* is Christ, Deut. vii. 19; hence, when the Prophet complains of the little success of preaching of the gospel, he calls it *the arm of the Lord*, Isaiah, liii. 1; and hence the Reader will also perceive that the Prophet is celebrating Christ in that *arm of the Lord*, which *cut Rahab*, and *wounded the dragon*; and *dried up the sea*, and led his people through. For who is meant by *Rahab*, but *Pharaoh*, the dragon, the leviathan; and what *sea* was this but the Red Sea? *This is he*, saith Stephen, *which was in the Church in the wilderness*, Acts, vii. 38. Reader, how blessed is it to trace Christ, in all the redemption of his people! See those scriptures, Habak. iii. 8, to the end; Psalm lxxiv. 13, 14. And observe, in this latter scripture, how the sacred writer makes that triumph of God's people over Pharaoh and his host, to be as meat to them in the wilderness; meaning, that in the experience of the Lord's victory then, they found food to keep alive their faith, in all the after exercises they were called to. And what is the final song of triumph, but the same? Isaiah, xxxv. 10. Rev. xv. 3.

12 I, *even* I *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of man *that* shall die, and of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass?

13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth? and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where *is* the fury of the oppressor?

14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

15 But I *am* the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared; the LORD of hosts *is* his name.

16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou *art* my people.

This is the Lord's answer, agreeably to that promise, Isaiah, lxxv. 24. And observe how the Lord proposeth comfort to his people, even in himself. As if the Lord had said, "The deliverance at the Red Sea was great; but let your joy for that deliverance be in me, the giver." Redemption is blessed, but the Author of it is more so. The Lord is the only comfort, and the comforter of his people; and how childish is it to fear man, while the Lord is our refuge! The child-like fear of the Lord will drive out all fear of men or devils; just as the fire of the sun will extinguish the fire of the hearth. Oh! for a knowledge of this, in all the circumstances of life! 2 Cor. i. 3.

17 ¶ Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, *and wrung them out.*

18 *There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth: neither is there any that taketh her by the hand, of all the sons that she hath brought up.*

19 These two *things* are come unto thee: who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?

20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.

21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine.

22 Thus saith thy Lord, the LORD, and thy God, *that* pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, *even* the dregs of the cup of my fury, thou shalt no more drink it again.

23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee: which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street to them that went over.

How very beautiful and gracious is this! It seems as if the Lord would answer his people in their own words. The church had called

upon him to *awake*; and now the Lord bids Jerusalem to rouse up herself, in his strength. The Lord puts her in remembrance how she had been exercised, and had tasted of the gall and the wormwood; but now, in redemption by Christ, she shall drink of it no more. And as a poor fretful sinner, until relieved by the redemption of Jesus, is entangled and unable to get free, like a bull in a net; so when the Son hath made the sinner free, he then is *free indeed*! Oh! the misery of sin! Oh! the rich salvation of Jesus! God be praised for his unspeakable gift! John, viii. 36. 2 Cor. ix. 15,

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Oh! for grace to seek the Lord, and to follow after righteousness! Blessed the soul, that is thus taught of God; he will hearken unto the Lord. Let it be my portion, O Lord, so to do, and to be the follower of them, *who through faith and patience, inherit the promises*. And surely, blessed Jesus, I shall fix my eyes, and heart, and affections, all on thee, and prize thy rich salvation while I keep in remembrance the rock from whence I was hewn, and the hole of the pit from whence I was digged.

Oh! for grace, yet in larger, fuller portions, to know the Lord, and so to know him, as to live upon him by faith, until I arrive to the full and everlasting enjoyment of him by sight! Such are the privileges of thy people: Lord, let such be mine! Then shall I not fear the reproaches of men, nor regard their revilings. Occupied with higher objects, my soul will unceasingly be engaged in contemplating thee, and the fulness of that righteousness, which is for ever, and thy salvation, which is from generation to generation. Awake then, O Lord, and cause me to triumph in thy strength; and oh! that, through thee, my soul may be perpetually awake to follow thee in the regeneration, that when thou comest to make up thy jewels, I may be found among *the redeemed of the Lord, which shall return and come with singing unto Zion, when everlasting joy shall be upon our heads, and we shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away!* Amen.

CHAP. LII

CONTENTS.

The Lord Jesus, by his servant the Prophet, is still comforting his Church; calls upon her to live upon, and rest in the full enjoyment of his free salvation; holds forth many sweet promises, and points to the loveliness of his servants, by whom he sends his gospel of peace.

AWAKE, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised, and the unclean.

2 Shake thyself from the dust: arise, and sit

down, O Jerusalem : loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

Was there ever a more gracious, a more encouraging invitation given for sinners to be made happy, than is here held forth, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ? Jehovah had before commanded his people to take hold of his strength, to make peace with him; and promised that they should do so: and here the Lord sheweth what that strength is, and how it is to be received. For what is the *strength of Zion*, but the salvation of Jesus; and what is the *beautiful garments* of Jerusalem, but his robe of righteousness? And who can put it upon the believer, but God the Holy Ghost? Oh! how precious is it to see Jesus in every thing! See Isaiah, xxvii. 5; and to the same amount, Job, xxiii, 3 to 6. John, xvi. 13, 14. And when the Church of Jesus is thus clothed, thus adorned, as a bride for her husband, how perfectly free is she from all captivity, and all uncleanness; John viii. 36. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Rev. xxi. 2. Ephes. v. 25—27.

3 For thus saith the LORD,, Ye have sold yourselves for nought : and ye shall be redeemed without money.

4 For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them, make them to howl, saith the LORD, and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

Reader! pause, and admire the beauty, as well as the grace, displayed in this scripture. The Lord had a right in his people, by creation, when they sold themselves to sin. When the devil broke into this our world, he came as a thief and a robber. The Lord did not lose his right by the devil's plundering, nor our apostasy; and, therefore, we were still his by right. Moreover, the sale we made of ourselves, was neither for his profit, nor our advantage. And, therefore, as the whole was an act of fraud, our redemption should be *without money, and without price*. But oh! how infinitely precious and invaluable was the purchase! See what the Apostle saith of it, 1 Peter, i. 18, 19. And what a vassalage is sin! How do poor burdened sinners groan, when they come to feel the chains of sin, of Satan, of an awakened conscience, the terror of God's broken law and justice, and the dread of temporal and eternal death!

6 Therefore my people shall know my name : therefore *they shall know* in that day, that I *am* he that doth speak, behold, *it is I*.

How very blessed and refreshing does this verse come in, after what went before! And, Reader, remark that this regard which

Jehovah hath to his great name, is the best of all possible arguments for his people, when going to a throne of grace in Christ. See how Moses, how Joshua, dwelt upon it: yea, observe how the Lord himself refers every thing of grace which he purposeth, to this one glorious consideration; Exod. xxxii. 9—15. Joshua, vii. 5—9 Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23. Reader! do we truly know the Lord's name, and is this gracious promise ours in Christ Jesus?

7 ¶ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

What glorious tidings of salvation must they be, when the very feet of those who bring them, are accounted by the Lord himself to be beautiful! This is indeed good news from a far country; and when the soul that hears the joyful sound, knows by heart-felt experience, that Jesus reigneth in and over all his affections, this is a *joy unspeakable and full of glory*. I cannot dismiss this view of the beautifulness of the feet of Jesus's sent servants, without reminding the Reader how Jesus honoured them; see John xiii. 3—5; neither can I look at the servants, without still having my mind more fully led to the contemplation of the master. Reader! think how beautiful were the feet of Jesus when he came over the mountains of sin, in our nature, and published peace in his blood! Think how the feet of Jesus appeared when on Mount Calvary they were nailed, for us and our salvation, to the cross! Oh! thou unequalled pattern of every thing beautiful and lovely! And how blessed are the promises that follow! Zion's watchmen shall see, eye to eye, when redemption here promised, was completed; and was it not so, when they saw Jesus, face to face, in the days of his flesh, when he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on him? John, ii. 11. It is not so now, in every instance, both in the Jewish and the Gentile Church, where the Lord hath made bare his holy arm, and the believing soul cries out, as holy Simeon, *Mine eyes have seen thy salvation!* Luke, ii. 30. And will it not be so in that day, when the Lord shall *make up his jewels*, when *every eye shall see him*, and *he shall*

come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe? Rev. i. 7. 2 Thess. i. 10.

11 ¶ Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*, go ye out of the midst of her, be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you: and the God of Israel *will be* your re-reward.

Probably the Prophet had his eye upon the deliverance of the people from Egypt; and it is probable also, that he connected with this view of what was past, the deliverance that was to come, when the Babylonish captivity, like the Egyptian should be over. But far greater prospects, no doubt, the Prophet had in contemplation, when he thus spake. The glorious redemption of poor sinners, by the Lord Jesus, called for this haste to depart, and to take nothing with them, when brought to see and feel their dreadful captivity in sin, and the pollutions of it. Oh! with what haste, like Lot's flight from Sodom, would men *flee from the wrath to come*, did they but know the things which make for their peace, and *before they are for ever hid from their eyes*. Reader! do not overlook how this sweet scripture declares the everlasting presence of Jesus with his people. The pillar of the cloud, and the pillar of fire, are still with all the redeemed. Exod. xiii. 21, 22. Matt. xxviii. 20.

13 ¶ Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men).

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations, the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them, shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard, shall they consider.

The Prophet could not help following up what he had said in the preceding verse, of the Lord's presence, with somewhat of the Lord's person. And what a lovely, though short account, hath he given of him! How he speaks of his person, his visage, his form; and how of his conduct and humble demeanour! How he describes the treatment he should meet with, and his lamb-like deportment under it! Precious Lord Jesus! is it so? was it so?—Is it said that Moses was exceeding fair; and that thou, Moses's Lord, hadst a form marred more than of any man! Lord, teach me to distrust all I see in man, and seek for nothing of comfort or of hope, but in thee only! Rom. xv. 21.

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READER! may it be your mercy and mine, that, while reading this blessed scripture, we may both awake, at the call of Jesus, and put on his beautiful garments of salvation, and find strength to our souls in his righteousness! May we have grace to shake ourselves from every defilement, and never let those souls of ours be again sullied with sin, after having been washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

And do thou Lord, who hast redeemed us without money, fulfil all thy precious promises, which this chapter contains. Give us to know thy name, and the glories of it; and may we make use of it, by faith, for every occurrence. Thy name is WONDERFUL; and thou wilt perform wonders for thy people. Thy name is GRACIOUS; and thou wilt be most gracious, in pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. Thy name is the HEARER OF PRAYER; and thou wilt be found of all them that call upon thee. Yea, Lord! so full and blessed is thy name, in every situation of thy people, that whatever names our wants may create, thou, Lord, hast a name infinitely beyond the whole, and able to answer all. Oh! then, *cause me to know thy name, that I may put my trust in thee.*

And while I read with what pleasure my God himself beholds the feet of his servants, whom he sends to publish, in his holy mountain, tidings of peace; let me welcome the faithful messenger, in the name of the Lord: and, above all, may it be my constant delight to sit at the feet of Jesus, to hear the gracious words that proceed out of his mouth!

Blessed servant of Jehovah! let me never cease to look on thee, never cease to love thee, never cease to adore thee! Let the kings and great ones of the earth shut their mouths at thee; be it my portion to behold thy face in righteousness, so shall I be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

CHAP. LIII.

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This may very well be called the Chapter of Chapters, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ; in which the two great features of his character are drawn to the full: the sufferings of Christ; and the glory that should follow. The Prophet, under the Holy Ghost, most blessedly sets forth the Lord Jesus, under both.

WHO hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

The Gospel of Christ is a report, and full of glad tidings of good things; yet so very generally is it despised and scorned, that the question is here put, Who hath believed it? Reader! when we consider who Christ is in himself, and how essentially necessary his salvation is to all men; it becomes a matter of wonder that all men, universally speaking, do not embrace it in transports of joy. But, on the other hand, when we consider how sunk and fallen our nature is, even to the total ignorance of our ruin, it becomes a matter of still

greater wonder, that any should receive it. Nothing, indeed, but sovereign grace can accomplish it in the heart. It is the Lord, that must make *his people willing in the day of his power*; Psalm cx. 3. Philip. i. 29.

2 For he shall grow up before him, as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness: and when we shall see him, *there is no beauty* that we should desire him.

Reader! do mark the prominent features, which the Holy Ghost here gives, of your Redeemer: then turn to the original, as he appears in the Evangelists, and compare the striking likeness. How did Jesus appear when he was born in the streets of Bethlehem? Was there ever a more tender, a more exposed *plant*? And, do remark, that this *growing up* is said to have been *before* Jehovah. And as his obscure birth hath nothing attracting in it, so neither had his person: a *root dry*; a form of *no comeliness*. Precious Lord Jesus! was this the state thou wert pleased to make choice of, in coming to seek and save thy people?

3 He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our faces* from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

As his person was without attraction, so the treatment he received corresponded to it. So very ungracious was the general abuse and contempt of him, that he said himself, *I am a worm, and no man; a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people*; Psalm xxii. 6. And they who should have countenanced him, blushed to own him for a time, and *hid their faces from him*. What a subject of wonder and astonishment is all this!

4 ¶ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Nothing can be more decisive than what this verse contains of the causes and ends of Christ's sufferings and death. They were wholly as the surety and representative of his people; nor can any thing be more satisfactory to the confirmation of the faith of the believer, than when we do esteem the Lord Jesus in this gracious character, as *stricken and smitten of God*, as the sinner's surety.

5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray: we have

turned every one to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

It is most blessed and delightful, everlastingly to view Jesus, in all he did and wrought, as the sinner's surety. Christ is never to be looked at, or regarded as a private person, but as the public head of his redeemed; and to endear this view of Christ still more, it is blessed to trace the hand of God the Father in all that concerns redemption. Did Jesus bear my sins in his own body on the tree? Then he did it, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him. And it was God the Father, not himself, who laid those iniquities upon him. Reader! I know not whether you enter into a rich enjoyment of those precious things; but to see the hand of God the Father in all, is what gives stability and confidence to our trust, and demonstrates that *our faith is not found in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*; 1 Cor. ii. 5.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Who that attends to these words, and beholds Jesus led forth to crucifixion can hesitate to apply them to the person of Christ, and to him only? Had *Isaiah* seen him led to Calvary; had he been present to witness the taunts and reproaches of the multitude; had he heard all that passed before Pontius Pilate, and seen the events which followed; surely it were impossible that he could have then described the person and character of the Lord Jesus more fully than he hath here done. The expression *being taken from prison and from judgment*, is uncommonly striking, and plainly confirms the doctrine of his propitiatory offering. For being cast into prison, and taken from judgment, fully proves that in all this Jesus stood as the believer's head, and not as a private character. Therefore, when he was *cast in*, the debt of his people was the cause; and his being *taken out*, is a plain proof that the prison keeper was paid, and the prisoner could no longer be left in confinement. *If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed*, John, viii. 36. Making *his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*, received a literal accomplishment, in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the honourable counsellor; and his being crucified between two thieves, as literally fulfilled the Prophet's other prediction.

10 ¶ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him, he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travel of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a *portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This *pleasure of Jehovah*, at the sufferings and bruises of Jesus, opens a sweet and consolatory thought to the faithful! So very great and important, in the sight of God the Father, are the bruises which Jesus received for his Church, that in the blessings of redemption, consequent upon them, the Lord Jehovah took delight to behold them, knowing that *by his stripes we are healed*. Not all the blood of beasts, on a thousand altars; neither all the services of angels and men, through endless generations, and for ever, could do that which was done by the bruises and putting to grief, which Jesus sustained. Hence the soul-travel of Christ, which he felt, both in the garden and on the cross, to bring forth the blessed fruits of it, in the real conversion of sinners to God. Christ's travailing pains for his people are until he is formed in the heart, the hope of glory. And the assurance that these points are to be accomplished, the promise of a seed to serve Christ is beautifully introduced, and declared to be so great, and so finished, that Jesus shall himself *be satisfied, and see of the travail of his soul*, in the multitude of sinners converted to the doctrine of the cross. Blessed promise to our glorious Head, and in him to all the seed; for all is *yea and amen to the glory of God the Father in Christ*; Psalm lxxii. throughout.

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My soul! ponder well this blessed, this glorious, this divine chapter; and do not dismiss it, until the Lord hath both taught thee the many gracious things contained in it, and brought home all that is said of Jesus to thine own experience and joy. And when dismissing it from thy present review, dismiss it but for a short season, and let thy frequent return to it, in solemn meditation, testify how very precious every part and portion of it is in thy esteem.

Behold here, my soul, thy Jesus, under his twofold character, in

which the Spirit of Christ, which was in the Prophets, did signify, when testifying of his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. And as thou passest over the several parts of the chapter, see whether thou art not constrained to cry out, in the same words as the Lord Jesus himself did, when he made the hearts of his disciples burn within them in the account: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

And oh! thou precious Jesus! who art the sum and substance of this chapter, and of the whole Bible, give me to enter into an heart-felt enjoyment of the greatness of what is here related of thee, in the all-sufficiency of thy sacrifice, and of my personal interest in it. Yea, Lord! I see that thou hast, by the dignity of thy person, and the glory of thy work, made full satisfaction, yea, more than satisfaction, for all the injuries which sin hath occasioned among the works of God! The glory of God's holy law, which sin had darkened, is more than restored by the perfect obedience of the Lord our righteousness. And the image of God, which sin had defaced in man, is more than brought back to perfection in that nature which thou hast taken, in a pure and holy portion of it, and which, by being united to the Godhead, gives to all thine actions and sufferings the merit of the Godhead. Oh! for grace then to believe, and to stand in that belief, eternally secure, that God the Father's covenant promise is and must be fulfilled: *Thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul, and be satisfied.* The dew of thy birth shall be as the womb of the morning. Thy people shall all be righteous in thy righteousness; and in thee and thy glory *they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.* Amen.

CHAP. LIV.

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The Lord here comforts the Gentile Church, by shewing her the fulness of her riches in Christ, and calling upon her to rejoice in the consciousness of her relationship to her Lord and Husband, her Maker. Many sweet and precious promises are contained in this Chapter.

SING, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the **LORD**.

What a sweet thought is it for the believer of the Gentile Church to cherish and keep in view, that they who were aliens, and strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, are not only brought nigh by the blood of Christ, but are more numerous than the original stock. Jesus himself is introduced as being astonished at the vast accession to his fold. Not that this was possible, but is only intended to represent, by a strong figure of speech, the joy of Christ over his redeemed; Isaiah, xlix. 18—23. Reader! pause over the precious thought, that Jesus is the husband both of Jew and Gentile; Galat. iii. 28, 29.

2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations, spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.

3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

4 Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

5. For thy maker *is* thine husband (the LORD of hosts *is* his name) and thy redeemer the holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Every mercy, every blessing, runs from this source; Jesus is the husband of his people. His assumption of our nature is, to all intents and purposes, the marrying of our nature. Jesus is no longer to be considered as a private person, but as the public head, surety, and representative of our nature; therefore all blessings and promises are made, and become yea and amen in him. *Reader! see to it, that thou art graciously taught this most blessed of all truths, by God the Holy Ghost; and then, from knowing thy union and oneness with Christ, take to thee all the blessings in Christ, which these verses express, and which become the sure privilege of all his people. Oh! the blessedness of seeing those mercies fulfilled, and fulfilling, in the earth!

6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy redeemer.

These words form a gracious continuation of the same soul-reviving promises; and all in Christ. Jesus was, and is, the husband of his church from everlasting. By the fall, a bill of divorcement was, as it were, written, and she was put away. By the interposition of his grace in redemption, she is again brought home; and

now never more to be separated from her first love, but with everlasting kindness, nourished and cherished, in grace here, and glory to all eternity. Prov. viii. 22—31. Hosea, ii. throughout. Jerem. iii. 14.

9 For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me : for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth : so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of thy peace be removed, saith the LORD, that hath mercy on thee.

The Lord is here pleased to make use of two very striking representations, to shew the unalterable nature of his covenant promises in Christ to his people; namely, the covenant made at the deluge, and the durableness of mountains. To this hour *the former* holds good; for though so many generations have passed, every day again proves God's faithfulness, Gen. viii. 21, 22; the *latter* may be more easily accomplished, by the removal of mountains, than that God's promises in Christ should fail; Psalm lxxxix. 30—35.

11 ¶ Oh thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

12 And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

13 And all thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD, and great *shall be* the peace of thy children.

14 In righteousness shalt thou be established : thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear ; and from terror, and it shall not come near thee.

15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, *but not by me* : whosoever shall gather together against thee ; shall fall for thy sake.

Every believer in Christ, as well as the Church at large, should take comfort from these gracious promises and assurances ; for while

they are spoken to the Church in general, they are intended for the special and personal consolation of every individual believer. And most sweet they are! Tried and tempted souls are afflicted souls, tossed about like ships on the tempestuous waters; but there shall be peace in Jesus. The New Testament Church, like the Jerusalem above, shall be glorious in her Lord's presence and favour, as those streets above are said to be paved with gold and precious stones. And, what is yet infinitely more sure to give comfort, all the children of grace shall be well taught, as well as well accommodated; for the Lord himself will condescend to become the teacher. And the consequence of this divine teaching is, that they shall come to Christ, and find all peace in him. Our blessed Lord himself was pleased to quote this passage, and apply it to himself, as concerning him and his gospel, John, vi. 45. Reader! do not forget to make application also of the blessed doctrine of our Lord upon it, and put down for thy comfort, what cannot be denied, that if thou art come to Christ, it is, and must be the sole result of divine teaching. Ephes. iv. 20, 21.

16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work, and I have created the waster to destroy.

17 ¶ No weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

The gracious Lord, still going on to satisfy and silence the fears of his Church and people, here condescends to make use of another similitude, to testify the firmness and unalterable engagements of his covenant and his people's safety. The smith cannot make a weapon to destroy without God's permission; for both the smith and the weapon, the fire that forms it, and the iron formed, all are no other than creatures and instruments, and can act no farther than the Lord permits and appoints. Every body, and every thing, is subject to God's control, and therefore can never act without his commission. And the Lord speaks of these watchings of his over his people, not as a thing limited to certain characters or situations only, but as the general inheritance of all his servants, whose righteousness is in Jesus. Isaiah, xlv. 24, 25.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! shall we not join this hallelujah, for redemption to the Gentile church, when we, as poor Gentiles, have, or ought to have, so much interest in it? Hath Jehovah indeed purchased salvation, and granted repentance unto life, to the Gentiles also; and shall not we glorify God, for the unspeakable gift? Do you not know, have

you not felt, hath not God the Holy Ghost opened your eyes to see, that we were once afar off, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and being without God in the world? And are we now brought nigh by the blood of Christ; married to Jesus, and made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ? And shall we not sing the song of salvation to God, and to the Lamb? Oh! for grace to enter into the full personal enjoyment of this sweet scripture, and to take part with the Gentile Church, breaking out on the right hand and on the left, and to feel interested in all that concerns Zion.

And oh! thou blessed, glorious, gracious Husband of thy people! we would hail thee as our maker, redeemer, surety, husband, friend! Thou art indeed *the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth!* Thou art indeed, in one and the same moment, our *Ishi*, our Jesus; for thou hast said, *I am married unto you, saith the Lord; and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.* Bring all thy redeemed, Lord, where thou thyself art, to behold thy glory, for thou hast said, *Where I am, there shall my servant be.*

And do thou, blessed Jesus, until thou comest to take all thy ransomed home, fulfil all those gracious promises, to our soul's joy. Noah's waters shall no more cover the earth, neither shall the Lord be angry with his redeemed in Jesus. Though mountains melt at thy presence, thy people shall behold thy face with joy. Jesus will teach, Jesus will comfort, Jesus will be the portion of his afflicted. Hearken, ye enemies of the cross, hearken to what our God hath said, in these sweet promises, and give over all your fruitless attempts to hurt his anointed. No weapon shall be formed to hurt them; for the smith, the maker of weapons is under the control of our God. Both the heritage and the righteousness of God's people are in himself; how then can any fail? Be wise now, therefore, O ye enemies of my God, for he that is his people's portion, will be his people's glory and defence. Let every foe hear, and tremble; whosoever shall gather together against any of Christ's little ones, shall fall for Christ's sake! Hallelujah! Amen.

CHAP. LV.

CONTENTS.

We have here a continuance of the same blessed subject as before. As the Prophet had held forth Christ's person, and then his Church; so here these blessed subjects are followed with gracious invitations, promises, and assurances of mercies in him.

HO, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is not bread?* and your labour for *that which sa-*

tisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is good*, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even the sure mercies of David*.

The Reader will not fail to remark, in the very opening of this precious chapter, what an uniformity runs through all gospel proclamations. They are general, they are great, full, free, and extensive. Every one individually, both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, shall be welcome to Christ, if Christ be welcome to them. Yea, the Lord will answer *before they call*. If they do but thirst for Jesus, it is a proof that he hath made them willing in the day of his power; Isaiah, lxxv. 24. Psalm cx. 4. John, vii. 37—39. How sweet and gracious is this? The *waters* they are called unto, mean the word, the ordinances, and the several means of grace in the gospel: and the sacred viands, *milk and wine*, mean the body and blood of Christ. Jesus is all this, and infinitely more than all: *For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*; Song, v. 1. John, vi. 33—53. The method of purchase differs from all others in the world; it is *without money, and without price!* Sweet consideration, and blessed encouragement to the poor and needy, who have nothing to buy with, and nothing to offer. The reason is obvious: Christ, the pearl of great price, is not sold, but given: moreover, if he were saleable, who could purchase? See 1 Peter, i. 18, 19. When all these things are considered, how delightful is the counsel of Jesus, Rev. iii. 17, 18. I only detain the Reader with one observation more on this passage, just to remark, that as all these mercies in Christ are general, free, full, and extensive; so are they, in Christ Jesus, sure and everlasting; liable to no change, incapable of being lost or taken away; for they are *the sure mercies of David*; alluding to God's covenant engagements with our spiritual David, the Lord Jesus Christ: compare 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, with Acts xiii. 34. After such gracious declarations as these, what weakness and folly must it be to seek redemption in any thing short of Christ, or in any thing but Christ! This, in the language of this scripture, like the man that spends his substance for chaff, and not bread; and his labour for that which cannot satisfy.

4 Behold, I have given him *for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people*.

How sweet and blessed is this declaration of Jehovah, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Here he is revealed under those distinguishing characters. And is he not *the faithful witness* in heaven? Called of God the Father, hath he not witnessed the whole truth of God, by his spotless life and holy death? Yea, doth he not now, by his blessed Spirit, confirm the whole, in the hearts, and lives, and consciences of his people? Is he not the leader, the captain, the commander, of his little army, in guiding, directing, strengthening,

and making more than conquerors, all his chosen, through this wilderness, to his kingdom above?

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation *that* thou knowest not, and nations *that* knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the LORD thy God, and for the holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Reader! do observe, that as, in the former verse, Jehovah spoke of Christ, so here, now blessedly he speaks to him. And this promise is among the covenant engagements, that when he made *his soul an offering for sin*, he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied; Isaiah liii. 11.

6 ¶ Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Oh! how blessed is it to see the earnestness with which the Lord pleads with his people. The gospel is called the *ministry of reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 18; and this notion carries with it the state of man before the fall, as being a state of amity and friendship. We cannot be said to *return* to the Lord, but under the idea that there was a time when our nature was in friendship *with* the Lord; which was indeed the case when Adam came out of the hands of his almighty Creator, pure and holy. But when he fell, all his children fell in him, and with him. Hence, when redemption is proclaimed, in and by Christ, the recovery from sin to salvation is called a *return*. What a beautiful and gracious invitation, seen in this point of view, doth these verses contain; and how sure of acceptance in Jesus! Psalm xxvii. 8. Ephes. i. 6.

8 ¶ For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways saith the LORD.

9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Among a thousand testimonies in proof of this doctrine, as if to draw an everlasting line of distinction between the perfections of Jehovah and the character of all his creatures, this of grace and mercy in the thoughts and ways of God's works! What an unmeasurable distance is this little globe from the unlimited heavens, and the unknown worlds with which we are surrounded! And yet these inconceivable disproportions are nothing, in point of opposition, to the pardoning grace of God in Christ, compared to the guilt

of man. Reader! it is our contracted notion of things, which makes us limit the Holy One of Israel. If the loftiest mountain were cast into the sea, the top of it would be lost, and totally covered; and the Prophet says that such is the fulness of grace and mercy in Christ, when God casts all our sins into the *depths of the sea* of Christ's blood; Micah vii. 18—20.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater :

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

Here are more sweet images and similitudes, to describe the great and wonderful properties of God's sovereign grace in Christ Jesus. How doth the snow and the rain from heaven come down? Often unperceived; often in large showers; sometimes gentle; always unsought for, and unasked. Such, then, is the grace of God; it waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men. *He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth: likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength,* Job, xxxvii. 6. And oh! how blessed is it to observe, that this grace of God in Christ cometh as the rain from heaven! not only before we ask it, but before we know that we stood in need of it; yea, it cometh in opposition to all our undeservings and rebellions. Oh! Lord! how dost thou surprize thy people with thy grace? And how is the word of thy grace made prosperous in the souls of thy people, wholly from thine own almighty power! Micah. v. 7. Psalm lxxii. 6.

12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.

13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.

Reader! do not fail to observe what a beautiful conclusion is made to this most gracious chapter! Surely, it is but just and right, that what begins in grace should end in thanksgiving! *Praise is comely for the righteous.* And how can any, and every redeemed soul do otherwise than shout aloud for joy, when Jesus is become his salvation? Such a blessed change is made from darkness to light, and

from the power of sin and Satan unto God, that it may well be compared to the removal of briars and thorns, when Jesus hath taken them all away, and planted himself in the heart, as the fir-tree and myrtle-tree of Lebanon. Isaiah, xxxv. throughout.

REFLECTIONS.

AND is this gospel call to every poor thirsty sinner, whose soul is scorched in this dry and thirsty land of sin? Doth Jesus indeed send out his heralds, yea, come himself with the invitation? Do I hear him say, as he said in the last great day of the feast, *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink?* What! is the invitation so general, so great, so extensive, that to *thirst* only for Christ, is a sufficient qualification to find Christ? He doth not say, *If any good man, any righteous man, any deserving man, thirst;* but the proclamation from the court of heaven is simply, *If any man thirst!* Oh! for grace to hear and know the joyful sound, and that he who gives the call, may give also the thirst of soul, to come at the gracious invitation. Precious Lord Jesus! let it be the portion, both of him that writes, and him that reads, to receive, on our bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, the unspeakable gift, and come to the waters without money and without price. Like David, may we cry out, "Oh! that one would give me of these waters of our spiritual Bethlehem, even Jesus and his full salvation, to drink!" 2 Sam. xxiii. 15.

Do thou, Holy Spirit! give us, as poor sinners, to see, while reading this blessed scripture, that we are they that have indeed spent our time, and talents, and substance, while pursuing any thing but Jesus, as those who spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour in any righteousness but his, for that which cannot satisfy. Do thou, Lord, incline our ear, that we may hear, and come to Jesus, who is himself both the whole of the covenant, and the sure mercies of David. He saith himself, who is *the faithful witness* in heaven, that he will cause them that love him to inherit substance, and he will fill their treasures. And do thou help us, oh thou Spirit of all truth, to have such views of the freeness, fulness, and greatness of God's rich mercy in Christ, as may remove for ever all our contracted notions of sovereign grace, that we may come to Him, who hath abounding pardons for abounding sin, and can, and will, save to the uttermost all who come to God by him. And, Lord, let thy word, like the precious influences of heaven, have free course upon our souls, to run and be glorified. Fulfil thine own gracious promises; cause it never to return void, but to be blessed, and accomplish thy merciful purposes. And then shall we go forth here, during a life of grace, like the flourishing plants of the earth; and ere long be among the trees of the Lord's right-hand planting, in the paradise of our God in heaven, in and through the glorious salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. LVI.

CONTENTS.

The subject of this Chapter is very different from that of the preceding: it consists of threatenings, mingled with promises; cautions to the watchmen of Israel, and an awful account of unfaithful shepherds.

THUS saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

2 Blessed is the man *that* doeth this, and the son of man *that* layeth hold on it: that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

It is blessed to observe with what solemnity and authority the Lord introduceth his declarations. The Lord is speaking of his salvation by Jesus Christ, and intimates the nearness of his coming; in the prospect of which he enjoins the faithful to be on the look out for it, and pronounceth a blessedness on every one found in it, and who layeth hold upon it. I conceive that Jesus himself is here peculiarly referred to; and consequently, in him, the blessing reacheth to all his people

3 ¶ Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I *am* a dry tree.

4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose *the things* that please me, and take hold of my covenant:

5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

The sorrow of Israel was great, if any family or tribe went childless; Jeremiah, xxii. 30. And the reason, over and above the common affliction of barrenness in a house, was, because the prospect Israel looked to, of Christ coming out of that family, was thereby defeated. Moreover, by the law, any one that had a blemish was deprived of the honour of the priesthood, and admittance into the congregation of the Lord; Levit. xxi. 17. But what a rich consolation did the Lord hold out in this scripture, in the view of the covenant, in and by Christ, of adoption into his family. What a fulness of all relations in one, is found in Jesus! He fills all, and supplies all,

and makes up the want of all. And as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, how much more may we hear Christ speaking; *Am not I better to thee than ten sons?* 1 Sam. i. 8. Oh! for grace to have an union and interest in that everlasting name of Christ, by which his people are called, Acts, xi. 26.

6. Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant :

7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer : their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar : for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

This is a repetition of the same promise, varying only in expression, under the gospel dispensation. Aliens and strangers shall be as fully instituted into the privileges of the Church, as the stock of Israel. All their offerings shall be accepted upon the New Testament altar, which is Christ, and in him, and for his sake, shall they be blessed; Malachi, i. 11. Gal. iii. 26—29.

8 The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, besides those that are gathered unto him.

This is a blessed verse, and full of blessings to the poor Gentile Church. Reader! well may we of the Gentile Church prize it. The Lord Jesus sweetly explained this, John, x. 16; and Paul hath described to what a wonderful extent this gathering shall be, Ephes. i. 10.

9 ¶ All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, *yea*, all ye beasts in the forest.

10 His watchmen *are* blind : they *are* all ignorant, they *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark ; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

11 *Yea* they *are* greedy dogs, *which* can never have enough, and they *are* shepherds *that* cannot understand : they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

12 Come ye, *say they*, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and tomorrow shall be as this day, *and* much more abundant.

Who, or what are meant by *beasts of the field*, and *dumb dogs*, may not be so easy to determine; but we cannot be at a loss to apprehend the meaning of the word *watchmen*. The passage is very awful, and closeth in a very awful manner. Those who minister in holy things, may well ponder over such a striking scripture, connected as it is with the characters here spoken of. The beloved Apostle hath marked their end, Rev. xxii. 15. Reader! let us turn our thoughts from the distressing view of unfaithful watchmen, to behold Him who is the true shepherd and watchman of his Church; he watches over it every moment; he keepeth it night and day, lest any hurt it; Isaiah, xxvii. 3. Precious keeper of Israel! do thou watch over me for good, and keep me by thine almighty power, *through faith, unto salvation*; 1 Peter, i. 5. Psalm cxxi. 4, 5.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED God! how truly refreshing to the soul of a poor dry barren believer, is the recollection of that covenant, which is everlasting and sure, and ordered in all things! What, though I have nothing; though I am nothing; yea, though I am worse than nothing; yet, convinced of an interest in this, I have riches, yea, durable riches, and righteousness, and a name better than sons and daughters. Children are uncertain comforts, and sure cares: but Jesus is a sure and abiding comfort, in which every promise is *yea and Amen*.

Grant, gracious Lord, that I may be among the gathered to Christ Jesus, that on that day, when he maketh up his jewels, I may be found among the number whom Jesus will own! And, Lord, keep me, keep thy Church, keep all thy redeemed, from unfaithful watchmen and shepherds. But do thou, in compassion to thy fold, give them pastors after thine own heart, who may feed them with true understanding and knowledge; and direct their souls to thee, that they may go in and out, and find pasture.

CHAP. LVII.

CONTENTS.

The subject of this Chapter is not unsimilar to the former. The Holy Ghost, by his servant the Prophet, is reproving the unfaithfulness of the people. The close of the Chapter contains one of the most sublime and consolatory representations of Jehovah, in the greatness and graciousness of his character, that can be conceived.

THE righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men *are* taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

2 He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, *each one walking in his uprightness.*

The chapter opens with remarking the inattention of the world to the operations of God in his providencés. God's faithful servants die, and the breach is not lamented as it ought; none considering that by so much grace as they possessed, that portion is taken from among men. Their prayers for Zion, those graces they exercised, and the supplications they put up for poor perishing sinners, cease with them. Here is cause for lamentation; for then it may be said, as by the Church of old, *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not*, Isaiah, lxiii. 16. But for them no tears need fall: could they speak to us, they would say, in language somewhat like that of Jesus, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to my Father*, John xiv. 28. Reader! cherish the sweet thought! Hast thou thy friends departed, who left a blessed testimony behind them, that they are gone to be with Jesus? Think where they now are, entered into rest! Jesus is their rest, and their refreshing; Isaiah, xxviii. 12. Matt. xi. 28—30. Psalm cxvi. 7.

3 ¶ But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer, and the whore.

4 Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, *and* draw out the tongue? *are* ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood?

5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

6. Among the smooth stones of the stream *is* thy portion; they, they *are* thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?

7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered *thyself to another* than me, and art gone up: thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee *a covenant* with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest *it*.

9 And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send

thy messengers far off, and didst debase *thyself* even unto hell.

What a change is here! Oh! the awfulness of an unawakened, unregenerated nature! What a sad thought is it, that from generation to generation, the deadly seeds of sin thus bring forth, and blossom, and spread their baleful fruit! Look into the world, as it is in the present day, and compare what is here said, with what every serious beholder is compelled to be a witness to, among the great mass of men. Was there ever a period in the annals of mankind, when the sons of the sorceress, the despisers of God and of his Christ, came forward with a more impudent and uncovered face? And, as might well be expected, when the fountain of true religion is corrupted, the streams would break out in adultery and whoredom. Was there ever a generation more marked than the present for general profligacy of life and manners? Blessed be God! the promise still continues fulfilled: and must and ever will be fulfilled; Jesus hath a seed that serve him, who are accounted to the Lord for a generation, Psalm xxii. 30. But while these are the salt of the earth, to preserve it from universal putrefaction; *the whole world*, as the Apostle said in his days, and it may be said with equal truth in ours, *the whole world lieth in wickedness*, 1 John, v. 19. Reader! amidst the multitudes who flock to the standard of Satan, now erected, are you of the happy distinguished few, whom Jesus hath gathered and brought into his own fold? Read attentively that alarming scripture, Revelations, xii. 12. Read also that scripture, and consider how blessed it is to know that we have a personal interest in it, Colos. i. 12, 13.

10 Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.

11 And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid *it* to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?

12 I will declare thy righteousness and thy works, for they shall not profit thee.

13 ¶ When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee: but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take *them*: but he that putteth his trust in me, shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain

14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.

This, it should seem, is a representation of such awful characters as were before described, disappointed in the pursuit of their pleasures, pausing over their dreadful state, and yet, though confessing all to be vanity and vexation of spirit, still going on from bad to worse, until life is over, and they lie down in sorrow. So the Lord elsewhere describes them; and so the world daily finds them; Isaiah, l. 11. Elihu hath drawn the most finished picture of such men, Job, xxxv. 9, 10: he represents them as crying out, and exclaiming continually under the vexation of a disappointed soul; but none of them cry out upon the Lord for deliverance. They are wearied in the greatness of their strength; but still they weary themselves for very vanity. Reader! mark from such characters what a dreadful blindness and captivity that must be, where sin forgeth such irons! But if the Lord removes the stumbling-block of a natural state, out of the way of his people (and none but the Lord can do it) the chain is then broken, and the poor deluded prisoner is free. Oh! Lord! in mercy look upon thine that are yet in the prison-house! Luke, iv. 18, 19. John, viii. 36.

15 For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls *which* I have made.

Reader! how blessed and lovely do these sweet verses come in, after what was said before! The former representation of our poor nature, was like a dreary wilderness, or the heath in the desert, that knoweth not when good cometh. But this is like the refreshing herbage, or the cooling stream, discovered in a weary land, where no spring was expected. I pray you read the verses again and again, that their full grace and comfort may be felt in your soul. When God saith thus, well may every poor broken-hearted sinner hear. See how Jehovah pledgeth his own divine perfections for the confirmation of his holy word; and do not overlook that most precious part, that though Jehovah inhabiteth eternity, yet doth he also dwell in the heart of the humble. Solomon was struck with wonder at the thought, that God would visit his house; but what would he have said, had he lived to see Jesus dwelling in a body of flesh? And what ought you and I to say, under a consciousness that our bodies are his temple? I Kings, viii. 27. John, i. 14. I Cor. iii. 16.

17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.

18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I

will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.

19 I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to *him that is afar off*, and to *him that is near*, saith the LORD, and I will heal him.

Can there be a sweeter description than these words contain, of the graciousness of God, in his dealings with sinners? The Lord corrects; the Lord hides his face; the Lord sends affliction. Wave follows wave, until the unthinking soul becomes humbled. But when at length the hand that smites, applies instruction to the stroke; and the Lord, who sends the rod, causeth the poor creature to *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*; then the cry goeth forth from the soul, *Save, Lord, or I perish!* But I beseech you, Reader, to remark in all this, that it is the Lord's sole work, and wholly to the Lord's own glory. The Lord creates, and new creates, both the heart and the lips. It is he that both wounds and heals. Oh! the blessedness of sovereign grace!

20 But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 *There is no peace*, saith my God, to the wicked.

These words are as awful, as the foregoing were comfortable. But every day's experience sheweth, that the one is as sure as the other. When God's judgments and chastisements do not soften, they harden. The same heat which melts wax, makes the clay stoney. Alas! the heart that remains hardened under the calls of grace, will increase in obduracy, and, like the horse's hoof, with increasing years, become more callous. Well may every one cry out, in the prayer of the Church, *From all blindness of heart, good Lord, deliver us!*

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! learn, from this blessed chapter, to form a right estimate of the departure of the faithful. They enter into rest. They are taken away from the evil to come. And inasmuch as a state of rest surpasseth toil and trouble; a state of holiness, that of temptation; and victory is better than conflict; by so much ought believers to rejoice, when the souls of the faithful enter into their rest in Jesus. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

But what an awful state, as here described, is that of the unreclaimed sinner! And what a melancholy close to a life of sin and vanity, must be a departure under vexation of spirit! *Come not thou, my soul, into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.*

From such views of the horrible lives, and more tremendous deaths, of unawakened sinners, do thou, my soul, turn thy thoughts,

to contemplate the wonders of grace, recorded in this chapter, concerning that High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. Oh! for grace to know, to feel, to enjoy, the blessedness here promised! Lord! I would say, do as thou hast said. Make my soul, by thy grace, suited for thyself: and then come and dwell in me; come and revive me; come and comfort me, that the bones broken by sin may rejoice.

Blessed be my God, thou hast indeed smitten for sin, and thou hast healed. God the Holy Ghost hath convinced of sin; and it is the same God the Holy Ghost that hath convinced of the righteousness of Jesus. Yea, Lord! it is thou that hast created indeed the fruit of the lips, and formed my heart anew in Christ Jesus. And to whom but to my God, in the riches of his sovereign grace, shall I ascribe the praise, that while to the unsubdued corruptions of sinners, there can be nothing but distress, and horror, and tempest, like the troubled ocean; I have peace with my God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Blessed, blessed for ever be God for Jesus Christ!

CHAP. LVIII.

CONTENTS.

We must consider this Chapter only as a continuation of the same sermon. It is full of reproof and instruction; and in the deficiency of all creature righteousness, the Holy Ghost, by his servant the Prophet, indirectly points to Christ.

CRY aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Let not the Reader overlook, to whom the Prophet is commissioned to preach, of transgression. It is to the Lord's people. They were transgressors, but at the same time the Lord owns them for his people. Sweet thought! that however we fail in duty, Jesus fails not in love. Oh! how doubly painful is that rebellion, which is against a covenant God in Christ!

2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching to God.

3 ¶ Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to

smite with the fist of wickedness; ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? *is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under *him*? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7 *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Observe how possible it is to have a fondness for ordinances, but to be void of a spirit of grace in them. Outward observances are easily followed; but heart-renewing, heart-felt sorrow for sin, consists in somewhat more than these. A squalid face and sable garments, yea, abstinence from ordinary food, are no real marks of true fasting. How divinely hath the Lord Jesus dwelt upon this subject, Matt. vi. 16—18.

8 ¶ Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I *am*: if thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity:

10 And *if* thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness *be* as the noon-day.

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually.

and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 And *they that shall be of thee*, shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.

If we read these sweet promises with an eye to the gospel of Jesus, and interpret what is here said by this rule, they will appear most blessed. Jesus is himself the light of the morning, yea, of the morning without a cloud. Health and salvation, righteousness and peace, in him, union and communion, with all the blessings of the covenant, in Christ, will then appear to be what the Prophet hath described; and such blessed intercourse will be kept up, in prayer and praise, on our part, and gifts and graces bestowed, on the part of God, as may well come up to the character here given, that Christ is the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in. So that it forms a lovely view of Christ. Psalm lxix. 4.

13 ¶ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words:

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

I beg the Reader to pause over this passage, and mark the several expressions enjoined to the people of God, for the due and proper solemnization of the sabbath; and surely he will immediately conclude with me, that if in the Jewish Church, which was but a type and shadow of good things to come, this holy day was commanded to be observed with such sacredness; how much more ought the observance of the sabbath to be regarded in the Christian, when the whole sum and substance of the law is in Christ, and Jesus himself is the very sabbath of his redeemed, *formed in their heart the hope of glory?* The *turning away the foot* from all pleasure, may perhaps have an allusion to what Moses was commanded at the bush: intimating that in the sabbath we see Christ; and all approaches to God in Christ must be made in sanctity. See those scriptures, Exod. iii. 4, 5. Levit. x. 3. *Not doing our own ways*, and the like, means that over and above all sacredness of soul, there must be accom-

panied with it a conscious sense of sin, and a total renunciation of all self-righteousness. Oh! how precious is Jesus, in his sabbaths, in his ordinances, and in all the means of grace and salvation, when the soul is once conscious of wants and pollutions. How little do these men know even the very nature of the sabbath, who spend the smallest portion of these hallowed seasons, these blessed golden opportunities, in any pursuit but that of *the one thing needful!* How do all faithful souls mourn in secret in the view of those troops of sabbath-breakers of our poor bleeding land, for which the nation mourns, and which come forth every Lord's day to their sport and pleasures!

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! listen to the call of God, by the Prophet, for he it is that speaks in his word, and by his word; and let a conscious sense of sin lead thee to seek salvation by Christ. And see to it, my soul, that while using all the means of grace, and following every sacred ordinance of the Lord's appointment, with diligence, under the divine blessing, thou place no stress upon the means, to the forgetting of the end. For what are all ordinances, unless the God of ordinances be found and enjoyed in them? So that if, like Israel of old, thou shouldest draw nigh to God with thy mouth, and honour him with thy lips, while thine heart is far from him; will not this be to prevent the very design of every thing that is sacred; and, instead of bringing thine heart to God, to lead thy heart from God? No, my soul! beg of God for grace, that thy fasts and thy poor services may be first seasoned by the Holy Spirit, and that the glory of God in Jesus Christ may be the grand object of pursuit and desire in every one. Oh! for grace to know these things, and to live in the heart-felt affection for them; for then, Jesus's righteousness will go before thee, and *the glory of the Lord will be thy re-reward.*

And, my soul! see to it also, that what the Prophet hath so graciously marked of divine promises be in thy experience. *The Lord will guide continually,* it is said. *He will satisfy thy soul in drought. He will make fat thy bones.* Precious, precious Lord Jesus! be thou my portion, and, sure I am, I shall be well guided, well satisfied, and well fed, with the fatness of redemption. Yea, Lord, I shall be as a well watered garden, whose waters fail not. For thou art the Repairer of the breaches of our poor fallen nature, and the Restorer of paths to dwell in.

And, Lord! help me to reverence thy sabbaths, to delight in, to love, and to esteem them, above all seasons; that, with one of old, I may say, and feel the full blessedness of the expressions, while I say it, *One day in thy courts is better than a thousand.* Yea, my ever-blessed Lord Jesus, be thou thyself my sabbaths; for being thyself my sabbaths, my rest, my joy, and sole delight, upon earth, thou wilt be my heaven of sabbaths in the life to come. Amen.

CHAP. LIX.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter opens with describing the nature and consequence of sin. The gracious interposition of Jesus, as a Surety and Intercessor, then follows. And the Chapter closeth with some sweet and precious promises, in consequence of the rich covenant of God in Christ.

BEHOLD, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save: neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

What a blessed assurance does this Chapter open with; and, as if the Lord would have it particularly taken notice of, it is prefaced with a *Behold!* Very often, I believe, the people of God have found comfort from this scripture; and as it hath refreshed and sustained souls under sharp exercises; so, will it continue to do, in all the remaining ages of the Church. And Reader! do not overlook the gracious revelation as it concerns yourself: If at any time the Lord hides his face, and his glory be for the moment eclipsed to our view, look diligently for the cause, and it will be found to originate in ourselves. It is our iniquities, our shyness to come to the Lord, and our deadness in coming, which makes a veil of separation. See Song, v. 2, 3.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity, your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4 None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

5 They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and *that which is* crushed, breaketh out into a viper.

6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works *are* works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands.

7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.

8 The way of peace they know not, and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein, shall not know peace.

9 ¶ Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, and behold obscurity; for brightness, *but* we walk in darkness.

10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes: we stumble at noon-day as in the night; *we are* in desolate places as dead *men*.

11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but *there is* none; for salvation, *but* it is far off from us.

12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions *are* with us, and *as for* our iniquities, we know them.

13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

15 Yea, truth faileth, and he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him that *there was* no judgment.

Here is a long and sad account of men's revolt and transgression, which fully explains what was said before, as well as accounts for the divine corrections which followed. Men may well wait for the light, and grope in darkness, when all the faculties are either benumbed with sin, or if alive are employed in the services of Satan, as here described; and how shall they know the way of peace, when their pursuits are all after sin? *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, Isaiah, lvii. 21.*

16 ¶ And he saw that *there was* no man, and wondered that *there was* no intercessor: therefore

his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head, and he put on the garments of vengeance *for* clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

18 According to *their* deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies, to the islands he will repay recompence.

I made but a short observation on the long passage before this, in order that I might enter upon the soul-relieving truth in the view of the Lord Jesus, which here succeeds the melancholy subject. *He saw that there was no man.* Whom is this spoken of, but of Jesus? Who was it saw the poverty and ruin of our nature, and determined to interpose for our salvation, but the Lord Jesus? Who, but he, could be both our Saviour and Intercessor? Precious Lord Jesus! it was, indeed, thine own arm that brought salvation; for the sins of thy people would have crushed every arm but thine, when, in the days of thy flesh, thou didst bear all the sins of thy redeemed in thine own body, on the tree! Oh! how truly lovely is it now, to behold thee, by faith, standing forth, the devoted head of thy body, the Church, and for her enduring the cross, and despising the shame! Oh! how truly blessed, to behold thee in thy priestly garments, and in a vesture dipped in blood, triumphing over all the power of hell; and in our nature recompensing fury to thine enemies, and manifesting favour to thy chosen! And surely thy zeal to thy Father's house, and to thy Father's honour, may well, from the completeness of it, be compared to the covering of a cloke. Isaiah, lxiii. 1—6. Rev. xix. 13. Psalm lxix. 9. John, ii. 16, 17.

19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun: when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against them.

20 ¶ And the redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

These words come in most blessedly, after the former, to shew the consequence of Christ's interposition, and the effects of his offices and labour: we have a similar prophesy by *Malachi*, that such should take place; and in Christ Jesus all is *yea and amen*; Malachi, i. 11. And it is among the sweet offices of the Holy Ghost, to glorify Jesus, John xvi. 14. The Apostle Paul makes application of what is said here of the Redeemer coming to Zion, directly to the person

of Christ, Rom. xi. 26. Reader! think how lovely our *God our Kinsman-Redeemer* is: and how ought all his brethren to be on the look-out for him, for the full accomplishment of this most blessed promise, when both Jew and Gentile shall be brought into *one fold, under one Shepherd*, John, x. 16.

21 As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD, My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

I know not with what views my Reader will regard this verse: But to me, I confess, it is as blessed a promise as any in the Bible. Indeed it forms a comprehension of almost every other. For is it not God the Father, speaking to the person of God the Son, in his proposed character of Mediator, in his rich promises concerning Jesus's redeemed? And doth not God, in his covenant-relationship, undertake to fulfil his gracious engagements, concerning the Lord's people? And, as such, may we not, as the redeemed of the Lord, look up, and plead for the accomplishment? Nay, is it not intended, by the very engagement itself, that we should? Blessed Lord, I would say, do as thou hast said: let a blessed portion of that Spirit, which was on Jesus, *without measure*, be upon all Jesus's seed and offspring, *according to the measure of the gift of Christ!* John, iii. 34. Ephes. iv. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! learn from what thy God hath said, how to form conclusions, both of the Lord's hand in helping his people, and of the Lord's ear in hearing their prayers. If at any time the enemy triumph, and the Lord seem to hide his face, search for the cause, and trace thine iniquities to their source. Alas! what need have I, like *Ezra*, day by day, to take shame and confusion of face, because *mine iniquities are increased, and my trespasses grown up to the heavens*.

Precious Lord Jesus! what everlasting confusion would cover me, did I not behold thee, as this sweet Chapter represents, coming as the Advocate and Propitiation, the Redeemer and Intercessor, of poor perishing sinners! Thine own arm, O Lord, wrought out deliverance for thy people; for none of thy redeemed were competent to stand with thee. Take, Lord, to thyself all the glory, for thou alone hast wrought all the salvation, while all the blessed consequences of it are to thy people.

And do thou, most gracious God and Father, for thy dear Son's sake, fulfil all thy promises in the soul of thy people. Put, Lord, thy blessed Spirit in us, and we shall live: and let the everlasting efficacy of Christ's blood and righteousness, produce the everlasting blessings of both, among thy redeemed, *from henceforth and for ever!*

CHAP. LX.

CONTENTS.

God the Holy Ghost is here celebrating the glory and praise of Christ, and his Church in him; and shewing what a vast accession of redeemed souls shall pour into the Redeemer's kingdom in the latter-day glory.

ARISE, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

I beg to be understood as speaking with all due humility, on a subject so infinitely sublime and glorious; and rather as asking than deciding upon it; but I venture to say, it strikes me that the person here spoken to, is Christ, the glorious Head of his Church, and not the Church herself, as hath been generally supposed. We find, by comparing scripture with scripture, that God the Father many times before addresses God the Son as Mediator, in the several parts of this same Prophet's sermon. See Chap. xlii. 6, 7. and xlix. 1—9. And there seems to be a blessed propriety in the glorious Head, and not the Church, being thus addressed, when the Gentiles are said to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising. This was literally and truly done, when Jesus came as the light and the life of men; and hence the Evangelist recorded the truth, *that the people saw a great light*, Matt. iv. 12—16. And John recorded also that his people were made *kings and priests to God and his Father*, Rev. i. 6. But Reader, do not forget one blessed truth contained in these verses, namely, that the glory here spoken of, is the glory of Jehovah. Christ and his salvation are uniformly said, in all the scripture, to be *Jehovah's glory*: God the Father proclaimed this, Isaiah, xlix. 6, and God the Son, as Mediator, confirmed it when on earth, John xvii. 1 to 5.

4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee, thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at *thy* side.

5 Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

6 The multitude of camels shall cover thee:

the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah: all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.

7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

What a blessed and soul-reviving thought is it, amidst the melancholy prospect all around, of sin and sorrow, in the present miserable state of things, that the kingdom of Jesus is neither weak nor small. The promise is absolute: *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.* Some of all nations, all tongues, all people shall come to him. In Jesus, the New Testament altar shall they be all accepted. I only detain the Reader to remark, that this passage alone, if there were no other, would be sufficient to determine, that the deliverance of the Church from Babylon (as some would fain have it) could not be in the Prophet's view, when he penned this scripture. It is true, many people of different countries, joined themselves with Israel on their return; but neither Israel herself, nor all the scattered remnants of the people that joined them, could warrant expressions like these. See *Ezra*, ii. 64.

8 Who *are* these *that* fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

9 Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God: and to the holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

Reader! pause, I pray you over these sweet verses. Can there be a more delightful thought, than that of souls flying to Christ, as doves, who by instinct take shelter in their houses? Mark what Jesus said, *John*, xii. 32; and do not overlook how the glory of Jehovah in covenant, as God, is folded up in the blessed relation. Yes! Christ's glory is his Father's honour; and it is the most blessed of all thoughts that God the Father is glorified in his dear Son, in the instance of every individual soul redeemed; *John*, xiii. 31, 32.

10 And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

11 Therefore thy gates shall be open con-

tinually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that *men* may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and *that* their kings *may be* brought.

How beautifully do we find the Redeemer's glory and his Church's happiness blended. Here the prosperity of the Church is particularly spoken of, but all with an eye to Christ. Psalm lxxii. 10.

12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish: yea, *those* nations shall be utterly wasted.

Here Jesus is evidently spoken of, agreeably to that prophecy, Psalm lxxii. 11; and the Lord himself very solemnly confirmed the same truth, Luke xix. 27.

13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

14 The sons also of them that afflicted thee, shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee, shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, the Zion of the holy One of Israel.

15 ¶ Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through *thee*, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

16 Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings, and thou shalt know that I the LORD *am* thy saviour and thy redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

17 For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise.

In what lofty language, of the most blessed import, and under what gracious similitudes, doth the Lord speak of the glories and happiness of the Church! But let the Reader carefully remember, that it is all in Jesus. Without an eye to him, none of these things could be said.

19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

20 Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

21 Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

22 A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.

The very blessed things here spoken of, evidently refer to the Church above, and we must look forward to the full accomplishment of them in the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth for ever. By comparing what is here said with what the beloved Apostle John saw in vision (and which he was commissioned to deliver to the Church) we are taught what a blessed state that will be, when Christ is all in all, and hath brought home his Church to his kingdom above. See Revelations, xxi. throughout. I do not think it necessary to enlarge upon the beautiful similitudes here chosen, to represent the glories of the Church of Christ; but would beg of the Reader to remember *from* whom all those glories result, and *in* whom they all center. It is Jesus, the life and the light of his redeemed, whose presence also is the light and the glory of heaven. It will be much more profitable both for him that writes and him that reads, to consider the fulness of the blessing contained in that one view of Jesus, in which he is called *thy God thy glory*; than to attempt to describe from these figures, in what that blessedness will consist. *All tears wiped from all eyes*: to be led to *fountains of living waters*, and the people of Jesus to be *all righteous*; these expressions, no doubt, imply a state of endless felicity; but our present unripe faculties are not competent either to the description or discovery. One assurance we have, and that is enough for all: our whole happiness will arise from our union with Jesus, our communion with Jesus; and our communications from Jesus. Lord! be thou my portion; for in thee I have all.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord Jesus! how shall I refrain, while reading this sweet chapter, from having my whole soul led out in longing desire after thee, and calling upon thee in thine own words, to arise, and shine upon my soul, and let thy glory be seen upon me? Do not I know, that thou, and thou only art the source and fountain of all saving light, and life, and knowledge? Gross darkness had indeed covered our whole nature, until that thou, the Sun of righteousness, didst arise on our benighted souls, with healing in thy wings! And both now in time, and hereafter to all eternity, all thy redeemed derive every thing from thee, for grace, and for glory. Gentiles may well come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising, for without thee all is darkness and as the shadow of death. Not all the lights of heaven and heavenly bodies, no nor all the moons and stars of earthly ordinances, can give light or warmth, without thee. Oh! hither come to Jesus, ye sons and daughters of this benighted world; awake, ye that sleep, and arise from the dead, that *Christ may give you light.*

And oh! my blessed God and Father! how shall I praise thee, and love thee as I ought, for this blessed, this glorious, this unequalled gift of thy dear Son? Oh! carry on the great design, and let not the gates of thy Zion be shut, day nor night; that men may bring to our *Shiloh* the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought: until the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; and all shall know, that thou, the Lord Jehovah, art our Saviour and Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob! Amen.

CHAP. LXI.

CONTENTS.

Another Chapter, full of Christ, in which, under the spirit of prophecy, the Lord Jesus is the preacher. Some precious promises are added, respecting the Church.

THE spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound* :

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.

Had the shadow of a doubt existed as to whom this blessed scripture applies, the Lord Jesus would have fully removed it, when, in his visit to the Jewish synagogue on the sabbath, he read it, and declared its accomplishment. See Luke, iv. 14 to 21. But, over and

above this precious testimony, I pray the Reader to remark under what features of character he is described by the Prophet; and then I beg of him to look at the original, as he appeared in the days of his flesh. See those scriptures, Isaiah, xi. 1, 2, 3. Matt. iii. 16, 17. John, i. 29—34.

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

4 ¶ And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

Every office of tenderness distinguished the person of Christ. So gentle, so gracious, and so full of compassion, was he to be, that even the *bruised reed* he should not break, nor quench the *smoking flax*. Hence all noticed the meekness of the Lamb of God, and every feature witnessed who he was.

5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien *shall be* your ploughmen, and your vine-dressers.

6 But ye shall be named the priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall you boast yourselves.

7 ¶ For your shame *you shall have* double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

As the Lord Jesus was so well known to his people, by the tenderness of his Person and Character; so his Church had her features from her connection with her Lord, by which she was to be known also.

8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering, and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

This verse seems to have no immediate connection with what went before, nor with what follows. I find, in an old Bible, the transla-

tion rendered somewhat different; *For I the Lord, which love right, and hate robbery (though it were offered me) shall make their work, of faithfulness and make an everlasting covenant with them.* From which reading it should seem, that what is said here, of the Lord's loving right and hating robbery, is only descriptive of his distinguishing excellencies of character; that He who is so known to his people hath made, and will make their works faithful in himself; and in his everlasting covenant. But I leave the Reader to consider what sense is the most probable.

9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they *are* the seed *which* the LORD hath blessed.

This is a blessed promise, and hath a sure fulfilment in the gracious will and pleasure of our covenant God!

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth: so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

I see no reason to limit this Song of joy and exultation to the Church. We shall have very blessed views of the Church's Lord and Saviour, if we accept the words as first spoken by Christ, and next as adopted by the Church, from her conscious union with Christ, and an interest in all that belongs to him. When God the Father gave Christ his Church, it is said, that it was his heart's desire, and that his glory was great in his salvation. See Psalm xxi. 1—6. It is always blessed, yea, it is twice blessed, first, to behold Christ, in every thing of salvation, and then his Church, as in him.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord Jesus! while I read this Chapter, methinks I would beg for grace and faith to be in lively exercise, that I might figure to myself, my God and Saviour, thus speaking to my soul, and to the souls of his people, in the same gracious words, as thou didst in the Jewish synagogue in the days of thy flesh. Surely the Spirit of Jehovah was upon thee then, when thou wast anointed to preach the gospel to the poor; and surely now thou hast finished redemption work, and art returned to glory, thou wilt send down, according to

thy promise before thy departure, the Spirit upon thy people, that all may bear thee witness, while receiving those gracious words which still proceed out of thy mouth. Thine arm of power is the same, and thy love is the same, all the purposes of thy salvation are the same; and thou art now daily, by the sweet influences of thy Spirit, preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the broken in heart, proclaiming liberty to poor captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Hail! thou Almighty Saviour of poor lost sinners.

And oh! ye ministers of my God! behold in Jesus, what ought to be your plan of ministration. Sent by him to act as under-pastors in his name, shall not the meekness, the gentleness of Christ, be your pattern and example? Did the Son of God come to preach good tidings to the meek; and will not ye, who have felt in your own souls the blessedness of those tidings of salvation, gladly go forth, and preach the gospel to every creature. Did Jesus bind up the broken in heart, and open the prison doors to them that were bound; and will not ye tell every poor broken-hearted sinner, whom ye meet with, that there is salvation for them in his name? Was Jesus mild and gracious; not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; and shall not the servant of the Lord, *be apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure, will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth?*

Ye followers of Jesus! whose seed are known among the Gentiles, and your offspring among the people, behold, here, what is said of your Lord; yea, what he saith most graciously of himself; and put in your humble modest claim, that he may comfort all who mourn, and give unto you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Blessed Lord Jesus? cause all thy people, thy redeemed, to rejoice in thee, as thou hast rejoiced in the salvation of Jehovah! And while thou art clothing all thine, with the garments of thy salvation, and covering them with the robe of thy righteousness; cause them to live to thy glory, and let their righteousness and praise in thee *spring forth before all the nations.* Amen.

CHAP. LXII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is at prayer: and God is in the confirmation of his promises in Christ, and the glories of the Church in her Husband and Saviour, are most joyfully set forth and celebrated.

FOR Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp *that burneth.*

They were happy times, when the Lord's servants burned with an holy zeal for their Lord's honour; and the Church of Zion, whose name hath been from all eternity engraven on the Lord's hands, had the first affection in the people's hearts. Whoever was the person here

spoken of that felt so ardent a concern for Zion, we must not overlook the Person of him whose zeal for his Father's house *did eat him up*. Psalm lxix. 9. Precious Lord Jesus! what were thy prayers for, in which thou didst spend whole nights, but for thy Zion! Who shall describe them? Luke vi. 12.

2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

How much the Holy Ghost seems to dwell upon the Church; beauty and loveliness, in various parts of his word: See Song, iv. 7. Isaiah, lxxv. 15. And was not this scripture fulfilled, when the Redeemer informed John of the blessings of the Church in him? Rev. iii. 12.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

The Church is her Lord's glory: so the Apostle was commissioned to inform the Church, 2 Cor. viii. 23. And when John saw the Lord Jesus in a vision, he beheld on his head many crowns, Rev. xix. 12. Reader? It is Christ's coronation day, when any poor sinner is brought to ascribe the sole glory of his redemption to the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus hath then another crown.

4 Thou shalt no more be termed, Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed, Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

5 For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *so* shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *so* shall thy God rejoice over thee,

Hephzi-bah, signifies *delight*; and *Beulah* means *union and marriage*. The joy is, that the soul is a marriageable creature, and that the Lord Jesus, in his assumption of our nature, hath married us, and made us one with himself. Sweetest of all thoughts, my soul! *thy Maker is thine Husband: the Lord of hosts is his name*; Isaiah, liv. 5. well might the Apostle speak of it as a great mystery, Ephes. v. 32.

6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, *which* shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence;

7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Here we see, in whose appointment ministers are, and what ought to distinguish the earnestness of their labours. What can be more blessed, and what service so honourable, as to be always engaged in speaking from God to the people, and bearing the people, in the arms of faith and prayer, before God?

8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn *to be* meat for thine enemies, and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured :

9 But they that have gathered it, shall eat it, and praise the LORD ; and they that have brought it together, shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

I beg the Reader to observe, how very sweet and frequent those promises are, scattered here and there, all over scripture which speak of God's absolute engagement to bless his people ; and let him not for a moment forget, that they are all *yea and amen in Christ.*

10 ¶ Go through, go through the gates ; prepare you the way of the people, cast up, cast up the high-way, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people.

11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh ; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

12 And they shall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the LORD : and thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.

The gospel way is a *high way*, and was all along to be so marked ; and the Lord promised that it should be so plain, *that the way-faring men, though fools, should not err therein* ; Isaiah, xxxv. 8. And the character of the Lord's people was also as plainly sketched. They were to be a *peculiar people* ; a people that should *dwell alone*, and *not be reckoned among the nations*. Jesus undertook to search them out, in all places, whither they had been driven, in the cloudy and dark day. Reader ! it will be always profitable to discover, in our own experience, the sweet testimonies to these truths.

REFLECTIONS.

On! for a portion of that holy zeal, which inflamed the minds of the faithful of old, when they preferred Zion, and her interests, above their chief joy! But now, alas! it may be said, in the language of the Prophet, *Zion hath none to guide her, among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any to take her by the hand, of all the sons she hath brought up.* Alas! what a day of languishing is Zion now in! Oh! that the Lord would take to himself his great name, and come forth in his own glorious cause, conquering and to conquer; that those sweet promises might be fulfilled, when *his land should no more be termed forsaken, nor be found desolate*; but that *Zion's walls might become salvation, and her gates praise!*

And oh! ye watchmen, whom our God hath set upon the walls of his Jerusalem, see to it, that ye hold not your peace, day nor night! Speak to the people for God and his Christ; and speak to our God, for his people in Christ. Ye know the vast, the infinite importance of your situation, and the awful responsibility in which the service of the sanctuary placeth you. Like watchmen, therefore, do ye not only watch over your own souls, but over the souls of the people. Look well to their state, to their order, and discipline. Mark well how others walk *with* Christ, and *in* Christ. See the tendencies of the Lord in his word, in his providence, in his grace, to his Church and people. *Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people.* Observe, and tell the people of the motions and advances of the enemy upon the ramparts of Zion; and above all, look up with holy earnestness and importunity to the Great King of Zion, and wrestle with him in prayer, that *when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord may lift up a standard against him.* Blessed Lord Jesus: make thy Zion, thy Church, as thou hast here said, *the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, and as a city that thou hast sought out, and which shall never be forsaken!*

CHAP. LXIII.

CONTENTS.

This is a most blessed Chapter, descriptive of the victories of the Lord Jesus Christ over his enemies, and the triumphs of his love and grace in redemption.

WHO is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that* is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

I cannot enter upon this Chapter, without first looking up, to bless God for it. Never surely was there a more glorious description of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; than what is here given to the Church, in the language of prophecy, so many years before the coming of Christ. Some writers, in order to lessen the force of these precious things, as referring to Christ, would tell us, that the writing is

no more than an account of the triumph of Israel over *Babylon*, when, by the destruction of that kingdom, Israel was delivered from bondage. But this is altogether impossible. The mighty Conqueror, here described, is said to come from *Edom*, with dyed garments from *Bozrah*. Now these places lay to the *south* of Jerusalem: whereas *Babylon* is always spoken of, through the Scripture, as the *North* Country. See *Jeremiah*, xxxi. 8. Nothing, therefore, can be more plain, than that the victory here spoken of, is Christ's personal conquest of salvation, in which, as the scripture saith, of the people, *there was none with him*. *Edom* and *Bozrah*, are mentioned, probably in allusion to the antient enmity of *Esau*, the head of the house of *Edom*, against *Jacob*, his brother. For from *Abel* and *Cain*, uniformly down through the whole race, in the separate and distinct seed, *he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit*, Gal. iv. 29. But I pray the Reader to look over all lesser considerations, and to follow the Prophet in what is here said, with an eye to Christ alone. And may He that guided the Prophet's pen, guide the heart both of the Writer and the Reader of this *Commentary*, that we may behold Jesus blessedly represented through the whole. The prophet opens the Chapter with a question, as one surprized at what he beheld. He sees one coming towards him, under a character that he could not explain to himself. He beholds him coming up as from war, not tired, nor weary, but travelling in great strength; and yet his garments are like those of the most menial servant, who had come up from the wine-press, an office always performed by the lowest of the people. The Prophet, struck with the view, asketh, *Who is this?* To which the Lord, in great grace, instantly gives answer, *It is I, mighty to save; and speaking in righteousness*. The Prophet could not but perfectly understand, by those characters, who it was. None but Jesus, the promised Saviour, could be *mighty to save*; for salvation is in no other. And this became the fulfilment of God's covenant in his promises, and manifested Jehovah's faithfulness, Deut. vii. 9. Reader! how blessed is it to see, in one and the same scripture, the faithfulness of God the Father, and the perfect righteousness and complete salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

2 Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?

The Prophet, encouraged by the gracious and condescending answer he had received, ventures now to go further in his enquiry, and asketh, how it is that One so great and glorious, should appear in an office so mean and humble? And this, Reader, is, and will be, among all the redeemed, the everlasting subject of wonder, praise, and joy, to all eternity. Oh! the condescension of the Lord Jesus, in emptying himself of his glory, and taking upon him the form of a servant! Surely, by this debasement, and by the obedience and death he wrought in the Person of the Mediator, the law of God hath been more honoured and glorified, than could have been done by the unobedient obedience and death of angels and men, to all eternity.

3 I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

4 For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

5 And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me.

6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Here the Lord Jesus Christ graciously gives a full and satisfying answer to the Prophet's question, and in it explains most blessedly, to the Church's joy, the subject of his personal triumph in redemption. The wine-press which Jesus trod, was the wine-press of the wrath of God, into which our nature deserved to have been thrown, and, but for Jesus's interposition, must have been thrown, and remained for bruising to all eternity; Rev. xiv. 19. Well might the Lord Jesus add, in this account, that *of the people there was none with him*. For the sins he bore, when he was made sin for us, had they been laid upon his people, would have crushed the whole race in ruin for ever! Sweet thought! He who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, wrought out the whole of redemption! On him the Lord laid the iniquities of us all. And, Reader! If Jesus's own arm wrought salvation, will you not give him, most cheerfully and thankfully, the whole praise? And do observe, the day of vengeance to Christ's enemies is come, when the year of his redeemed arrives. For while he saves his people from their sins, he treads down, with everlasting destruction, sin, death, hell, and the grave. Both these views were in his heart from everlasting; and Jesus alone accomplisheth the sacred purposes of his own, and his Father's will. How sweetly, therefore, may every redeemed soul, take up the Prophet's song, and say; *Sing, O ye heavens! for the Lord hath done it! Shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein! for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!* Isaiah, xliv. 23.

7 ¶ I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his

mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

8 For he said, Surely, they *are* my people: children *that* will not lie: so he was their saviour.

9 ¶ In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

The subject is here changed, as well as the Person speaking. The Prophet, probably contemplating what had passed, begins to celebrate the divine goodness, and especially with an eye to the Church's mercies in time past. It is worthy to be observed, how often the redemption of the church from Egypt, and the blessings in the wilderness, are alluded to, in different parts of the word of God. The Holy Ghost thus taught the Church to exercise faith for all that was to come, in recounting the Lord's goodness for all that was past; and certainly nothing contributes more to the accomplishment of this end. Psalm lxxvii. 3—12. Who can read the account, here given, of Jesus taking part in all the affliction of his people in the wilderness, without having their hearts led forth in love and praises to the Redeemer?

10 ¶ But they rebelled, and vexed his holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* he fought against them.

11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, *and* his people, *saying*, Where *is* he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? where *is* he that put his holy spirit within him?

12 That led *them* by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

13 That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, *that* they should not stumble?

14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, the spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

Was there ever a more affecting representation of the natural unamiableness of the human heart, and the tender graciousness of the Lord Jesus, than what these verses set forth? Precious Lord, may I never lose sight of it! that while it induceth humility of soul, I

may still recollect, thine unequalled compassion to poor sinners! I need not detain the Reader, to remark the scripture, to which these verses refer. The Lord's leading his people through the wilderness, cannot be overlooked.

15 ¶ Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where *is* thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? are they restrained?

16 Doubtless thou *art* our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer, thy name *is* from everlasting.

17 ¶ O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? *and* hardened our heart from thy fear? Return, for thy servant's sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

18 The people of thy holiness have possessed *it* but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

19 We are *thine*, thou never barest rule over them, they were not called by thy name.

Reader! do you want a specimen of prayer? Here is a most blessed one; in which both supplication and praise, holy pleadings and waitings, are most beautifully blended. And what an unanswerable argument for being heard, is made use of, in reminding God of his Covenant. Those are the strongest pleas in prayer, when we are enabled to tell the Lord, what the Lord hath first told us; that all blessings are in Jesus, and that whatsoever we ask in his name, *believing*, we *shall receive*, John, xvi, 23, 24.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! ponder well the blessed things contained in this Chapter; and while the Prophet, in the name of the Church, is humbly enquiring, who Christ is, and in what garments he appears; do thou see whether thou canst answer the enquiry, to thy joy, in the most satisfying tokens of thy Redeemer's Person and righteousness. Who is this, that cometh up with salvation, but the Lord, mighty to save? He is One with Jehovah, in the divine nature; and no less one with us in the human; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. His name is indeed *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!* Surely, Lord, thine own arm brought salvation, and of the people there was none with thee; and though in all things, it behoved thee to be made like unto thy bre-

thren; yet, in redemption-work, thou trodest the wine-press of the wrath of God alone. And amidst all our rebellions, and forgetfulness of thee, never didst thou forget us, or forego our interests. In all our afflictions, thou wast afflicted. Thy love, and thy pity, allowed of no abatement, for thou wast always Jesus: *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* Oh! then Lord, let nothing of the waywardness of thy children, thwart the gracious designs of thy love; but remember that we are but dust, and let thy strength and thy zeal, and the sounding of thy bowels, never be restrained. We throw ourselves upon Covenant relationship, and beseech of thee, our God, to remember that most blessed promise, in which thou hast said, *I will not turn away from them to do them good: and I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me!*

CHAP. LXIV.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter is one continued strain of prayer, from beginning to end. It is to the same amount in supplication, as the conclusion of the former chapter, and contains the fervent cries of the Church for the divine manifestations.

OH that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

2 As *when* the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, *that* the nations may tremble at thy presence.

3 When thou didst terrible things, *which* we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

4 For since the beginning of the world, *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Here is a most fervent, animated prayer, in which the Church petitions her Lord, that by the sovereignty of his grace, and the outpouring of his Holy Spirit, he would so come forth, and come down in the midst of his people, that the mountains of sin and unbelief might melt before him. Reader! depend upon it, when grace enables the Church, or the individual believer, to go forth in such awakening cries of soul; the Lord, who thus prepares the heart for mercy, is near at hand, in mercy to meet and bless his people.

5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, *those that* remember thee in thy

ways: behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

6 But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousness *are* as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

7 And *there is* none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

To the earnest cry of the soul, that went up in the preceding supplication, the humbling of the soul, in the deepest self-abasement of spirit, which here follows, becomes a most suited addition, in prayer. Nothing surely can be more express, in token of heart-felt contrition, than what is here said. The uncleanness, and the witherings of the leaf in a wintry day, are strong figures to intimate the unworthiness of our most holy things. And, Reader! think, I beseech you, if the heavens are not clean in God's sight, and if he charge even his angels with folly, *how shall man be just with God?* Oh! precious, precious Jesus! how sweet a relief to my soul is the recollection, that the perpetual and eternal efficacy of thy blood and righteousness taketh away the iniquity of our most holy things! For if, as is most true and just, our very righteousness is filthy in the view of God, then will it follow, that our prayer sins, our sacramental sins, our ordinance sins, need cleansing in Christ's blood. Oh! how blessed, and to the praise of God my Father's grace, is it, that both person and offering find acceptance in Jesus the beloved!

8 But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father: we *are* the clay, and thou our potter, and we all *are* the work of thy hand.

9 ¶ Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever; behold, see, we beseech thee, we *are* all thy people.

10 The holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these *things*, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

How beautiful is the connection between the opening and close of this prayer, and indeed the whole of the Chapter from beginning to end! Surely, every faithful follower of the Lord Jesus, who knows himself to be, in himself, what this prayer expresseth; and desires, in that conviction to lie as clay in the hand of the potter, will look up, in and through the Lord Jesus, and the fullness of his propitiation and advocacy, and rest in humble waitings on the Lord, until the hour of deliverance come. *Wilt thou refrain thyself? Wilt thou hold thy peace? Wilt thou be silent from the throne, when Jesus's name is pleaded?* will be the finishing and irresistible argument of every prayer. It is as if the soul of the believing pleader should say, "Will God forget his covenant engagements? Shall the efficacy and merit of Jesus's blood and righteousness cease, and the helping of our infirmities in prayer, by God the Holy Ghost, be no more available?" Sweet and unanswerable pleas, these, to be sure of finding grace and mercy in due time of need.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us learn from this Chapter, how we are to pray, and what we are to pray for. Surely, the Holy Ghost hath caused this prayer of the Church, which he awakened by his grace, to be recorded and handed down through all ages of the Church, as a standing pattern of what words we are to take, and to come with before the Lord: And how sure that the Lord will hear the prayer he awakens in grace, and answer it in mercy.

Blessed Spirit of grace and supplication! thou who didst thus teach the Church; Lord, I beseech thee, teach me! For unless my soul feels thy sweet influences in an hour of prayer, too well I know, that my poor soul will be indifferent and unawakened to the employment, and cold and lifeless in it. But if thou, Lord, wilt graciously set me to pray, sure I am, thou wilt give me a spirit in prayer; And then shall I call upon a gracious Covenant God in Christ, and neither the mountains of sin in my poor nature, nor the hills of unbelief in my soul will stop the gracious communications from above; but Jesus will be glorified in causing his grace to shine upon my soul; and God will manifest himself, as a prayer-hearing God, to my humble petitions in Jesus. *Then shall I run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast enlarged my heart.*

CHAP. LXV.

CONTENTS.

We have here much, yea very much of Christ, and they who would read this Chapter profitably, here need of much of the Spirit of Christ to instruct them in it. Jesus, in the person of his servant the Prophet, in speaking of the call of the Gentiles, and of the sad obstinacy of the Jews. Towards the close of the Chapter we have a cluster of the richest gospel promises.

I AM sought of them that asked not for me: I am found of them that sought me not: I said,

Behold me, behold me, unto a nation *that* was not called by my name.

We have abundant cause to bless God the Holy Ghost, that he would not leave the Church to her own conjectures, concerning the person to whom this scripture referred, and by whom, under the spirit of prophécy, it was spoken; but by his servant, the Apostle Paul, hath opened to us the glories and graces of the Lord Jesus as folded up in it, and thereby he hath handed to us as it were a key to unlock the blessed contents of the whole Chapter; See Romans, x. throughout. Hence we are authorized to draw this conclusion, that it is Christ, and not Isaiah, who was found by poor Gentiles, who in a state of nature could never have known Jesus, nor have asked for him. Oh! the riches of preventing grace! Reader! well may you and I rejoice in the consolation, who were not called by Jesus's name; Ephes. ii. 11 to 22.

2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good: after their own thoughts:

3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face, that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick:

4 Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable *things is in* their vessels:

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou: these *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

6 Behold, *it is* written before me, I will not keep silence, but will recompence, even recompence into their bosom.

7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burnt incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

This is the lamentation of Jesus over his antient people, the Jews. And what a sad history of rebellion, from the beginning, when God formed them into a Church, to the time of their rejecting the Lord of life and glory, do the scriptures furnish concerning them! Reader! it is a blessed relief to a gracious soul, longing for the Redeemer's kingdom to come with power and glory on the earth, to recollect that sweet promise, which must, and, we hope, is not now far off to be fulfilled, when the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, Isaiah, lix. 20. Rom. xi. 26.

8 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and *one* saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing *is* in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

10 And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

With an eye to this gracious promise, the Holy Ghost here sets forth, under the similitude of a poor apparently dry and fruitless vine, how the mercy for Israel is preserved, and how at length it shall be accomplished. To all human observation, the vine brings forth nothing; but there is one who looks on and knows all, who takes notice of a cluster in which the new wine is found. *My beloved*, (said the Church, speaking of Jesus) *is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi*, Song, i. 14. Sweet consideration! Jesus in our nature, became the preservative of our poor blighted nature, all along from the fall. For though not then openly appearing in substance of our flesh; yet the Church subsisted in him, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. Colos. i. 17. Hence therefore, He that looked on, and who could this be, but He that felt so highly interested in the preservation of his Church and people, as to become, from everlasting, the Church's Husband, Head, and Surety? said, *Destroy it not; there is a blessing in it*. Jesus, the promised seed, is in it, and must come out of it for its salvation. And hence Jchovah saith, *For my servant's sake, I will not destroy them all*. There is a remnant according to the election of grace; and hence *Sharon* and *Achor* shall flourish and open a door of hope to poor transgressing Israelites, to make one fold with the Gentile church. Here shall they lie down, and in Christ's pasture shall they be fed. The Reader will not forget, as a farther confirmation of those blessed promises, and in proof that the eye of the Lord, at the time of delivering them, was looking on the very spot where Jesus, in after ages, should open the gospel, and give testimony to those truths that *Sharon* was near to *Joppa*, on the west, and *Achor* lay to the eastward, near *Jordan*, the sacred river, where the Lord Jesus entered on his ministry.

11 ¶ But ye *are* they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink-offering unto that number.

12 Therefore will I number you to the sword,

and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose *that* wherein I delighted not.

These verses contain an awful confirmation of what every day's experience continues to prove, that *all are not Israel, which are of Israel*, Rom. ix. 6. In every Church, under every ordinance, the same word, the same gospel, how often is it found, that what becomes to some *the savour of life unto life*, to others, becomes *the savour of death unto death!* What quickens some, kills others! Hence the Apostle declares himself and his few faithful companions to be in one and the same moment a savour of death and of life. Solemn consideration! Reader! what know you of this immense difference? See Acts xxviii. 23, 24. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

13 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

16 That he who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth, and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

Reader! do not hastily pass over the review of these verses. They are like the pillar of cloud in the camp, which, while giving light to Israel, became darkness to their foes, the Egyptians. Who can read what is here said, but with a mingled feeling of joy and trembling? You will soon discover your personal interest in the blessing here spoken of, if you can say, as the verse here expresseth it, that in blessing yourself in the earth, that is in all that concerns you while sojourning upon earth, your blessings, in nature, in providence, and in grace, are all in Jesus. For this is to bless ourselves in the God of truth, when, from knowing him to be *the way, and the truth, and the life*, and knowing ourselves to be united to him, and members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, all our springs of all bless-

ings, and of all spiritual life, are in him! Reader! what sayest your experience to this statement?

17 ¶ For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

These blessed promises are fulfilled in a gracious sense, when sinners are made new creatures in Christ Jesus; and more fulfilled in that upper and brighter world, which John saw in a vision; Rev. xxi. 1—5.

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner *being* an hundred years old, shall be accursed.

How truly blessed is it to see and remark the happy change wrought in the circumstances of mankind, by the gracious effects of the gospel of peace. And what tends to heighten and endear those blessings, is, that in every renewed heart, where a saving change is wrought, the auspicious consequences are instantly induced, whether in infancy or old age. The infant in nature is an old man in grace; for all are one in Christ Jesus: whence the sinner, though he were to live a hundred years twice told, and yet live out of Christ, and without Christ, and then dies at last, dies in the same state of condemnation in which he was born, *and the wrath of God abideth upon him*, John iii. 36.

21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree, *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they *are* the seed of the

blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

Every thing and every event shall be blessed to the blessed in Christ. For it is this which secures their mercies: they are the seed, the offspring, the children, of Him, who is blessed of the Lord, and are therefore, as the days of a tree, where seed is in itself, so are they, in Christ Jesus in the tree of Life, in the paradise of God! Rev. xx. 2, 3.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

I have read this verse by itself, purposely to make it, beauty and grace, and blessedness. This scripture promise hath refreshed and encouraged the souls of very many, and thousands have been enabled to set their seal to the truth of it. And what a rich thought is it, that even before we call, or before we go to the throne, the answer is prepared, and come forth. God will be before-hand with his people. And wherefore? because Jesus is thine; and in his blood and righteousness all his redeemed are accepted. Dan. ix. 22, 23.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust *shall be* the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Such will be, and must be, the eventful blessed circumstance induced in the heart of every one, on whom a saving change hath been wrought by the glorious gospel of Jesus, that all, in whom the Spirit of Christ is, will *live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit*. The minds of men will be changed, and the power of Satan will be so lessened, that the most uncouth and rugged tempers, like the savage natures of the wolf and the lion, will be softened to the gentleness of the lamb; and God's holy mountain, his Zion shall both fill the earth, and become the blessing of the earth; and none shall any longer hurt or destroy, for Christ shall reign and rule for ever. Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pass by all lesser considerations, to attend, with heart-felt joy, to the many precious things said in this Chapter, concerning Christ and his Church: for surely every promise here is richer and more valuable than a pearl, and all the gold of Ophir.

And, first, may God the Holy Ghost, who hath given such blessed views of the Lord Jesus, give us grace to behold, and take home to our own hearts, what is said of, and by the Lord Jesus, that *our meditation of Him may be sweet*. And let us not fail, while hearing Christ, in such repeated endearments of character, crying out, *Behold me! Behold me!* so to look up, and indeed behold him, as to

be saved by him! For surely, such repeated calls to behold Christ, must argue a dead heart if we regard them not. God the Father hath commanded it, *Behold!* (he saith) *my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth!* God the Holy Ghost saith also, by his servant John the Baptist: *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.* And the Lord Jesus himself, with reiterated invitations of grace, enjoins the same, when he saith, *Behold me! Behold me!* Reader! what are your apprehensions and views of these things? Isaiah, xlii. John, i. 29.

When we have duly pondered over the subject, as it concerns Jesus, and our knowledge and enjoyment of him, let us next consider the many gracious calls and promises given to the Church in Jesus, in this chapter, as it concerns the Church. And oh! for grace here also to receive every promise, and to act faith upon all God's covenant promises in Christ as the sure earnest of the Spirit in the heart. Never, surely, was there a more blessed cluster of promises brought together, for the Church continually to feast upon, than what the Holy Ghost hath set before us in this Chapter. Let us see to it, my brother, that we accept them in this point of view, and remember, that they are not *yea and nay*, but of God in Christ are all *yea and amen*; certain, unquestionable, and sure. Lord, I would say, both for myself and Reader, cause them to be all *yea and amen*; to thy glory and our exceeding great joy in Christ Jesus for ever.

CHAP. LXVI.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here come to the close of his Prophetical writings, and a blessed close he makes. The Chapter seems to be but the continuation of the same subject as the former; full of consolation to God's people, and marking all their mercies in Christ.

THUS saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest?

2 For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

Stephen, in his address to the Jewish Council, made a quotation from hence, and in direct application, to their characters. But what a very blessed and condescending way was this, of Jehovah's speaking! And what unheard of, unexplored, yea, unknown mercies, must be contained in the bosom of this astonishing declaration of the Lord! Though the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, yet will he condescend both to look to the man of a contrite heart, and even dwell in him. Paul the Apostle seems to have followed up his earnest address for the Church on this very ground, and perhaps from this authority, Ephes. iii. 14 to the end.

3 He that killeth an ox, *is as if* he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, *as if* he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, *as if* he offered swine's blood: he that burneth incense, *as if* he blessed an idol: yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose *that* in which I delighted not.

I should apprehend that by the killing of an ox, here spoken of, is not simply meant the act of killing the beast, but with an eye to sacrifice. And if I do this in the idea of an offering, I do thereby set at nought the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus; and this would be what the Apostle calls *crucifying him afresh, and putting him to an open shame*. There is an uncommon degree of expression in those words, *as if he slew a man*; meaning the man Christ Jesus. Whoever looks to sacrifices, since the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, by way of acceptance, doth to all intents and purposes virtually declare that he fears Christ's sacrifice was not all-sufficient, and therefore he adds this by way of making up the deficiency. And such, by the way it may be observed, is, more or less, the danger of mingling any thing of our own with the perfect offering body of Jesus Christ, which was offered *once for all*.

5 ¶ Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word, Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

What a vast difference is found in the minds of men under the word! To some, how blessed; to others, how uninteresting! Reader! do not forget who it is that maketh men to differ, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD, that rendereth recompence to his enemies.

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth: before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child.

8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? shall the earth be made to bring

forth in one day, *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut *the womb*? saith thy God.

Perhaps the voice here spoken of, means the voice of the gospel: and the effects of it follow. Quick was the success, when the Holy Ghost came upon them that heard the voice. Jehovah inquireth whether such things were ever heard of before? And the Apostle Paul asserts, that when the Lord thus works by his word, and in his word, souls shall be constrained to confess, that *God was in that word of a truth*; 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations: that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon *her* sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

14 And when ye see *this*, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and *his* indignation towards his enemies.

All these are so many blessed promises, with which the Church was to be distinguished in gospel days, when the Lord had brought home his holy word with power to the heart. Ordinances were to become blessed; Jesus alone should be blessed, and her people in her; and so endeared should the people be to the Lord, that is, Jesus's tenderness over them should be like the tenderness of a mother! We do not find this image of the mother's tenderness frequently made use of in scripture; but when it is, the Lord makes it most gracious indeed. See Isaiah, xlix. 15.

15 For behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire.

16 For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse; shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

The Lord is here speaking of his judgment upon sinners, who despise his ordinances, and corrupt and pollute them. Mingling ought with them they become a pollution; Exod. xx. 25.

18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory.

19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

20 And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

21 And I will also take of them for priests, and for Levites, saith the LORD.

22 For as the new heavens, and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

The call of the Gentiles, the gathering of the Jews, the formation of a kingdom of priests and kings, the wonders to be accomplished in redemption, and the awful state of those who finally reject the gospel, seem to be the several outlines of the subjects, with which the Prophet folds up, and concludes his inspired scripture. The images of the worm that dieth not, and the fire not to be quenched, our Lord himself, three times in one Chapter, makes use of, when delivering his solemn truths, Mark, ix. 44, 46, 48. And very evident it is, from the declarations of both the Master and his servant, that an awful termination must, and will follow the rejection of such great salvation, while mercy, peace, and grace, will be to them who come, *from one new moon to another, to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*, and are found in Christ *to the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath made his people accepted in the beloved*, Eph. i. 6.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pause over the close of Isaiah's prophecy, and observe with the humblest reverence and godly fear, how the Prophet in folding up his ministry, calls the Church in this last Chapter, once more, finally and fully, to the contemplation of Jehovah. With what a solemn close; *Thus saith the Lord*. As if, with an indelible seal, the whole was to be left upon the minds of the people. As if the Prophet had given in his commission, with reminding them, that what he had delivered, was all in the name, and by the authority of Him that was, and that is, and that is to come! And observe how he speaks of his distinguishing character: *The heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool*. God's throne is indeed every where, but in an eminent special manifestation of himself, as the Prophet was commissioned to set forth. His throne is in the person of Christ. It is there that he promiseth to come and meet and bless his people. Christ is, and was the mercy-seat; and in him, and from him, he communeth *with the man that is poor, and of a contrite spirit*. His dwelling is in Christ; his ordinances are in him; the whole of his mercy, grace, goodness, love, as displayed to poor fallen man, are all in him. And therefore to slight Jesus is to slight God in Christ; to kill an ox in sacrifice, is as if the sinner crucified the Son of God afresh, because he thereby intimates as if the one offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all, had not for ever perfected them

that are sanctified. Pause, Reader, over the solemn view, and let us learn to bless God, more and more for his unspeakable gift!

And oh! thou blessed, eternal, glorious Jehovah! give us grace to hail thee, in thy threefold character of person, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and give us grace to accept all thy gracious purposes of salvation, thus brought home and unfolded to us, in and by Jesus Christ. Truly, Lord, we may, and do cry out, in the words of this scripture, *Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth bring forth in one day? But in truth and indeed, Lord, in that one memorable day of Jesus's incarnation, a nation was born in him at once; and therefore shall not every poor sinner, in his new birth in Christ, say, Oh! Lord! thou hast indeed brought to the birth, and caused to bring forth. Thou hast caused to bring forth, and not shut the womb, oh our God! We will therefore rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her in her glorious King; and we will in him, and his name, milk out the breasts of her consolations, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory!*

Farewel, Isaiah! farewel, thou servant of the most high God! While we bless thy Lord and Master, because he hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, we would love thee, as the instrument of so much good to his Church and people, as it hath pleased the Lord, by thy preaching and writings, to accomplish: and in thine own words, we would say, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thou art entered into his rest. Thou hast found, according to thine own prophecy, that Jesus is the rest, wherewith he causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing. And He that gave thee, and the Patriarchs and Prophets, faith to live and die in the full enjoyment of faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them: will give us grace and faith now to be the patient followers of them, who through faith and patience now inherit the promises!*

Oh! thou to whom give all the Prophets witness! Do thou, blessed Lord Jesus, give witness by thy Holy Spirit in our hearts, to their word; that *seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, we may lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and that we may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto thee, the Author and finisher of our faith! Amen.*