
Precious LORD JESUS! while we thank the servant, we bow down with unspeakable thanksgiving to the MASTER! Be thou everlastingly loved, and praised, and adored, in thy Person, Work, Offices, Characters, and Relations. *Men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed.* Praised be the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all Covenant love, in JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

IN entering upon this blessed Book of GOD, which carries with it, through every Chapter and verse, proofs of divine inspiration, I would beg the Reader to look up with me to the Almighty LORD, which both directed and guided *Luke's* pen, for grace to attend to it, with that reverence and godly fear, as is suitable and becoming to such precious Memoirs of our LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. Surely, Reader, the HOLY GHOST would not have raised up the several Evangelists to this sacred service, neither have added the Gospel of *Luke* to those of *Matthew*, and *Mark*, but for the most blessed purposes. Oh! that they may all be unitedly made a *sweet savor*, to make manifest his knowledge to his people in every place.

Some have thought that *Luke* was one of the seventy disciples. It is possible he might have been so. And others have supposed, that he is the same person whom *Paul* calls *the beloved Physician*. Col. iv. 10. But there is no certainty whether either be right; the whole is conjecture.

Neither is it determinable, with any greater assurance, at what time *Luke* wrote this Gospel. Some make it as early as within *fifteen* years after our LORD's ascension: So *Beza* saith in his Manuscript Copy: while others date it as late as *twenty-seven*. *Eusebius*, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates, that the Apostle *John* read it when finished, and gave his sanction to it. But GOD's people have a yet higher authority of its truth, when the HOLY GHOST, in his divine teaching, gives to his regenerated children the testimony of its holy doctrines in their own hearts and consciences. I cannot upon this occasion help making an earnest request to my Reader, that he will make this the grand standard of decision, concerning the

whole scriptures of GOD ; namely, that when the HOLY GHOST teacheth *in* them, and *by* them, this forms of itself the truest test of their divine authority. May the LORD the SPIRIT do this, by this precious portion of his Holy word, we are now entering upon, and render it in his Almighty Hand, the blessed instrument of good to his people. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

We have an Introduction by the Evangelist, in the opening of this Gospel. To which follows the Account of John the Baptist, as the Harbinger of CHRIST. An Angel appears to Zacharias, and to the Virgin Mary : the Hymn of Mary on the Occasion : the Birth of John the Baptist, and the Prophecy thereon of Zacharias.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word ;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any long observation on this preface. The reasons *Luke* assigns for entering upon this solemn service, plainly shew that the hand of the LORD was upon him. The certainty of the truths he was about to deliver, arose, not only from being with others *eye witnesses* of them, but he, and they, are said to have been *ministers of the word* ; thereby intimating that he considered himself called to it by the LORD ; for he saith, that *it seemed good to him*. Who this *Theophilus* was, is not certain ; but it should seem to have been One taught of God, by what is said of his instruction in the faith. And hence we learn, for whom the Gospel is designed, and to whom God the HOLY GHOST sends it ; similar to what *Paul* said in his preaching, *Men and Brethren, Children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to You is the word of this salvation sent !* Acts xiii. 26. Gal. iii. 29. Reader ! if God the SPIRIT so commissions His word of salvation to your heart and mine, this will be a blessed testimony to us both, not only of the truth of his holy scriptures, but also of our personal interest in them. And this will be what the same Apostle

said to the Church of the *Thessalonians*, the highest proof of our election of God, when his Gospel comes unto us, *not in word only, but also in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much assurance.* 1 Thess. i. 4, 5.

5 THERE was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord, their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Here *Luke* begins his relation of the wonderful events concerning the Person, Character, Offices, and Relations of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And he begins the subject with the date of those transactions, which was in the days of One of the *Herods*. And it is worthy the Reader's remark, that as this *Herod*, who was at this time deputy King, under the Roman Emperor, the prophecy of Jacob when a dying was now to be fulfilled. He had said, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*. Gen. xlix. 10. And here we find the sceptre indeed departed, for *Herod*, a foreigner, was King. Deut. xvii. 15.

The birth of *John*, though singularly accomplished, differed widely from that of the LORD JESUS; for though wonderful, it was not miraculous. And the introduction in the opening of this Gospel, in the particulars of it, appears to have been on purpose to mark the striking dissimilarity. We shall have occasion in the course of this chapter to notice this. In the mean time, let us observe the method the LORD was pleased to adopt to bring *Zacharias* acquainted with it. He was, in the course of his ministry, attending the temple service, when an angel appeared to him. This is the first open vision which the HOLY GHOST had favored the Church with, from the close of the Old Testament prophecy by *Malachi*. *Zacharias*, astonished at the sight and message of the angel, is tempted to doubt, and is struck dumb for his unbelief. But what I particularly request the Reader to remark, in proof that the birth of *John* differs altogether from that of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is, that though the wife of *Zacharias* was indeed now aged, and had been hitherto barren, yet the event of *John's* birth was altogether the result wholly of natural causes, and from natural means; and though *John* was a child of promise, as *Isaac* was, yet in his conception and birth there was nothing miraculous, or contrary to the ordinary course of nature more than his. Gen. xviii. 10 to 14. Gal. iv. 28.

When the Reader hath properly noted this, that no more honor be given to the servant than the LORD hath given him, the Reader may properly pause, and consider the greatness of the Man, and the greatness of the Office, in the which he was designed to minister. Like *Jeremiah*, ordained from the womb, he was filled with the HOLY GHOST, for the purpose of this office, in ministering to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Jerem. i. 5. And when it is said, as that it is said, that *he should be great in the sight of the LORD*, plainly this means, that he was so in the sight of Him to whom he became a forerunner. And hence we find the LORD JESUS bearing testimony to his character, that he was not only a Prophet, and more than a Prophet, but that among them born of women, none had been greater than he. Matt. xi. 11. See John i. 23, &c.

I detain the Reader to make one observation more, in order to have suitable apprehensions of the vast difference between the servant, and Him that sent him. It is said here, concerning the office of *John*, that *he should go before the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the power and spirit of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and to make ready a people prepared for the LORD*. Reader! do not overlook, that all that is here said, is said only of *John's* ministry, as an instrument to this blessed work, and no further. *John* never did, nor could, convert or turn a single soul. This is Creator-work, and not creature. The LORD who made the heart, can only turn the heart. But *John*, by ministering in the LORD's name, became the LORD's instrument in the great work. And I beg the Reader to notice, and with the just attention it deserves, what is said of *John*, in *making ready a people prepared for the LORD*. Yes! *John's* ministry, like all other servants, could be blessed to no other than the LORD's people: they whom the FATHER gave to his dear SON, before the world was formed, and whom GOD the HOLY GHOST had engaged to make willing in the day of his power, were *prepared* for JESUS as his redeemed; and grace here, and glory hereafter, *prepared* for them in CHRIST,

from everlasting. How blessedly all the great truths of God harmonize!

26 ¶ And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word: and the angel departed from her.

As the miraculous conception forms so grand and momentous a doctrine of our most holy faith, in the firm assurance of which is involved every thing that is important in the Gospel; I persuade myself that I shall have the free indulgence of my Reader to enter upon it very fully, and on true spiritual grounds to look into the whole relation of it, while looking up to God the HOLY GHOST to be the teacher both of myself and Reader, in examining the several interesting particulars contained in it. Could it be supposed but for a moment, that the human nature of CHRIST had been produced in the ordinary way of generation among men, though it were admitted at the same time, that the mission of CHRIST as far exceeded all other Prophets, as the heavens are higher than the earth; still this were nothing. For then, after all, the dignity of CHRIST's person would have been no greater than that of any other Prophet; and his communications from God would have been in no other way than theirs. The office indeed, might have been greater, and his communications from God greater, and his usefulness more extensive. But, as to nature and person, CHRIST would have been upon a level with all that went before. Whereas, between CHRIST and *Moses*, the greatest of all Prophets under the Old Testament; and CHRIST, and *John the Baptist*, declared to be the greatest of all born among women, under the New; the *former* is said to be but as a servant to CHRIST, the SON, in the house of GOD: and the *latter* declares himself not worthy to unloose the latchet of the shoes of CHRIST. See Heb. iii. 1—6. John i. 15—34. Reader, ponder over these things by the way. See Commentary on Matt. iii. 1—4.

I have, in my *Poor Man's Commentary*, on the first chapter of *Matthew*, ver. 18. stated, somewhat largely, my views, according to scripture testimony, on the miraculous conception. But, as the subject is infinitely important, and the Church of God cannot be too clearly, nor fully established, in the most perfect conviction of this fundamental truth of our most holy faith; I would very earnestly beg the Reader's indulgence, taking advantage, from the long contents concerning it, in this chapter, to consider it yet a little more particularly. And I am free to confess, that an anxiety, for the rising generation in this kingdom, on the momentous doctrines of the Gospel, prompt me the more earnestly to this service. Never, in my view, was there a day since the Reformation, when the only principles, which make the glorious Gospel of the ever blessed God truly blessed, were in equal danger to be frittered away, by the carelessness of some, and the artfulness of others, who affect to call themselves *rational* Christians. I humbly beg to bear my testimony to the truth, as it is in Jesus, to this fundamental article of the real Christian's creed, in the evidences of the miraculous conception. And when I have stated in order, the scriptural account of this momentous doctrine, I shall leave the whole to the Reader's own mind, that he may compare spiritual things with spiritual: and that, under the teaching of God the HOLY GHOST, his faith may be found, not to rest in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

And first: I beg him to observe with me, that with the Promise, which came in with the Fall; it was said, *the seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head*. And in conformity to this, when, in the after

age of the Church, the LORD entered into covenant with *Abraham*; the tenor of this covenant was conveyed in terms agreeably to this promise; that *in his seed should all families of the earth be blessed*. Gen. xii. 3. Now, saith the HOLY GHOST by Paul, when explaining both those Scriptures, and shewing their connection; now to *Abraham*, and his seed were the promises made: he saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of *One*, and to thy seed which is CHRIST: Gal. iii. 16. Words, as plain these, as language can furnish, in proof that the human nature, which the SON of GOD should take into union with him, thereby forming one Person, even CHRIST, should be the seed of the woman. Peter, in his sermon, on the day of Pentecost, quotes a passage from one of the prophetical Psalms of *David*, in confirmation. He first shews that *David* king of Israel could not possibly mean himself; and then saith, that *David* being a prophet, knew that GOD had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his body according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST to sit upon his throne. Acts ii. 30. compared with Psm. cxxxii. 11. and Luke i. 31, 32. And these scriptures most plainly shew, that CHRIST, after the flesh, should be of the seed of the woman.

The next point to be attended to, in forming suitable and becoming apprehensions of this great mystery, is, to examine into what the holy scriptures taught, concerning the Incarnation of the SON of GOD. And here we discover the Prophets, commissioned by the HOLY GHOST, informing the Church, that the event should be altogether new, and mysterious; such as never had taken place in the annals of the world. One of them cried aloud to the Church, saying: that the LORD himself would give them a sign. Behold, (said he,) a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Which (saith an Evangelist in after days, under the same authority) being interpreted, is GOD with us. Compare Isaiah vii. 14. with Matt. i. 23. Another Prophet, in allusion to the same blessed promise, declared, that the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth; A woman shall compass a man. Jerem. xxxi. 22. And the LORD Jesus himself by the spirit of prophecy, confirms them both, in what he had long before delivered to the Church; when in that precious Psalm, which principally means himself, he had said; For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought, in the lowest parts of the earth. Psm. cxxxix. 13, 14, 15. Fearfully and wonderfully made indeed, when considered with an eye to CHRIST, by the sovereign agency of GOD, in the womb of the Virgin; here called, in prophetical language, the lowest parts of the earth. But the terms are by no means applicable to the universal generation of mankind. Great as the LORD's power is, in all his works of creation; yet the stated order of the LORD, in those acts of his appointment, do away the expressions of fear and wonder. Now, these scriptures taught the Church to expect the birth of Him, whom they refer to, as coming out of the ordinary course of nature; and in a way, such as the Incarnation of the SON of GOD, by the miraculous conception only, can explain.

From hence we go on to what the Evangelist hath recorded in this

chapter. An angel is sent to the virgin *Mary*, to announce the wonderful event. His salutation implied somewhat of infinite moment. *Hail thou that art highly favored!* Highly favored indeed! And not simply, in the grace imparted to her, of God's everlasting love; personally considered in redeeming mercy, as distinguished in calling her, with an holy calling, from the Adam state of nature, in which she was born; for this blessing she had in common with all the children of God; but highly favored, in this singular instance of grace, which never could be enjoyed by any other; in being chosen, as the woman, whose seed should bruise the serpent's head.—Concerning the chastity of *Mary*, in respect to her virgin state, none but unblushing infidels could for a moment question. For unless it could be supposed, that God the HOLY GHOST, for more than seven hundred years before the event was to take place, should have caused such a prophecy to be made, as that of the conception of a virgin; and then, be regardless of the accomplishment: unless this could be supposed, which is impossible, we cannot but suppose, that the Lord watched over his own promise, and made all due arrangement, that it should come to pass.

Assuming this point also granted, and still prosecuting the mysterious subject, we next have to consider another branch, requiring explanation. The Virgin *Mary*, though in herself in perfect chastity, yet certainly derived from the Adam-nature, in which she was born, taints of the same corruption from that race of fallen man, of whom it is said, by the testimony of the HOLY GHOST himself, *there is none holy, no not one*. It therefore becomes necessary to enquire, how He, who was conceived in the Virgin's womb, by the miraculous power of God, was preserved free from that contagion; so as to be, as he is blessedly described, *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens?* Heb. vii. 26. This question becomes exceedingly momentous. And blessed be God we have, in scripture, the most satisfying answer to it.

The word of God teacheth, that all the persons of the GODHEAD were engaged in the formation of the human nature of CHRIST. Concerning God the FATHER, it was said by CHRIST, under the spirit of prophecy, ages before his incarnation: *A body hast thou prepared me*. Compare Psm. xl. 6. with Heb. x. 5. And that God the SON had a hand in it is evident, for the HOLY GHOST by *Paul* saith; that He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of *Abraham*. And again, He took of flesh and blood. Heb. ii. 14. 16. And in this Chapter we have the wonderful relation of the part which God the HOLY GHOST had in the work, in his *overshadowing power*.

When the Reader hath duly pondered these sublime considerations, I would beg of him to be very attentive to what the Evangelist hath recorded in this Chapter. The angel answered the modest enquiry of *Mary*, how the thing he spoke of should be; by saying, *The HOLY GHOST shall come upon thee: and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*. By which we plainly learn, that this overshadowing power became the sole act of generation. And this is in exact correspondence to what was said by the angel to *Joseph*. For that (said he) *which is conceived in her, is of the HOLY GHOST*. Matt. i. 20. Here then, the whole is explained. The act of conception from the HOLY GHOST must be holy; because it is solely from, and

wrought *by*, the LORD himself, who is holy. Had there been the intervention of an human father, no doubt, that in this case, defilement must have followed; for it is by this corruption is derived in all generations, from father to son. But in this instance, GOD the HOLY GHOST is the agent; and therefore, as the angel said, that *holy thing* which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of GOD. This then was *the tabernacle which GOD pitched, and not man.* Heb. viii. 2. This *the stone cut out without hands*: that is, without human hands. Dan. ii. 45.

And I beg the Reader to observe with me, yet further, in confirmation of this most blessed, and wonderful truth; how the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to word the mysterious subject. *A virgin shall conceive.* Yes! But not by man! She shall bring forth a son. Yes! But not by human begetting. The HOLY GHOST shall overshadow her. THEREFORE, (that is, his Almighty agency being the sole cause) THAT HOLY THING (not that holy person, for then there would have been two persons in one CHRIST; but that holy thing) *shall be called the Son of GOD.* Oh! how precious is this discovery! And further: When GOD sends forth his SON, he is said to be *made* of a woman; not *begotten*, but *made*: and which, though *made* of the substance of the *seed* of the woman; yet being made by the HOLY GHOST, cannot but be holy. So that as nothing is derived by generation, from the impurity of our nature, the sole agency being of GOD; that *holy thing* is in nature holy, and of consequence the SON of GOD.

Now Reader, pause over the wonderful subject! Put the whole together in one collected point of view. Behold, how very full and clear the several terms made use of, in representing this great truth, are; that the Church-might have all suitable, and becoming apprehensions (as far as our capacities at present are capable in apprehending) of so great a mystery. Call to mind the vast preparations made for this one purpose: the union of GOD and man in one person, through a long succession of generations, from the fall of man to the coming of CHRIST. Yea, before the earth was formed, or JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of person, went forth in acts of creation. Then CHRIST was set up, as the head of his body the Church, from everlasting. Prov. viii. 22, 23. And from the first promise in the Bible, concerning the seed of the woman, until we behold it fulfilled in the uncreated word being made flesh, and dwelling among us; we trace the whole scope of scripture, pointing and directing, like so many rays of light, converging to this one centre. Had the human nature of CHRIST been formed out of nothing, or from the dust of the earth, as *Adam* was; where would have been his relationship to his people? Or, had the human nature of CHRIST been taken from any part of man, as *Eve* was, from the rib of *Adam*; this would have been a relationship no doubt, but nothing more mysterious than the former instance. But, to form the Human Nature of CHRIST from the seed of the woman, by conception, without man, and wholly by the power of GOD; this was a sign indeed, from GOD: this was a new thing in the earth; and a mystery, surpassing all human foresight and contrivance. Well might the Apostle, in the contemplation, exclaim: *Great is the mystery of godliness: GOD was manifest in the flesh.* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Largely as I have trespassed, I must not dismiss the vast subject

before that I have first called the Reader to remark with me, and to remark it in terms suited to its infinite importance, the very blessed doctrine connected with it, of the *atonement*. For, the miraculous conception, once confirmed, brings up after it, the evident intention from it, of CHRIST's sacrifice. The SON of GOD becoming incarnate, implied the design, of *making his soul an offering for sin*. This one act preached more fully than ten thousand sacrifices on Jewish altars; that *without shedding of blood, there was no remission*. Surely, all the branches of revelation, concerning GOD, might have been accomplished, (as far as revelation was necessary,) without such an event as the miraculous conception. But if CHRIST, and CHRIST only, can do away sin, by the sacrifice of himself, a body must be given him. Psm. xl. 6—8. Blessedly doth GOD the HOLY GHOST bear testimony to this, by his servant the Apostle: *In all things* (said he) *it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful, and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation, for the sins of the people*. Heb. ii. 17. See the Commentary there.

39 ¶ And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things: and holy *is* his name.

50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him, from generation to generation.

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed, for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Many very beautiful, and highly interesting things, arise before our view, in those scriptures; but I must study shortness. The babe leaping in the womb of *Elizabeth*, was certainly more than the ordinary effects of natural causes. In the after circumstances of the Baptist's life, every thing testified to the sanctification of the man, as the forerunner of his LORD. Hence therefore, as if moved by a divine impulse, at the approach of CHRIST, though not manifested openly, the babe leaped in the womb for joy. Let the Reader recollect, what the angel said of *John*, Luke i. 15. And I cannot but request the Reader to observe with me, that the salutation *Elizabeth* gave to *Mary*, was in the same words as the angel saluted the Virgin with; *Blessed art thou among women*. But the thing is explained, for we are told, that *Elizabeth* was filled with the HOLY GHOST. And let not the Reader forget *Elizabeth's* testimony concerning Him, of whom she spake, when she said, and *blessed be the fruit of thy womb!* neither the source from whence she said it, being filled with the HOLY GHOST. So then, here is God the HOLY GHOST, by the mouth of *Elizabeth*, confirming the whole word of Scripture, to the testimony of the GODHEAD, and Manhood of CHRIST; that He is the blessing of JEHOVAH, to the Church: *Men shall be blessed in him; and all nations shall call him blessed.* Psm. lxxii. 17, 18, 19.

The song of *Mary* is full of the breathings of a soul under the influence of the HOLY GHOST. How blessedly she speaks of God her SAVIOR; evidently shewing, that she had a perfect apprehension of

what the Prophets had taught, concerning the miraculous conception; and therefore knew, that the child then in her womb was, in one and the same moment, her Son and her SAVIOR! And how blessedly she speaks of the low estate, both in the temporal poverty of her father's house, and the spiritual reduced estate, by reason of sin, to the whole race of *Adam*. And the personal dignity to which she, a poor, young, and humble Virgin, was exalted. *He that is mighty* (said she) *hath done to me great things*. Great indeed, and, until that period, never heard of before; and never to be again wrought in the earth. And how beautifully she ends her hymn of praise, in singing the sure deliverance of the Church, by this stupendous event. *He hath holpen* (said she) *his servant Israel*: meaning, He hath redeemed the Church of God, in the Israel of God, his chosen; thus confirming the Covenant made with Abraham, that *in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed*. Gen. xii. 3. with Gal. iii. 16.

57 ¶ Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John: and they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad, throughout all the hill country of Judea.

66 And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! and the hand of the Lord was with him.

It was a custom among the Jews, though we do not find in the word of God a precept to this effect, to give the child a name at circumcision. And it was also customary, for the person, who performed the act of circumcision, to accompany it with a blessing. So that it could be no ordinary character that did it, and very generally it was the father. See Gen. xvii. 23. But the dumbness of *Zacharias*, it is most likely, prevented in the present instance, his performing the service. For the name which those present intended to give the child, seems to imply as much. And when they made signs to his father on the subject, it is said, that he asked for a writing table for this purpose; that is, he made signs to have a writing table, so to do; for the dumbness of *Zacharias* was still upon him, until the name of *John* was fully given, according to the angel's declaration. (See verse 13.) *Elizabeth's* determining this name for her son, might have been taught her from her husband, who probably, notwithstanding his loss of speech, might have had the ability of informing her by sign, somewhat of the vision he had received. But I confess, that I am rather inclined to think, that the chastisement for unbelief on *Zacharias*, deprived him of this ability; and that *Elizabeth*, being full of the HOLY GHOST, (see ver. 41.) derived her knowledge from an higher source. The immediate liberation given to *Zacharias's* tongue when the prediction of the angel was fulfilled, became an additional testimony to the whole of this wonderful affair. And we may well suppose, as is here recorded, the astonishment produced in the minds of all that heard it.

67 ¶ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began;

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Reader! before you enter upon your observations of *Zacharias's* prophecy, pause at the threshold, to notice the grace of the LORD towards him, in removing from him his affliction. Well was it for *Zacharias*: well is it for all the LORD's people, his grace waits not their deservings, but flows from his own free love. And you should observe also, that no sooner is his tongue untied from the consequence of his unbelief, but the LORD loosens both heart and tongue to speak the LORD's praise; and to proclaim the LORD's mercy. And how doth he praise the LORD? Do not fail to observe, it is as the God of Israel: Israel's God in covenant. All, and every part of redemption is, *to perform the mercy promised*. Yes! For the LORD's CHRIST is *the mercy promised*: the first born in the womb of mercy; the whole of mercy; yea, mercy itself in the full. For there is no mercy, but in CHRIST. Every thing which can be called mercy, must have CHRIST in it, or it is no mercy be it what it may. It must have its very nature from CHRIST; its sweetness from CHRIST, its value from CHRIST, and its everlasting continuance from CHRIST. And hence *Zacharias* harps upon this sweet string; that it was *to perform the mercy promised*, and to fulfil JEHOVAH's covenant and oath, in all the blessings of CHRIST, for evermore. And let not the Reader fail to observe, with what holy rapture the father *Zacharias* addresses his son, though an infant, under the divine influence of the same spirit of prophecy: and having spoken of the LORD, now speaks of His harbinger. And this, by the way, is no small testimony in what office and character the HOLY GHOST, by *Zacharias*, declared John's commission: (see Malachi iii. 1.) as a messenger going before the LORD, of His temple. Who, less than God, can have a temple? Who, but the SON of GOD in our nature, can be called *the LORD* of his temple? Oh! the preciousness of those unnumbered attestations, all over the word of GOD, to the GODHEAD of CHRIST, the truth as it is in JESUS!

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

It is a blessed account of *John*, in the close of the chapter. He grew, and was in the deserts, until he entered upon his ministry. Untaught of men, unacquainted even with the person of his LORD,

until taught of the HOLY GHOST, how to know him; but then giving the highest attestation to the greatness of CHRIST's character, while declaring the littleness of his own. See John i. 19—34.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you, and I, at the very portal of this precious Gospel, stand and pause, before we hastily enter into the perusal of its blessed contents, and look up, and praise the Almighty Author, of His holy word, for such a profusion of mercies, as are here made known unto us; while we entreat the same glorious LORD to be our teacher, into a right understanding of those mysteries of godliness, to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. Was it not enough to have given the Church the inspired records, concerning our LORD, in the precious relation by *Matthew* and *Mark*; but would our bountiful LORD add the Gospel, according to *Luke*, and *John* also? Oh then! do thou, blessed LORD the HOLY GHOST, accompany the whole with thy divine teaching, that we may know the things, which are so freely given us of GOD; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Behold, Reader, in this chapter, the unbelief of *Zacharias*. Behold the faith of *Mary* and *Elizabeth*! To what, or to whom, shall we ascribe these things, but to distinguishing grace? Oh! may it be our happiness, to believe the record, which GOD hath given of his dear SON. And while we have faith, to this testimony of GOD; may we never lose sight of what the HOLY GHOST hath taught by his servant, the Apostle; when he saith, *Unto you it is given to believe in his name*.

Reader! let us ponder over, again and again, the wonderful subject here recorded, of the miraculous conception. Let us view the distant prophecies, so many ages before, declaring the unheard of, unthought of, event: and then behold, as related in this Chapter, the accomplishment; until our souls are warmed with the contemplation, and we feel constrained to cry out with the Apostle, *Great is the mystery of godliness, GOD was manifest in our flesh*! And oh! for grace to join in those hymns, both of *Mary* and *Zacharias*, from a personal interest in the same subject. Surely our souls may well rejoice in GOD our SAVIOR, when through the mercy of our GOD the day-spring from on high hath visited us.

CH A P. II.

CONTENTS.

The birth of CHRIST. His Circumcision. Simeon's Prophecy of CHRIST, and the declaration of Anna concerning him. JESUS teaching in the Temple, at the age of twelve years.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed,

2 (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 ¶ And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

The Evangelist hath thought proper to note the reign of *Cæsar Augustus*, and also to distinguish a striking circumstance of the very period when the taxing the persons, (not their property,) first began: both which were important, to mark the æra of the birth of CHRIST. First, in confirmation of *Daniel's* prophecy, which declared, that in the days of the *fourth* great monarchy, *the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed*. And, secondly, *Micah* declared the town of Bethlehem was the place where CHRIST should be born. See Dan. ii. 44, 45. Micah v. 2. Now the Roman kingdom, under which CHRIST after the flesh was born, was the *fourth* from the Babylonish captivity, that is the time of Daniel's prophecy. And but for the enrolling the names of the subjects of this empire, humanly speaking, nothing could have brought *Mary*, a poor young woman, betrothed to a poor carpenter, working for his daily bread, from *Galilee* to *Bethlehem*, for this purpose. So the LORD over-ruled these events; and so the Evangelist therefore hath recorded them. And as this taxing implied, the compleat government the Roman empire had obtained over *Judæa*: the dying *Jacob's* prophecy was now fulfilled, and CHRIST was come. Gen. xlix. 10. The poverty of CHRIST's birth, corresponded to the object of his becoming incarnate. Cast out into a stable, formed a striking testimony, in correspondence with all that followed, that as he put himself in the state and circumstances of his Church, which he came to redeem, it was proper he should represent us here also, as in all other points: for we, by reason of sin, were cast out, as the prophet described, in the day we were born, and left to perish, but for the LORD passing by, and bidding us live. Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

When we consider the humble appearance in which CHRIST was born, how blessed is it to see the glorious attestation, which was given at the same time, of the greatness of his person. Angels, (and it should seem a multitude, though one only came forward to the Jewish shepherds, to be the speaker,) came from heaven to proclaim the wonders of his birth, and the end of it in salvation. I beg the Reader to remark the burden of their message: *Glory to God; peace and good will to men.* Yes! the whole glory is God's; because it is all founded in God; carried on in God; compleated in God; and man is but the receiver of the mercies. Oh! that this was well understood by men! What an end would it put to all the pharisaical righteousness, and pride of men!

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it*, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

It doth not appear that those shepherds, though struck with astonishment, both at the vision of angels and in their visit to *Bethlehem*, at what they had seen and heard, were savingly converted to the faith. They are said to have returned praising God, and spreading the report abroad. But we hear no more of them. *Mary* is said to have pondered these things in her heart. Sweet view of grace; which is silent and retired, waiting on the LORD!

21 ¶ And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the LORD;

23 (As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the LORD;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice, according to that which is said in the law of the LORD, A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to behold CHRIST being put into our law-room and place, thus entering upon his work in redeeming his people. As such, circumcision was the first rite in the Church, for admission into the covenant. See Gen. xvii. 10 to 14. CHRIST therefore, by virtue of this rite, became a debtor to the whole law to fulfil it. This proved him to be under the law, and a son of *Abraham*, according to the flesh. And his presentation in the temple, became a farther testimony. And with CHRIST the rite ceased for ever. For as CHRIST, by virtue of it, became a debtor to the whole law, and fulfilled it in his own person, so he virtually freed his Church from the rite for ever. Hence the Apostle saith, *Behold I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, CHRIST shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.* Galat. v. 1 to 6. See Levit. xii. 3 to 6. Exod. xiii. 2. Numb. iii. 13.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Concerning this man, the HOLY GHOST hath given blessed testimony. And the revelation made to him, doth not seem to have been of an ordinary kind, as is the case with all that are regenerated and sanctified: but in a way of prophecy, so as to comfort therefrom others. And the LORD that gave him such strong assurances, that he should not die till he had seen CHRIST, must have led him to the temple at the very time CHRIST was there; and also taught him, that this was CHRIST. Reader! think how blessed it is to be taught of God. See that promise. Isaiah liv. 12. with John vi. 45. And what a beautiful hymn of praise and faith, and holy joy! How strong the faith of Old Testament saints. They had no fears of death, when once they had seen CHRIST. God's covenant love, and CHRIST's salvation, were the same to them, living or dying. The astonishment

excited in the minds of *Joseph* and *Mary*, was not, I apprehend, as if what *Simeon* had said, was altogether unheard of or not considered by them before; but rather, their wonder was continually kept up, in the expectation of the marvellous things which was predicted to be wrought by CHRIST.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

This woman was very aged indeed, according to the general age of people in those days. For supposing she had married as early as fifteen, and seven years in marriage, and eighty-four years a widow, she could not be less than one hundred and six years. And yet we find her constant abode was in the temple, in deep humility of soul. The HOLY GHOST's testimony by her of CHRIST, is worthy regard.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

I detain the Reader at those verses, in order to call his attention to what is said of CHRIST concerning his growth in nature, and waxing strong in spirit. It forms a subject of interesting enquiry. I pray the LORD the HOLY GHOST to guide the mind, both of Writer and Reader, into a proper apprehension of the mysterious subject.

Now let it be first considered, that CHRIST in his human nature was to stand in the precise state and place of that nature he came to redeem. *It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren in all things.* He came to redeem his people from the curse, *being made a curse for them.* Hence he is said to have been made in the *likeness of sinful flesh.* In the *likeness* of it only: not himself sinful, for *he knew no sin*; but was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* Standing thus; though holy, in our nature, and the representative of all his people, the moment he entered our world, the consequences of the curse attached itself to him, and seized upon him. Hence, he took all the sinless infirmi-

ties of our nature; was born a child; became subject to misery and sorrow; to labor and travail; and as *Adam's* doom for sin was pronounced upon him, and all his children, CHRIST in putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, subjected himself to eat bread, in the sweat of his brow, until he was brought into the dust of *death*. Psm. xxii. 15.

Hence, therefore, this explains at once, wherefore it became necessary for CHRIST to stand in the very state and place of the nature he came to redeem. It was as the representative and surety of his Church and People. The mere taking of our nature into union with the GODHEAD, without this, would not have answered the purpose. It would have been indeed a wonderful act of condescension in the SON of GOD so to have done: but then, had he came forth as the first earthly *Adam* came forth, in the perfection of his manhood at once, this would not have suited our case and circumstances; neither would it have answered for us in removing the curse. No! The SON of GOD, if he will be our surety, must put himself in our circumstances; must be born an infant; must gradually advance to manhood; must wax strong in spirit, and be filled with wisdom, and have the grace of GOD upon him. And these things blessedly prove to us, that it was a real and true body, the SON of GOD took into union with himself, in all points like ours, *yet without sin*: so that both in body and in soul he was manifested to be the same as we are.

From these premises let us go on further, and we shall discover, that agreeably to this assumption of our nature, for the purposes of redemption, JESUS became subject to all the sorrows of it, and to all the labors of it. His reputed father was a poor man, who worked for his daily bread. JESUS therefore did the same. Hence we hear him upbraided, *Is not this the Carpenter's Son? Is not this the Carpenter?* Matt. xiii. 55. Mark vi. 3. And so truly low in circumstances, that he could not, as the children of better condition among the Jews did, learn to read the Prophets, for the HOLY GHOST from the mouth of his enemies hath given us this testimony, that he never learnt from human teaching. *The Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters having never learned?* John vii. 15. And no doubt, though it is not recorded in so many words, but from the earliest period of his life, as soon as ability enabled him to work for his bread, to the time he entered on his ministry at the age of thirty years, his lot was cast among that class of labor which belongs to the greatest part of mankind. Reader! so far is this from lessening the dignity of our LORD's character, that without it he would not have filled in the whole of the office of our great Mediator. The curse pronounced on the fall, comprized in it three grand points. *First*, a nature of frailty and infirmity. *Secondly*, a toilsome life, midst thorns and briers. And, *thirdly*, death. When the SON of GOD undertook to be his Church's surety, and to redeem his Church, he engaged for all these, and all these he fulfilled. Oh! how precious to my soul is the consideration. *He who knew no sin was made sin for me, that I (who know no righteousness in myself,) may be made the righteousness of GOD in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

As in the preceding verses we were introduced into an acquaintance with CHRIST's abased state, so here we are brought into a short, but blessed view of his exaltation and glory. The men of Israel were obliged to go up three times in a year before the Lord at Jerusalem, at the great feasts; but the women were not enjoined to this service. Deut. xvi. 16. However, we find *Mary*, on this occasion, accompanying her husband at the Passover. *Nazareth* was distant from *Jerusalem* about three days journey. It is refreshing to behold, how holy men of old delighted in attending the feasts at Jerusalem. And as they were figurative of Gospel mercies, especially the *Passover*, there can be no doubt but that the HOLY GHOST accompanied those services with a sweet savor of CHRIST. And the LORD JESUS, at twelve years of age, accompanying his mother and *Joseph*, becomes a blessed recommendation to the children of believing parents

to have an early relish for divine things. Neither doth the conduct of *Joseph* and *Mary*, seeking for *JESUS* among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, bring with it a subject of less profitable instruction. Where should we seek *JESUS*, but among his people? Song i. 7, 8.

But the most interesting part in what is here said, is the engagement in which *Joseph* and *Mary* found *JESUS*, after a three days' search in the midst of the doctors, and the answer the Lord made to *Mary's* question. *How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my FATHER's business?* And though they understood not the saying, yet, Reader! You and I, under divine teaching, may. What business could the Lord *JESUS* then be upon, but the very business which brought him first from heaven, in the redemption of his Church and People? Here then was the opening of it. Here a breaking forth for the moment appeared of that *zeal which for his FATHER's house had eaten him up.* Psm. lxix. 9. and which afterwards appeared in full glory. John ii. 12. to the end. A more decided proof could never be desired, in testimony of *CHRIST's* mission, than in such an instance. *JESUS* gently reprov'd both his mother and *Joseph* by his answer, in that, after all that had been told them, and especially his mother, they should not instantly have concluded where he was, and how engaged. *Wist ye not that I must be about my FATHER's business?* As if *JESUS* had said, in the temple, my *FATHER's* house, I enter upon that business for which I became incarnate; to fulfil the whole law; to satisfy divine justice; to bring in an everlasting righteousness; and by conquering sin, Satan, death, hell, and the grave; to save my people from their sins!

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And *JESUS* increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

The Reader will have all suitable apprehensions of what is contained in these verses, if he keeps in view the recollection of the GOD-HEAD, and of the Manhood of *CHRIST*. In his human nature he was, as hath been before observed in this Chapter, a true and proper man, *in all points as we are, yet without sin.* And had he not been so, he could not have been a true and proper surety. In this nature therefore, he was subject to *Mary* and *Joseph*, in all subordination. And in this nature, he increased in wisdom and stature, and in age also, (as it is rendered in the margin of our Bibles,) and in favour with God and man. For as the holiness and purity of his life became daily greater in accession, so of consequence it increased in favor both in the eye of God and man, as tending more and more to perfection. But in his divine nature there could be no increase, being in the essential properties of *JEHOVAH, one with the FATHER over all God blessed for ever. Amen.* If men of no grace would read their Bibles with candour only, (for with more than this, untaught of God, they never can,) and recollect, that the *faith once delivered to the saints*, contemplates the person of *CHRIST* in his two-fold nature of God and

Man united; they might from the same candour be led to suppose, that in all those passages, such as is contained in these two verses, it is the simple humanity of CHRIST only, which the HOLY GHOST is treating of. But what becomes a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, to Infidels of every description and character, is to the faithful among the sweetest and most precious testimonies of his suitability and fitness as the CHRIST of GOD. Yes! thou dearest LORD! thy humble birth, thy laborious life, in eating bread by the sweat of thy brow, in fulfilling all righteousness, and in thy ignominious death, even the death of the cross, mark thee as the very Lamb slain from the foundation of the world! Hail! thou LORD of all, while servant of all! To thee shall every knee bow, and every tongue confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! how little did the Roman Emperor *Augustus*, or his deputy *Cyrenius*, conceive, that the over-ruling power of GOD so arranged the taxation, that the chief object to which it should minister, should be to bring the Virgin *Mary* to *Bethlehem*, and mark the precise period of the birth of CHRIST! How unconscious were the Jewish shepherds, when keeping watch over their flocks by night, until the message from heaven informed them of the wonderful event of the arrival of the SAVIOR! And oh! the astonishing mystery, when GOD, who hath recorded from all eternity the names of his redeemed in the book of life, brings them acquainted with the unspeakable mercy, and manifests himself to them otherwise than he doeth to the world. Reader! can You and I mark down our personal knowledge of these things, so as with *Simeon* or *Anna* declare, our eyes have seen CHRIST's salvation; and speak of the LORD JESUS to all them that *look for redemption in Jerusalem*?

Precious LORD JESUS! when I behold thy obscure birth, thy low circumstances and mean accommodation, a manger only to receive thee in thine entrance into this our world, and no room for thee in the inn; oh, what a lively representation was there in this, of all the future circumstances of thy life. Truly didst thou say, and the truth holds equally good in all ages; *Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in thee!* My soul! delight thou more and more in the sweet testimonies of thy LORD's humanity, while beholding him at the same time possessing all the proofs of GODHEAD. For by both only could JESUS be suited for thee as thy Surety, Husband, and SAVIOR. Oh! the preciousness of that mystery, which without controversy is great, GOD was manifest in the flesh.

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

The Introduction of John the Baptist, with the Time of his Entrance on his Ministry His Testimony of CHRIST. Our LORD's Baptism and Genealogy.

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

The Evangelist having in the two preceding Chapters, faithfully recorded the wonderful events of CHRIST's incarnation and birth, now enters upon the wonderful history also of CHRIST's ministry, in order to prosecute it to the end. But in doing this he makes a long stride. The *fifteenth* year of the reign of *Tiberius Cesar*, became nearly parallel to the *thirtieth* year of CHRIST, when the LORD JESUS entered on his ministry, (verse 23,) so that from the *twelfth* year, in which the last Chapter represents CHRIST, as found in the midst of the doctors, in his FATHER's business, to the period of his entrance on his public ministry, *Luke* passeth by in silence. Reader! think of this, and conceive, if it be possible, how the holy soul of the LORD must have been exercised, during the many years in the society of the ungodly, before the time arrived for making himself known to Israel. If *Lot* was vexed, as it is said he was, *with the filthy conversation of the wicked*, 2 Peter ii. 7, 8. what must CHRIST have experienced? Pause over the contemplation. For my own part, I cannot but conclude, that here, in this part of the Redeemer's life, in the private circumstances of it, as well as when coming forward to his public ministry, he was fulfilling all righteousness, and acting in all departments, and in all offices, for his people. For consider, CHRIST being the very same in nature as we are, (*yet without sin*,) in being exercised with the same feelings as ours, his holy soul must have felt, (only in a ten thousand times higher degree,) what we feel, when once our souls are renewed by grace, at what we behold, and hear, and see, in the sins of others. And as the LORD JESUS came to bear the sins of all his people, how must he have felt at what he saw and heard of his redeemed in their infirmities and sins? And is it not in this sense, as well as in every other, he is said *to have took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses*? Matt. viii. 17. For let it be remembered, that as his holy nature was not liable to be affected with any disease in himself, personally considered, by sickness, as well as by sin, his knowledge of both must have been one and the same. And the scripture account is, that he was made in the *likeness* of sinful flesh. Romans viii. 3. and was made sin when he knew no sin, 2 Cor. v. 21. Such views of CHRIST are exceedingly precious! And I cannot but hope that the Reader will have his mind suitably exercised, in contemplating the LORD JESUS under characters so truly endearing, whenever he is led to reflect on the long interval from the birth of CHRIST, to the more open display of his Person, Work, and Labors, at his entrance on his public ministry!

I only detain the Reader one moment longer at these verses, just to remark, that the characters here spoken of, I mean of *Cæsar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, Annas, and Caiaphas*, would never have found place for record in the word of God, but for the more perfectly ascertaining the period of John's ministry, and the appearance of CHRIST. This *Tiberius Cæsar* was the third of the *Cæsars* which were Emperors of *Rome*. CHRIST was born under the reign of the second of the name, *Augustus Cæsar*: and the Reader may at once conclude how contemptible the whole were in the view of the Church, since nothing more is said of either, than just by way of recording the period in their reign, which opened in the ministry of John the Baptist to the advent of CHRIST. And the grand point, as it related to the Gospel of CHRIST, and which the mention of their names was designed to prove, was; that now *Judæa* was brought into subjection to the *Roman* power, the prediction of the dying Patriarch *Jacob* was fulfilled; *the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet*, and consequently *the Shiloh was come!* Gen. xlix. 10.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth:

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? and he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 ¶ And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water: but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 ¶ But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 ¶ Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptised, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came

from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son ; in thee I am well pleased.

Having very largely dwelt upon the most prominent features of the person and office of John the Baptist, on the parallel account given of him in *Matthew's* statement, Chap. iii. I to the end ; I think it unnecessary to enlarge on the subject here, but rather refer the Reader to *my Poor Man's Commentary*, in that place. In addition to what was there offered, I would only beg further to observe, on what is here said of the consternation into which *John's* ministry threw his auditory, whether he was the CHRIST, or not ; certain it was, that a general expectation had been raised about this very time, by all orders of the people, for the coming of the *Messiah*. The prophecies concerning CHRIST, when he should appear, according to *Daniel's* seventy weeks, was now arrived : Dan. ix. 24. where he should be born, according to *Micah*, had been fulfilled in CHRIST's instance. Micah v. 2. Matt. ii. 4, 5, 6. John vii. 42. And his forerunner, which *Malachi* described, now arrested their attention. Malachi iii. 1. So that it is not to be wondered at, that the multitude of the people which read their prophets, pondered over *John's* preaching. See John i. 19 to 34. I beg the Reader's particular attention to what was offered on the subject of CHRIST's baptism, and the testimony of the three heavenly witnesses on that occasion, as stated Matt. iii. 16, 17.

23 ¶ And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, which was *the son of Heli*,

24 Which was *the son of Matthat*, which was *the son of Levi*, which was *the son of Melchi*, which was *the son of Janna*, which was *the son of Joseph*,

25 Which was *the son of Mattathias*, which was *the son of Amos*, which was *the son of Naum*, which was *the son of Esli*, which was *the son of Nagge*,

26 Which was *the son of Maath*, which was *the son of Mattathias*, which was *the son of Semei*, which was *the son of Joseph*, which was *the son of Juda*,

27 Which was *the son of Joanna*, which was *the son of Rhesa*, which was *the son of Zorobabel*, which was *the son of Salathiel*, which was *the son of Neri*,

28 Which was *the son of Melchi*, which was *the son of Addi*, which was *the son of Cosam*,

which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er,

29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi,

30 Which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the son* of David,

32 Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson,

33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Pharez, which was *the son* of Juda,

34 Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,

35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala,

36 Which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,

37 Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,

38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

I detain the Reader, at the very entrance on this genealogy concerning CHRIST, to call his particular attention to the manner in which *Luke* introduceth *Joseph*, as the *supposed* father of CHRIST. Than which form of words, nothing can be stronger in proof, that it was a mere supposition only, and not in reality. And the insertion in *Luke's* Gospel of the direct descent of CHRIST after the flesh, in a regular order from *Adam* to *Joseph*, as *Matthew* had before done from *Abraham* to *Mary*, was evidently intended for no other purpose than as a testimony to the great point, that CHRIST was the seed of the Woman. With *Joseph*, CHRIST had no connection. But it was a common mode of expression with the Jews, to call the man *father* which brought up a child. Hence *Joseph* became the *supposed* father. And if the Reader will compare *Matt. i. 16.* with what is said here, verse 23, he will discover somewhat of this very custom. In *Matthew*, *Joseph* is said to have been begotten of *Jacob*, so that *Jacob* was his real father. But according to *Luke*, *Heli* was his father, and so he was, that is his *reputed* father, by virtue of *Joseph* being betrothed to *Mary* his daughter. So that these things explain the several expressions, according to Jewish customs.

In respect to the life of CHRIST, at his entrance upon his ministry, being then about *thirty years of age*; I have already, in the former part of this chapter, offered a short observation upon it. In addition, I would only just remark, that the precise period, for CHRIST being made manifest unto Israel, had been so strikingly marked from the beginning, that to this point several weighty circumstances evidently had reference. The law enjoined, that from thirty years, and upward, until fifty years, the sons of *Levi* should enter into the host. *Numb. iv. 2, 3.* JESUS, though not of *Levi*, but of *Judah*, yet being Him, in whom the Priesthood centered, and was completed, shall therefore so enter. And although his ministry extended but to the half week of *Daniel's* prophecy, that is, just three years and a half; yet so much worn was He, by hard service, cruel treatment, and hard fare, that the Jews supposed him to have been fifty. *Dan. ix. 27.* *John viii. 57.* And in type also, *Joseph* is said, when prefiguring CHRIST, to have gone at that age in before Pharaoh. *Gen. xli. 46.* Some have gone further in discovering, or in supposing they have discovered, many shadows in scripture, of this substance of CHRIST's ministry, in relation to the period of three years and a half. See *Dan. xii. 7.* with *Rev. xii. 14.* *James v. 17.* with *Luke iv. 25.* But I presume not to decide upon the subject.

In respect to this genealogy, I do not think it necessary to enlarge. The correctness of it is unquestionable; and the intention of it is plain. It is essential, yea most essential to the Church's peace and welfare, to be well informed, and as the Apostle saith, to remember also that JESUS CHRIST *is of the seed of David.* *2 Timothy ii. 8.* So that in going over this, it is not, as may be said of many, *giving heed to fables, and endless genealogies which minister questions, rather than godly edifying*: but here is a subject, which leads to the foun-

tain head of mercy, in tracing Him, *who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! where are all those proud monarchs, in the *Cæsars*, and *Pilates*, and *Herods*, of the day; whose looks frowned men for the moment into fear; and whose words, and actions, made men tremble throughout the earth? The flood of time hath gone over them, and they are no more! But He, who as a *little stone cut out without hands*, hath broken them all in pieces, and, as foretold, is become a mountain, and hath filled and is filling the earth. Behold the humbleness and austerity of his herald the Baptist. Then see the low estate of the Son of God. And in the midst of all that debasement, poverty, and meekness of character, hear the voice from heaven attesting to the glories of his person, while the HOLY GHOST bore testimony to the same; *Thou art my beloved Son! In thee I am well pleased.* Oh! for grace to be well pleased also with his person, work, offices, character, and relations! Precious LORD JESUS! truly thou art the seed of the woman; and in thee *shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory!*

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

CHRIST'S Temptations. His Preaching in the Synagogue. He casteth out a Devil, and cureth many that were sick.

AND Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power

will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me: and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee:

11 And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

It was one part of the covenant of redemption, that the human nature of CHRIST should be anointed to the arduous work, which the Son of God, when taking into union with himself that holy portion of our nature, for this vast purpose, engaged to do. Hence those scriptures: Isaiah xi. 1, 2. Psm. lxxxix. 19—24. Heb. i. 8, 9. with Psm. xlv. 6, 7. And what makes this subject most blessed is, that the spirit of JEHOVAH not only rested *upon* CHRIST, but was *in* CHRIST. Holy men of old, and the Prophets of God, spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST. The influence given to them was limited at certain times, and greater or less as occasion required; but GOD gave not *the spirit by measure* unto CHRIST. He always spake the words of GOD. So that in every other person, the HOLY GHOST was as in a vessel, but in CHRIST as a fountain. In JESUS, full, overflowing. *To every one of us*, saith the Apostle, *is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST.* 2 Pet. i. 21. John iii. 34. Ephes. iv. 7.

We shall do well, in our entrance upon the subject of CHRIST'S temptations to observe, how immediately after his baptism, temptations began. And we shall do well also to observe, how every thing tended to heighten those temptations with the LORD JESUS, in long and severe fasting; and in a wilderness uninhabited but with wild

beasts. Reader! it is one of the most endeared views of JESUS, which the HOLY GHOST hath given us, when we behold him going through the same exercises, and being assaulted with the same fiery trials his people are made acquainted with; inasmuch as these things carry with them a palpable evidence, that he knoweth all our feelings by his own. All the angels of light cannot give us that assistance, neither can they enter into our feelings, because their nature is not human. But JESUS's affections are like our own, only infinitely heightened, both from the greatness and holiness of his nature, and his own personal experience in his humanity. It was a precious love-token of our LORD, and, if I do not greatly mistake, intended to act in this way, when after his resurrection, in appearing to them, he saw and felt for their fright, and comforted their minds into this assurance, from fellow-feeling. *A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.* Luke xxiv. 39. It will be well both for the Writer and Reader in all their temptations, while reading those of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, to keep this thought in view.

The limits I must observe in a work of this kind, will not allow me to lead the Reader through all the several particulars which might otherwise be noticed in our LORD's temptations. It will be sufficient to observe, that under three great branches are included all sorts of sin, to which the devil tempted CHRIST in our nature, and which John calls *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.* 1 John ii. 16. If the Reader will examine the several different artifices of *Satan*, here used by the accursed enemy to seduce CHRIST, he will find that all may be classed under one or other of these. But I am more concerned that both myself and Reader may have suitable apprehensions of the *cause* of those temptations of the LORD JESUS, when acting as our surety and representative, than to attempt exploring what human intellect, in the present unripe state of things, can never arrive at, and in a subject so deep and mysterious as the temptations of JESUS.

And we shall at once get into very precious and blessed discoveries of this most interesting subject, such as the temptations of CHRIST are, when, under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, we behold CHRIST as sustaining those attacks from *Satan* on our account. By the fall of man, our whole nature was become the lawful captive of the devil. See Isa. xlix. 24, 25, 26. Here then JESUS enters the field in our behalf, and goes into the very territories of *Satan*, to rescue our nature from his dominion. And when the devil had discharged the whole of his artillery, he departed for a season. We find his renewed attacks in the garden of *Gethsemane*, the particulars of which are related to us, Luke xxii. to which I refer the Reader. But in this part of his temptations in the wilderness, we behold him giving out, and CHRIST victorious.

Let not the Reader however, even for the present, dismiss the subject, before that he hath first, under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, taken with him one or two improvements arising from the same, which may the LORD make profitable.

And first, let it be remembered, it is said of CHRIST, *that though He were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.* Heb. v. 8. From hence we may safely conclude, that it was in our nature CHRIST sustained the attacks of *Satan*; and therefore his per-

sonal knowledge and fellow-feeling of our nature, give him redeemed an interest in that knowledge and fellow-feeling, upon every occasion of trial. *For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he knoweth how to succour them that are tempted.* Heb. ii. 18.

Secondly. To this should be added, that though JESUS is now in glory, yet is He the same JESUS still. It is not his nature that is changed, but his state. And He is now in glory, as the head of his body the Church, and consequently as an head, he knows and feels what every one of his members feel. Every attack of *Satan*, on the humblest of his people, JESUS is perfectly acquainted with. And if JESUS, in the days of his flesh, *offered up strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared*, how sure, how very sure is it, that he will hear and answer all the cries of his redeemed!

And *thirdly*, to add no more, and what according to my view of things, becomes as sweet a thought as any, all that mercy, help, compassion, and the like, which JESUS will impart to the tempted state of his members below, will be his JESU-love, that is, his GOD-man love, made everlastingly secure and full, to all the unnumbered wants of his whole tried family upon earth, by virtue of his GODHEAD; but at the same time no less most graciously suited, to be communicable to them by virtue of his manhood, in flowing in one and the same nature from his heart to theirs, in an endless succession of love and kindness.

14 ¶ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 ¶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 ¶ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the

eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

We shall enter into *some* of the very blessed things contained in this scripture, (but ah! how small a part,) if we do as we are commanded, while waiting on the HOLY GHOST's teaching, *compare spiritual things with spiritual*. 1 Cor. ii. 13. By turning to the writings of the Prophet *Isaiah*, chap. lxi. 1, &c. we are taught to expect CHRIST as there represented. And here we behold CHRIST exactly answering to the description. JESUS reads the passage, confirms thereby the character of Him that was to come into the world; and then appeals to their own senses for the application to himself.

It were to do little short of going over the life of CHRIST, to follow JESUS in all the parts of this most precious Sermon. Indeed it may be considered but as an abridgement of his whole Gospel. Sweet as it would be, and the most interesting discourse capable of being offered, yet that pleasure I must suppress, while remembering the limits suited to a *Poor Man's Commentary*. But though constrained to pass over all observations on CHRIST's Sermon, yet I do very earnestly beg the Reader not to overlook the decided testimony the people gave, in consequence thereof, to the truth of his divine character. For it is said, that *all* bare him witness. There seemed to be for the moment, one general common consent, that He was the CHRIST. I beg the Reader not to lose sight of this; and the more so, from what follows in a few verses after.

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

And here we find how the tone of their sentiments is changed. *All they in the synagogue were now filled with wrath*, and endeavoured to push him on to the brow of the hill of their city, in order to destroy him. Reader! when you have duly pondered the subject, and marked the great change, I beseech you to pause, and if it be possible, find out the cause. It was at one and the same meeting this vast alteration of conduct in the people took place. There could have been no one circumstance of a change in CHRIST, either in his person or behaviour. And what was it, think you, filled the minds of this people with wrath, which before had borne witness at the *gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth*? Are you able to discover the cause? surely nothing can be plainer. The simple reason was, in the *former*, Jesus preached his Gospel in the *general* features of it. In the *latter*, Jesus preached the same Gospel in the *special* and *particular* application of it. In the *one*, he held forth the glories of his person, in his offices, character, and relations. In the *latter*, the personal interest his people alone have in it. In a word, CHRIST preached in the close of what he had before delivered, that doctrine, which ever hath, and ever must, and ever will give disgust to all carnal men; and which, though CHRIST himself be the preacher, (as we here see fully proved,) will never cease to be odious; even the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in opposition to the pride of the free will of man; and hence CHRIST shall experience what all his servants, in all ages of the Church have experienced, the most bitter resentment instantly arising against it. But, Reader! while making due observation on those striking passages, in explaining the cause of that change of behaviour towards the LORD JESUS CHRIST, do not fail at the same time to mark down in suitable characters, what a blessed testimony the SON of GOD hath here given, in proof of that fundamental, glorious, and incontrovertible doctrine of God. See Matt. xi. 25, 26. John xvii. 2, 3, 9. Rom. ix. 6. to the end.

33 ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil; and cried out with a loud voice,

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

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

We have the relation of this miracle, in very nearly the same words, Mark i. 23, &c. I refer therefore to the observations on it there offered.

38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house, and Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking *them*, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him,

and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

We have the record of these things, Matt. viii. 14. &c. I refer the Reader thither.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let it be our wisdom, in all our meditations on the sufferings and exercises of CHRIST, to connect with them the cause. *He was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed!* And while we think of those things, let us in all our lesser exercises bless GOD, when at any time called to the fellowship in suffering of his SON JESUS CHRIST. *My brethren (saith James) count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations.* And, no doubt, when the strength of CHRIST is made perfect in our weakness, there is great cause of joy, to glory even in our infirmities, when the power of CHRIST doth rest upon us.

Reader! think what a sermon CHRIST's first sermon was, as recorded here, which he preached after his ordination by the unction of the HOLY GHOST, in the Jewish synagogue? Oh! that all preachers of the word of God were to follow CHRIST's example, and thereby prove that the spirit of the LORD, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST, was upon them. Might we not hope, that from the same blessed cause, as by the master, so by his servants, gracious effects would follow; and the LORD's cause would be glorified in the earth. But let all such not fail to do as CHRIST did. However offensive to carnal reason, and to the free will of men, let the sovereignty of God be proclaimed. Many widows, and many *lepers* there may be in Israel now, as of old; but until God sends his word, there will be no commission to heal. Oh! do thou, blessed JESUS, who in the days of thy flesh didst heal all the diseases of thy people, now in the day of thy power manifest the sovereignty of thy grace and salvation, and preach by thy blessed spirit, as then in the synagogues of Galilee. Amen.

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter the LORD JESUS teaching the People: the miraculous Draught of Fishes; the Leper cleansed; a Man with a Palsy healed; and the Call of Matthew.

AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

I pray the Reader to pause over this interesting account of the Lord's preaching, and the eagerness of the people to hear Him, *who spake as never man spake*. Let the Reader figure to himself the thronging multitude, pressing upon him, and hanging upon his very lips, to catch the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Doth it not remind the Reader of what is said of CHRIST, Psm. xlv. 2. *Grace is poured into thy lips!* And of what the Church, in her rapturous view of Jesus, hath said; *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*. Song i. 2. So precious, so very precious are all the words and manifestations of JESUS, that the Church could hang upon CHRIST's lips for ever.

4 ¶ Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing, nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Very many blessed things are contained in this short history of the miraculous draught of fishes. I might call upon the Reader to remark with me, what kindness to the poor fishermen, who had toiled all night and caught nothing, in thus immediately providing for them and their households. I might observe also, what a beautiful application was hereby made of the LORD's sermon. These, and other remarks, might be gathered from it of an instructive nature. But I pass by all these, in order to call the attention of the Reader to a point, yet vastly more momentous; namely, the testimony which this miracle of the LORD JESUS carried with it to the mind of *Peter* of the GODHEAD of CHRIST. For the Apostle's falling down at the feet of JESUS and crying out, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O LORD*, was altogether expressive what his views of JESUS at that time were. *Peter*, it should seem, at the moment recollected what the LORD had said to *Moses* in the Mount. *Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.* Exod. xxxiii. 20. And under these impressions, holy men concluded, that the sight of GOD must produce instant death. Hence *Manoah*, in after ages, when the angel of the LORD appeared to him and his wife, and did wonderously, expected death: *We shall surely die, (said he,) because we have seen God.* Judges xiii. 22. *Peter* felt all this, and under a conscious sense of sin, desired the LORD to depart from him. The Apostle was convinced, that nothing short of an Almighty power could have produced such a miracle, as was then shewn, and therefrom drew his conclusion of the GODHEAD of CHRIST. I hope the Reader will as readily, and from the same power as taught *Peter*, be led to the same conclusion, and then the passage will appear in all its beauty. See Matt. xvi. 13—17.

12 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus, fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; Be thou clean; and immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy

cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear: and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

For observations on the history of the leper, See Matt. viii. 2, &c.

17 ¶ And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.

19 And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house,

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

I cannot suppose that the cure of the man with the palsy was at the same time as those doctors were present; for *Mark*, in his relation of this miracle, doth not notice their presence; and moreover it is said, in the close of the wonderful act, the lookers on were all amazed, and they glorified God. A circumstance never ascribed to those men, who only came to entrap CHRIST, and to accuse him. Concerning this miracle of the paralytic, I have very largely dwelt upon it, *Mark* ii. 2 to 12, to which therefore I refer.

27 ¶ And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

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

36 And he spake also a parable unto them ; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old ; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles ; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles ; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new : for he saith, The old is better.

We have this passage almost literally, Matt. ix. 9, &c. I refer therefore to the observations which were then offered. The last verse indeed is an addition to the subject, and only made by *Luke* ; but the sense and doctrine is the same. It should seem to have been a proverbial expression, and well understood in a wine country like that of *Judæa*. But the spiritual sense of it, in application to our LORD's discourse, appears to have been thus : No man having drunk into the spirit of the faith of the old disciples, the Patriarchs, and Prophets, concerning CHRIST, will desire to taste of any other. That which was from the beginning, and in which the fathers among the faithful all lived and died, is the old wine of God's covenant love. And he which hath drank into this will drink of no other. CHRIST's *love is better than wine* ! Song i. 2.

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! think what privileges the men of that generation possessed, which had CHRIST himself for their preacher ! He, who was himself the whole of the covenant, to be the messenger, and administrator of it also ! Well might the people press upon him to hear the word of GOD ! And, Reader ! see how immediately after the sermon was finished, he kindly rewarded the attendance of his disciples with the supply of fishes. What a testimony at the same time of his being LORD and proprietor, both of earth and sea. LORD ! let such a display of thy sovereignty have the same effect on my heart, as on that of *Peter* ; not to say LORD ! depart from me, but to impress my mind as his was, that I may say, *Thou art my LORD and my God* !

Oh ! for grace, when I read of this *leper*, and hear of the mercy shewn to the *paralytic*, to have faith in my GOD ! Yes ! blessed JESUS, all power is thine to cleanse both the leprosy of soul and body ; and to remove the crippled state of all thy redeemed, until *the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing*. Like *Levi*, LORD ! I would take thee home to my house, to my heart, and invite other poor sinners to the banquet of my GOD. No Pha-

risaical fastings would I set up, by way of recommending myself to the LORD; but rejoice in this, CHRIST came not to call the self-righteous, but sinners to repentance. No patched up garments, no new wine of the Gospel to receive in the old skin of nature; but pray that He who sits upon the throne, making all things new, while He himself remains eternally and unchangeably the same, would make my heart new, and renew a right spirit within me. LORD JESUS! do thou all this, and more; and cause thou me to drink of the old wine of thine everlasting love, *which goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak!*

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

JESUS *passing through the Corn Fields on the Sabbath, and his Disciples eating the Ears of Corn, called forth the Anger of the Pharisees. JESUS's Answer. He healeth the withered Hand: calleth the Disciples: performeth Miracles, and preacheth.*

AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days?

3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

In the two former Evangelists, *Matthew* and *Mark*, we have the circumstance here mentioned by *Luke* also related. See *Matt.* xii. 1. *Mark* ii. 23. It is always profitable to attend to what the LORD JESUS hath said, on every occasion of discourse. These *Pharisees*, however undesignedly, have been very useful in calling forth the LORD's observations in answer to their cavils.

6 ¶ And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and

taught : and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day ; that they might find an accusation against him,

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing ; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil ? to save life, or to destroy it ?

10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so ; and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with madness ; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

This miracle is recorded by both the preceding Evangelists ; and observations were offered on both, to which I now refer. See Matt. xii. 9. and Mark iii. 1.

12 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

I would beg to notice this verse by itself. There is somewhat very striking in those scriptures which relate to our LORD's retiring for the purpose of prayer. The sample he hath caused to be left upon record, John xvii. throughout, may in some measure lead our minds into an apprehension of our LORD's employment, upon those solemn occasions. The Evangelist in this place gives two striking features of it. He was alone. And he was all night in communion. Oh ! for grace to be like him. And may he give his people *songs in the night !*

13 And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples : and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles ;

14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes;

16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

CHRIST's call of his Apostles we have noticed, Matt. x. 1. and again Mark iii. 14. See Matt. x. 1, &c. and my *Poor Man's Concordance*, on the subject.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

Here is a beautiful view of JESUS, and his College of Apostles, coming down from the mount where He had ordained them. Can we suppose the ordination service to have been less solemn than that of the Prophet *Jeremiah*? see chap. i. throughout. True, *Judas* was among them; but this became no bar to the LORD's special sanctification of the rest; while JESUS well knew, when he called the traitor, that he was a devil, and consequently unsanctified. John vi. 70, 71. Solemn consideration!

20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor; for your's is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for

in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 But woe unto you that are rich? for ye have received your consolation.

25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye: for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to the* evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven;

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like :

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock : and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it : for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.

This is the same sermon as CHRIST preached, and which is recorded in *Matthew's* Gospel, chap. v. vi. vii. And having very largely dwelt upon the principal parts of it in that place, I do not think it necessary to enlarge upon it here. I would beg the Reader just to remark, how CHRIST in this sermon specially and peculiarly addressed his disciples, when he pronounced those blessings with which he opened his discourse.

Perhaps in the 39th verse, here are certain proverbial expressions of CHRIST, which, as they were not in the sermon recorded by *Matthew*, were not spoken by our LORD at that time, but at another occasion, but introduced in this place by *Luke*. See *Matt.* xv. 14. But our LORD's discourse in this Chapter, being in itself very plain, and for the most part having been explained in the Commentary on *Matt.* v. I think it needless to enlarge.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED LORD! as oft as I pass through the corn fields, whether on the Sabbath day or any other, may the recollection of thine unequalled tenderness and condescension, in those seasons here represented, lead me to the contemplation of thy grace and love to thy disciples. And while I behold thy followers rubbing the ears of corn and eating them, I would call to mind how Jesus was broken and bruised for our sins, and his body given as the bread of life for all his redeemed. Oh! for grace to feed on thee by faith, until I come to see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever! And do thou, LORD, to all my withered and dying circumstances, do by me as this poor man in the synagogue; let Jesus speak but the word, and sure I am of being healed. And let thine effectual calling on my poor heart, cause me to follow thee, as did thy faithful disciples: surely, LORD, if virtue went out of thee, when upon earth, and healed them

all, the efficacy is not lessened in the day of thy power! Oh! for that distinguishing grace which JESUS pronounceth to be blessed, which though found by them that are poor in themselves, and among the hungry and the mourners, are found rich in faith before God, and heirs of the kingdom. Standing firm on the rock CHRIST JESUS, they shall ride out every storm, and find CHRIST a sure sanctuary in the day of wrath.

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

We have here the Cure of the Centurion's Servant: the raising of the Widow's Son; CHRIST's Answer to the Messengers of John the Baptist; and Mary anointing CHRIST's Feet.

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them; and when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof;

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Capernaum was much frequented by CHRIST, indeed it is called his own city. Hence the condemnation, Matt. xi. 23. The account here given of this centurion, differs in some points from the relation given by *Matthew*: but both are correct. *Matthew* doth not notice the elders of the Jews first coming to CHRIST in his behalf: but it should seem that the *centurion* sent them first, and then hearing that Jesus was coming to him, he hastened towards CHRIST, as is here described, to testify his unworthiness of the LORD's condescension. I have somewhat largely made observations on this gracious act of CHRIST, in Matt. viii. 5, &c. to which I refer.

11 ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain: and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier; and they that bare *him* stood still: and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

This city of *Nain* lay near Mount *Tabor*, and not very remote from *Capernaum*. The case of this poor widow, and her dead son,

is not noticed by either of the Evangelists, except Luke, and therefore it may be proper to attend to it somewhat more particularly. The history is but short, yet it is wound up to the most finished description of sorrow. This youth was not an infant, whose endearments had not therefore been long, so as by time to work deeper holdfast in the affections; but one arrived to manhood, in the flower of his age, and capable of recompensing a mother's care. And what made the loss more bitter, he was her *only* son; so that in his death she had been stripped of all. And, as if all this was not enough to weigh her down with overmuch sorrow, she was a widow; so that she had no husband to bear a part with her in the affliction, and to drink a portion of the sorrowful cup. Yea, an husband *dead*, and child too, so that she was desolate.

The scriptures have noticed the distress of such bereaving providences, as among the heavy calamities of life. Jer. vi. 26. Zech. xii. 10. And we find this case attracted the attention of the Son of GOD. *When the LORD saw her, he had compassion on her.* Reader! what a sweet thought it is to relieve the sorrows of the LORD's people, that the eye of JESUS is always upon them. And his knowledge of their distresses is not only as GOD, but his feeling for them is as man. Blessedly is it said of him, *in that he hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* Heb. ii. 18.

The miracle he wrought in raising this young man from the dead, became the fullest and most decided evidence of his own sovereign power and GODHEAD. For although there are on record in scripture, several instances of the LORD's servants, for the confirmation of the faith, working such miracles, yet not one without first praying to the LORD to justify them as his servants, in the accomplishment of such deeds. But in the instance before us, here is the immediate act of JESUS, saying, *Young man, I say unto thee, arise!* I beg the Reader to notice this, with that due attention so decided a testimony gives to the GODHEAD of CHRIST. John x. 37, 38. The improvements to be drawn from this miracle of JESUS, are very many; but it would swell our little work into too great a bulk to notice all. Yet, I cannot allow myself and Reader to leave it altogether, without first observing, what a most lovely view it affords of the tenderness and compassion of CHRIST. Truly was it said of him by the Prophet, *He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.* And I would request the Reader, while beholding this affection of character to his people while on earth, to remember that He is the same JESUS now in heaven. And the most blessed part of the subject is, that He not only knows what the exercises of his redeemed are, as GOD; but He knows also, and feels for them as man. That union of GOD and man in One Person, gives him both the power to know all, and the fellow-feeling to administer the suited relief to all; and in such a way, as without this union of the two natures, could not have answered our wants, and his glory, as Mediator. Oh! the preciousness of such views of CHRIST!

Reader! allow me to add one thought more on this glorious miracle of our GOD and SAVIOR. Think what a testimony it carries with it concerning Him, and his Almightiness of character, as the resurrection and the life. Surely, He who raised the widow's son, can and will raise the members of his own mystical body, at the last day. They

shall arise by virtue of their union with Him. All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth. But the dead in CHRIST shall rise first. For thus the charter of grace runs. *He shall quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you.* Read in confirmation those precious scriptures: Isaiah xxvi. 19. John v. 28, 29. 1 Thess iv. 16. Romans viii. 11.

18 ¶ And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19 And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in the same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him.

31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation! and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine: and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

We have already noticed this message of John to the LORD JESUS, together with CHRIST's answer; and his testimony concerning John. Matt. xi. 1, &c. I refer the Reader therefore to the observations there offered.

36 ¶ And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him: and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.

38 And stood at his feet behind *him*, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did

wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that touched him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee; and he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most: and he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.

The interesting account which *Luke* hath recorded, concerning our LORD's dining with a *Pharisee*, and which gave rise to the very beautiful history of this pardoned sinner, merits our particular attention, and the more so, as this is the only Evangelist who hath preserved the relation of it to the Church. I beg the Reader's indulgence upon the subject.

And first, whatever motive this *Pharisee* had, of inviting CHRIST to eat with him, is not so material to regard, as it is to remark the gracious condescension of JESUS, in accepting so readily the invitation. Reader! do not fail to notice it down for constant use, in the memorandums of your heart, that if JESUS so promptly went at the first invitation to eat with a *Pharisee*, will he not, think you, readily come at the repeated requests of his people?

Turn to those sweet scriptures in confirmation, and then may you and I give that condescending LORD the frequent invitation to come and dwell with us, and make his abode with us. Isaiah lxxv. 24. Rev. iii. 20, 21. Isa. lviii. 9.

Secondly, Let us look at this poor woman. The Evangelist makes the Reader feel much interested in her history, from the manner in which he hath introduced the subject; *And, behold! a woman in the city which was a sinner!* Surely every conscious sinner, at the first hearing of such an one visiting CHRIST, cannot but feel anxious to know what reception she met with, and how she succeeded. So that at once, you and I, knowing that we are sinners, take part in all that concerned her in her approaching JESUS, and anxiously wait the event.

I pause however to observe, that according to my views of this woman's history, I do not think, as some have done, that this woman was *Mary Magdalene*; for their circumstances do not correspond. *Mary Magdalene* no doubt was, like this woman, a sinner, for the LORD is said to have cast out of her *seven devils*. Mark xvi. 9. but there is not a word of the kind said here, neither should it seem, according to the account before us, that this woman had ever had any interview before with JESUS. Moreover, the very name *Mary Magdalene* implies, that she was of *Magdala*, or if by *Magdalene* it be supposed was meant a loose woman, still this might be on account of the place, because *Magdala* was proverbial for women of no chastity. Whereas this transaction was in *Galilee*. Neither do I conceive, that this woman is the same with the sister of *Lazarus*, mentioned John xii. 3. for here this poor sinner lay at CHRIST's feet, and washed them with her tears; but there, the *Mary John* speaks of, poured the ointment on CHRIST's head. And the former is said to have been done in the house of this *Pharisee*; whereas the latter was in the house of *Lazarus* and his sisters. So that the history is not one and the same. Neither is this instance the same with that mentioned Matt. xxvi. 6, 7. for the event concerning this poor sinner in the *Pharisee's* house, must have taken place a considerable time before CHRIST's farewell supper; but that recorded by *Matthew*, and *Mark* xiv. 3. was only the evening before CHRIST's apprehension. I venture therefore to believe, though I do not presume to speak decidedly upon the subject, that this poor sinner was a different person from either of the *Maries*, noticed by the other Evangelists, and that she had never before had any interview with JESUS.

Let us now attend to what is related of her behaviour in her approaches to JESUS. Every circumstance which is said concerning her by the Evangelist, is expressive in proof of a real work of grace wrought upon her heart. And who shall say whether, as in the instance of *Zaccheus*, and that of the woman of *Samaria*, CHRIST's eating with the *Pharisee* was not wholly intended on her account, and for the instruction of the Church, in all the future generations of it, by her history. See Luke xix. 1—10. John iv. 4—42. I beg the Reader particularly to notice, amidst the several features of a true sorrow of soul for sin, in this woman's behaviour; the self-loathing and abhorrence of her own filthiness, and the ardent love which her kisses expressed to the person of the SON of GOD! Reader! in all the marks of genuine repentance, depend upon it, these are the strongest. It is not our tears, nor our prayers, nor our attempted reform; no, nor our faith, considered as any act of our's, which can bring any glory to GOD, or peace to ourselves. A broken and a contrite heart becomes a blessed *effect* from GOD's grace there planted. But it is GOD's grace and CHRIST's blood which are the *cause*; and the change wrought by that grace and blood is the *effect*. Every thing is beautiful in order. Faith and repentance are precious *fruits* of the HOLY SPIRIT. But CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, becomes the *cause* of salvation.

Our next view of this beautiful memoir, is to look at *Simon the Pharisee*. Though he invited CHRIST to his house, yet it is evident, from his suspicions of CHRIST's character, that he had no high opinion of him in his heart. The gracious allowance of JESUS to this poor sinner wounded his pride. Had she touched the Pharisee's garment, he would have thought himself defiled. But JESUS the SON of GOD was pleased with the act. Reader! think of this. JESUS is glorified when his people are sanctified in him. His holiness suits their uncleanness. His riches their poverty.

But it is high time to look to JESUS, and observe his grace and mercy on this occasion. And first, I beg the Reader to take notice how plainly our dear LORD's conduct towards the *Pharisee*, proved the GODHEAD of his person. The Pharisee had made it up in his mind, that if JESUS were a Prophet, he would have known who, and what manner of woman this was, for she was a sinner. Not that this knowledge belonged to the ordinary Prophets; but to JESUS, as the LORD GOD of the Prophets, it did belong, and his omniscience marked his character. Rev. xxii. 6. Hence therefore JESUS, by telling *Simon* what was in his heart, manifested his eternal power and GODHEAD. Reader! mark this first down in thine heart, or rather beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to do it for thee. John xvi. 13, 14. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Next observe the very wise and gracious manner which the LORD JESUS adopted in manifesting himself as GOD, in pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, and to make the wounded soul of this poor sinner to rejoice. Under the similitude of a beautiful figure, which the *Pharisee* might not immediately see through, the LORD JESUS taught, that the debtor of five hundred pence, or the debtor of fifty, when both unable to pay, were equally insolvent before GOD, the Almighty creditor; and that it must be an act of free grace to pardon either. Here *Simon*, with all his fancied righteousness, confessing, as he could not but do, that he had many infirmities, in the midst

of all; and this poor sinner, with her conscious compleat unworthiness, stood upon a level; and therefore if the LORD forgave both, both were debtors to his free bounty. And then when JESUS had extorted this confession from the proud self-righteous *Pharisee*, he proceeded to apply. And the Evangelist hath most beautifully set this forth, in terms so plain and evident, as can need no explanation.

One thing more I would beg the Reader particularly to notice, namely, the grace CHRIST manifested, and the authority he exercised in forgiving her sins. And this the LORD twice said, that there might be no possible mistake in a point of so much consequence. Oh! how truly blessed is the view! I beg the Reader to look to a similar passage on this ground, Mark ii. 3—12. Let the Reader observe how the LORD expresses himself to the woman, *thy faith hath saved thee*. And to the Pharisee concerning her. *For she loved much*. In both which expressions we are not to suppose JESUS meant, that either her faith, or her love, both which were the LORD's gifts, could be her merit, or the cause of her pardon. These were from the workings of grace in her heart, so that the LORD's love and mercy were the *cause*, and the workings in her heart the *effect*. And as her pardon was great, because her sins were great, her love and thankfulness were the more. Such are among the many precious things this lovely history furnisheth, to the praise of the LORD's grace, the joy of poor sinners, and the casting down the pride of all Pharisees. And, Reader! think where that precious soul of her's is now, amidst the spirits of just men made perfect, surrounding his throne in glory, who once lay at his feet when upon earth in tears. Blessedly *Paul* speaks to this subject, concerning those recovered by grace among the redeemed, from among men upon earth, when he saith, *And such were some of you! but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our God*. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! behold thy LORD, in the many sweet views of Him presented in this chapter. See him in his mercy, hastening to the relief of the centurion's servant. Behold him manifesting what the HOLY GHOST had marked of his character, when exercising his sovereign authority as God, blended with the tenderness of his manhood, at the gate of the city *Nain*. Oh! who that beheld my God and SAVIOR, in that moment of turning the widow's tears into joy, and raising her son from the dead, but would have cried out with the Prophet, and echoed to his blessed words, *behold! your God is come to save you!* And who that beheld the poor penitent in the house of the proud Pharisee, and the gracious mercy and condescension of JESUS to her sorrows, but would have hailed the happy hour of God's faithful promise confirmed; *I even I am he that blotteih out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins*.

And is it not the same in the present hour? Is the LORD's arm shortened that he cannot save? Is his ear grown heavy, that he cannot hear? Precious, precious LORD JESUS! how sweet to my soul the assurance, that as thy person, so thy purpose admits of no change. JESUS CHRIST! the same yesterday and to day, and for ever.

C H A P. VIII.

CONTENTS.

We have here an Account of some Women who ministered unto CHRIST. The Parable of the Sower. JESUS on the Water. The Man dispossessed of the Legion: the Daughter of Jairus raised from the dead; and the Woman healed of the bloody Issue.

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

2 And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3 And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto him of their substance.

It must have been very blessed to have followed the LORD JESUS in this circuit of his preaching. Our Great High Priest and Bishop going through his diocese, attended by the twelve, proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom. Reader! do not forget, however, that spiritually, the same is daily doing now. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Concerning those women, it will be proper to observe, that having received from the LORD JESUS spiritual mercies to their souls, as well as temporal mercies to their bodies, they gladly ministered to JESUS of their time and substance. It is remarkable, that none of the Evangelists have recorded this great miracle shewn to *Mary Magdalene*, they only speak of the thing itself being done; but have not mentioned, as in other cases, the time. That this *Mary Magdalene* was not the woman noticed in the preceding chapter, hath been shewn there. And to which it may be added here, in confirmation of the same, that she is said to have gone about with CHRIST in this circuit of preaching: whereas JESUS dismissed the woman in *Simon's* house, when he said, Go in peace. *Joanna* and *Susanna*, no doubt, were persons of some property; and it is blessed to behold, such as the LORD hath dealt bountifully by, in temporals, as well as spirituals, ministering to the necessities of CHRIST and his family. The CORPUS CHRISTI, that is, the body of CHRIST, in his mystical members, is in every place; and JESUS takes every act done to them, in his name, as done to himself. See, in proof, Matt. xxv. 40. Mark ix. 41, 42.

4 ¶ And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he

sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it;

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe, and be saved:

13 They on the rock *are they* which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 ¶ No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed;

but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest: neither *any thing* hid that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

19 Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20 And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

The parable of the sower is so fully explained by our LORD himself, that it can need no farther comment. For the observations made on the whole discourse of CHRIST, in those verses, I refer the Reader to the parallel passages, Matt. iii. 13, &c. Mark iv. 1, &c. Matt. v. 15. Matt. xii. 46.

22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? and they, being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

In addition to the observations made on this situation of CHRIST and his disciples on the lake, Matt. viii. 23 to 27, I would only just remark, that exercises, like these, for trial, are among the most precious tokens of divine love. It is blessed to be brought into difficulties, where those difficulties afford a better opportunity for the larger display of divine strength, made perfect in human weakness. When nature is unable to help, grace becomes more sweet and valuable. And, however it may be a paradox to the world, yet it is not so with the people of GOD; they know the blessedness of the apostle's state, and can fully ascribe to his sentiments, when he saith, *Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me; for when I am weak, then am I strong.* 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

26 ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs:

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? and he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him, that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them: and he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* saw what was

done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city, and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done ; and came to Jesus, and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind : and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw *it*, told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about, besought him to depart from them : for they were taken with great fear. And he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed, besought him that he might be with him : but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city, how great things Jesus had done unto him.

I have so largely dwelt upon the circumstances of this history, in the parallel account given of it by *Mark*, that I think it needless to enlarge upon the subject in this place. I beg to refer the Reader to *Mark* v. 1 to 20.

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him ; for they were all waiting for him.

41 And, behold, there came a man named *Jairus*, and he was a ruler of the synagogue ; and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house :

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 And a woman having an issue of blood

twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, said, Master, the multitude throng thee, and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and, falling down before him, she declared unto him, before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead: trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard *it*, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her, but he said, Weep not: she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise;

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose

straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

56 And her parents were astonished, but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Both these cases here recorded, are incorporated one in the other; and so they are in the same history of each, given by *Matthew* and *Mark*. I have largely insisted upon the interesting particulars, Matt. ix. 18 to 26, to which I refer. If the Reader will allow me to make a short observation, in addition to what was there offered, it would be to say, that in the case of the woman touching CHRIST's garment, with such lively actings of faith, we may remark upon it, that such will ever be the result of that true faith, which is the operation of the Spirit of God. Those who attend ordinances, who express delight in them, and seemingly love to hear of JESUS: but in whose heart no saving change from nature hath taken place; may *press* upon CHRIST, as the throng here did: but the personal knowledge of CHRIST, and faith in CHRIST, is like this woman truly *touching* him.

The miracle of CHRIST, in raising the ruler's child, not only became a decided testimony of his eternal power and GODHEAD, but it served to teach all his redeemed family, that amidst all their dead and dying circumstances, that power secures for them the resurrection of grace here, and glory hereafter.

REFLECTIONS.

BEHOLD! ye poor and afflicted of the LORD's tried ones, how JESUS, the SON of GOD, when he humbled himself to be made man, condescended to have his wants supplied by the bounty of his people. Oh! how hath he dignified the path of honest poverty by his bright example! Never, then, forget what *Paul* was commanded to tell the church: *Ye know*, said he, *the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be made rich.* Blessed LORD! while I read thy sweet parable of the sower, oh for grace to discover that the pure seed of thy Gospel is sown in my heart, by thy sovereign power: and, from the fallow ground of my poor heart being turned up, and planted with thy grace, the fruit of thy righteousness may, in thee, and through thee, be brought forth an hundred fold. Enable me to embark with thee, thou dearest LORD, in the roughest sea, never being alarmed as long as GOD-incarnate is with me in the storm; who guides the helm of all my affairs, and will rebuke both wind and tide. And blessed be my GOD, my SAVIOUR, my HOLY ONE! JESUS, the SON of GOD, hath dispossessed the enemy from my heart; and now let me, as this poor *Gadarene*, sit at the feet of JESUS, clothed in my LORD's robe of righteousness, and in my right mind. Yea, LORD, if, like the poor woman, deeply and long diseased, or even as the ruler's daughter, dead, JESUS can and will recover. He saith himself, *I am the resurrection and the life. He that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Amen.*

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS is here sending forth his Apostles. An Account of Herod. JESUS feedeth the Multitude in the Wilderness. Peter's blessed Confession of CHRIST. The Transfiguration. The Lunatic healed. JESUS going through Samaria.

THEN he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money, neither have two coats apiece.

4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

The two former Evangelists have given us an account of our Lord's ordination of his apostles; Matt. x. 1, &c. Mark, iii. 14, vi. 7; and there is somewhat truly interesting in the relation of it. But certainly the commission, at this time, must have been very limited. For the apostles themselves, had but imperfect notions of their Lord's kingdom of grace, leading to his kingdom of glory. So strongly were their minds rivetted in the Jewish nation of a temporal kingdom, that not even the death of CHRIST had power to do away the impression. See, in proof, Acts i. 6, 8.

7 ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 And of some, that Elias had appeared: and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this of whom I hear such things? and he desired to see him.

We have noticed this man before, Matt. xiv. 1, and Mark vi. 14. Were it not for his connection with scripture history, how little would his name have been known in the present hour: but how little to be regarded now, but for the instruction his awful character holds forth? Oh how plain is it that purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, have nothing to do to make up happiness! A guilty conscience, and the fear of death, are enough to throw down all the props of such outside splendor.

10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled; and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

For shortness sake, I would refer the Reader to what hath been already offered, by way of improvement, on this miracle of CHRIST, Matt. xiv. 14, &c. and Mark vi. 30 to 46.

18 ¶ And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him : and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am ?

19 They answering, said, John the Baptist ; but some *say*, Elias ; and others *say*, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am ? Peter answering, said, The Christ of God.

21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing ;

22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 And he said to them all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it : but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away ?

26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

We have the whole of what *Luke* relates in those verses, Matt. xvi. 13, &c. and Mark viii. 27. I refer the Reader to both.

28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 ¶ And as he prayed, the fashion of his

countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistering.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias ;

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them : and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son : hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

Having largely considered the subject of these verses, Matt. xvii. 1, and Mark ix. 1 to 13, I do not wish to trespass farther by enlarging upon it.

37 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him :

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee look upon my son : for he is mine only child.

39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out : and he teareth him, that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering, said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God; but while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

46 ¶ Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

The Reader will meet my humble observations on these verses in the similar ones, Mark ix. 14, &c.

49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not; for he that is not against us is for us.

There is somewhat very singular in what is here said. Who this man was is not at all noticed, or even hinted at, by any of the Evan-

gelists. *Mark* takes notice of him indeed; but leaves us wholly in the dark concerning him. See *Mark* ix. 38. Some have supposed that he was one of *John's* disciples; and, therefore, in the expectation of CHRIST, from a lively apprehension of CHRIST's mission, went about preaching in his name, although he had not as yet come to CHRIST. But be this as it may, I beg the Reader not to overlook the LORD's gracious answer to *John*. Oh! who shall say how many there are of CHRIST's little ones hid away and unknown by the world, but yet well known and well regarded by JESUS CHRIST!

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples, James and John, saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

I apprehend, by the time being come that Jesus should be received up, is not meant that his public ministry in preaching was now nearly over; for, according to all calculation, the crucifixion of CHRIST was, at least, six months after. But, probably, it means, that it was now arrived when he should ascend from *Galilee* to *Jerusalem*; for after this, we do not find our LORD again in *Galilee*. The indisposition in the Samaritans to receive JESUS, it is possible, might arise from their discovering our LORD's wishes to go up to *Jerusalem*. And this they construed into a partiality for the temple, at the holy city, in preference to the mountain of *Samaria*, for worship. Reader! observe, I do not decide upon it: I only offer my conjecture. See *John* iv. 9 to 29. But whether I am correct or not in this view of the subject, one point I beg the Reader not to overlook, the striking contrast of our LORD's mind to that of the apostles' James and John. They were for calling fire from Heaven to resent the insult offered to Jesus. But Jesus himself manifested nothing but meekness and love. Oh! how blessed, how very blessed is it to behold Jesus pre-eminent in mercy, as he is pre-eminent in greatness!

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me, but he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

We have similar observations in Matt. viii. 19, &c. But there we read CHRIST was in *Capernaum*; and here he is on his way to *Jerusalem*. Moreover that conversation which Jesus had, as *Matthew* relates it, was with a scribe soon after his descent from the mountain: but here our LORD had taken his farewell of *Galilee*, no more to return thither. However, the words are the same, and the observations arising from them the same.

REFLECTIONS.

THINK, my soul, of the vast honour, the high privilege, the distinguished dignity of the apostles of thy GOD and SAVIOR! Sent forth, as his ambassadors, to call his redeemed Israel to the blessings of reconciliation and peace! Oh! ye servants of the LORD, what an honour was your's to cast out devils, to heal the sick, and preach the Gospel! But what an awful contrast in the character of *Herod*! And yet who that had seen the poverty of the poor fishermen of *Galilee*, and beheld the purpled luxuries of the *Tetrarch*, but would have connected every thing blessed with the latter, and misery with the former? See, Reader, how JESUS instantly supplied a wilderness with food: and think, then, how soon the wilderness frames of his people he can make to blossom as the rose! Oh! my soul, what a view was that which the disciples *Peter*, *John*, and *James*, had of JESUS in the Mount of Transfiguration! But what was this, in point of glory, to that which all the church of GOD will see, and thou among the number, when he shall come in the mount Zion, *to be glorified*

in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe? Behold CHRIST's power in healing the lunatic. Behold how JESUS predicted his sufferings when he should be crucified in weakness. Oh! for grace, that all the precious sayings of JESUS may sink down into my ears! And grant, dearest LORD, that while Samaritans refuse to receive thee; and the dead, in trespasses and sins, are too busily employed in burying their dead, to find time or inclination to follow thee, I may be found with having put my hand to the gospel plough; and never to look back, but follow my LORD in the regeneration, and enter with him into his kingdom.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

The LORD appoints other Seventy also to go before him. CHRIST pronounceth a woe upon Chorazin and Bethsaida. JESUS in sweet Communion with his FATHER. The Parable of the Samaritan. Martha reproved.

AFTER these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 ¶ Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house.

6 And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire, go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick, that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you : notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

I do not presume to say as much, but it doth seem not improbable that these seventy disciples were, in conformity to what is said, Numb. xi. 16, 24, 25, or, perhaps more properly speaking, those of the Old Testament were figurative of the New. See Exod. xxiv. 1—9. And the twelve tribes of Israel were descriptive of the twelve apostles, Rev. xxi. 10 to 21. But I beg the Reader not to overlook what is said of these men being sent into every city and place, whither CHRIST *himself would come*. Yes, without his presence, and his power, all their labours were nothing, John xv. 5. We have much of the same expressions in *Matthew*, to which I refer, Matt. x. 5 to 15.

13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgement than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.

16 He that heareth you, heareth me : and he that despiseth you, despiseth me : and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

There is somewhat very awful in these verses : to think that the preaching of JESUS himself should have no effect ! And, Reader, it may well be supposed, that the heaviest judgments will light on those whose advantages have been greatest, but have rejected them : and, in this sense, we may be tremblingly alive for our British *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*. The grace of GOD, it may be truly said, hath, in the outward ministry of the word, appeared unto all men ; but, alas ! *who hath believed the report, or to whom is the arm of the LORD re-*

vealed? Ordinances and means of grace do exalt our nation, as *Capernaum* was exalted to heaven; but will not the neglect and abuse of them sink down to hell?

17 ¶ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you : but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

I beg the Reader to pause over these verses; not so much to observe the joy of the seventy at the success of their ministry, as to behold the LORD JESUS in this almightiness of character. We are not made acquainted when it was that JESUS beheld the fall of Satan. Whether before the foundation of the world, when Satan was cast out of heaven, see Jude 6. Rev. xii. 7 to 12. or whether in the overthrow of his kingdom and influence, by CHRIST, and his Gospel in covenant promises, Psm. lxxxix. 19 to 23. And the power JESUS communicated to his disciples, opens to the view a very blessed contemplation. For is it not so to all his redeemed? Mark xvi. 18. Acts xxviii. 5. 1 Cor. x. 13. Rom. xvi. 20. But when the Reader hath paid all due attention to these scriptures, I would beg to call his notice yet more earnestly to what the LORD told his disciples, as opening to a much greater cause of joy, than even the devils being made subject to us through his name : namely, that the names of CHRIST's redeemed are written in heaven. Here, Reader, is a subject of holy joy indeed ; and which secures all the blessedness of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, see Rev. xiii. 8. Nothing can more decidedly prove that the choice of God to eternal life, is special, personal, and particular. Names written, implies persons known, and everlastingly secured. So that the FATHER's gift, the SON's purchase, and the HOLY GHOST's work of grace, are the result of everlasting love ; and render the event of salvation and happiness as a thing not liable to any doubt or uncertainty. See those scriptures, Jerem. xxxiii. 13. John vi. 37 to 40. Philip. iv. 3. Rev. xx. 12 to 15.

21 ¶ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto

babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

I desire to refer the Reader for my observations on this verse to Matt. xi. 25, 26.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son; and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

The subject contained in this verse, short as it is, is so infinitely great and sublime, that though I could not dare to pass by it altogether unnoticed, yet I know not how to presume the offering my faint and imperfect observations upon it. I shall, indeed, but barely touch on the deep things contained in it; and no farther than may, under the LORD's teaching, lead the Reader's mind, with my own, to the consideration of the very sweet and precious instructions which arise out of it.

The *all things* delivered to CHRIST, of his FATHER, is a comprehensive expression, to denote the office and authority of CHRIST, as mediator. This part I do not allude to in respect to the depth of mystery contained in this verse; for though such is the infinite fullness of CHRIST, that neither men nor angels can have capacities competent to conceive, yet this is not the most wonderful doctrine which this verse calls the church to contemplate. *No man knoweth who the SON is but the FATHER*: and, in like manner, *who the FATHER is but the SON*. Here are depths indeed of mystery. We are told by the Evangelist John, that *no man hath seen God at any time, but that the only begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him*, John i. 18. So that nothing can be more plain, than that it became impossible for the creation of God to know any thing of JEHOVAH, in his three-fold character of persons, but by the immediate act of the SON, begotten into his mediatorial character, God-Man in one person, thereby to reveal him. By this voluntary act of the SON of God, and by this humbling himself, in order to make this revelation through the medium of the manhood, he hath done that, which, without this union of nature, never could have been done. And by this act, he hath brought in a new glory to the GODHEAD, in that his creatures have now a knowledge of the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT; and which opens to the felicity of God's intelligent creation to all eternity. Our LORD's expression is striking: *No man knoweth who the SON is but the FATHER*: that is, as SON of God. It is GOD only, that can know GOD. For though the persons in the GODHEAD are revealed, sufficiently plain in proof, as articles of faith, yet none knoweth how the SON is SON but the FATHER. It is the FATHER only who knoweth the SON, as a person of equal dignity and glory with himself. And so, in like manner, *No man knoweth who the FATHER is save the SON*. The personal apprehension of each is to each, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, can be known only as such in their essential nature and GODHEAD, by each other. And when JESUS adds, and *he to whom the SON will reveal him*: that is, in making

such a revelation of him, as he came purposely to make, and the enlightened soul, by grace, is capable of receiving.

Reader! ponder over the wonderful mystery; and, while looking into the vast depth, rather feel astonishment at the condescending grace of the LORD, in that we are enabled to apprehend so much, instead of marvelling that we know no more. It is very blessed that the SON of GOD hath come to make known such stupendous things, which, without his having taken upon him our nature, and in that nature made such gracious revelations of the mystery of GOD, and of the FATHER, and of CHRIST, never could have been discovered to all eternity. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*

Though I passed by the consideration of the *all things*, delivered by the FATHER to CHRIST, at the opening of this verse, in order to attend the more particularly to the momentous doctrine contained in the latter part of it, yet let not the Reader overlook either the sweetness or the fullness of the blessed expression. JESUS, in his Mediator-character, here considers himself as the Great and Almighty Trustee of heaven; and that he is thus full in himself, and by the FATHER's appointment, in order to give out, in all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory, to the supply of all. And CHRIST's invitation is founded upon his ability, see Matt. xi. 27 to 30. So that as all the promises, all grace, all the blessings of the covenant, all government; in short, the whole, and every part of supply for all things, can only be found in CHRIST; there can be no possibility of obtaining any thing either for time or eternity, but in him. And what tends to endear this state of things still more, is, that as all things are delivered from the FATHER to the SON, in seeking all things from CHRIST, we honour the FATHER by seeking for the SON. For as the FATHER puts honour upon CHRIST, in thus constituting him universal and everlasting LORD, so every poor needy creature, who looks by faith to CHRIST for his supply, puts honour upon him also. Reader! think of this in all approaches to CHRIST: and depend upon it, that whenever your poor heart is made joyful in CHRIST, and enriched by supplies from him, CHRIST is glorified in you, in giving out of his fullness, and gets praise from the riches of his grace in making all his people happy in him. *Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST!* 2 Cor. ii. 14.

23 ¶ And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

I beg the Reader to notice the grace of JESUS. With what tenderness and affection the LORD JESUS marks his own! It was the longing of the Old Testament saints to see CHRIST's day. *Moses* was both prophet and king in *Jesurun*: and how he earnestly desired even but to see the hallowed spot, where he knew, by faith, CHRIST; his

dweller in the bush, should one day come, and accomplish salvation. Deut. iii. 23 to 27. And as *Peter* told the Jews in his sermon, *All the prophets, from Samuel, and those that followed; with David*, and the good Kings of Israel, who foretold of CHRIST, desired to see his day: and, like *Abraham*, in the prospect *rejoiceth, and was glad*. Acts iii. 24. John viii. 56. Hebrew xi. 13. Reader! hath Jesus ever said the same privately to you, as he did here to his disciples?

25 ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering, said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*.

34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him : and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

There can be no doubt but that this lawyer's question was not with a view to learn from CHRIST, but to confound CHRIST; for it is said that *he tempted him*. And what a body of such critics have the servants of JESUS been tempted with ever since! How admirably our LORD sends the man to the law for conviction! When the law is used as CHRIST here useth it, the HOLY GHOST makes it a school-master to CHRIST. *By the law is the knowledge of sin*, Rom. iii. 20; so that JESUS sent this lawyer to the law for self-condemnation. But how the man aimed to evade the force of it! He saith nothing about the love of God, but questions about his neighbour. The method the LORD took with this lawyer is both beautiful and striking: and though we have no authority to conclude the discourse ended in any saving work upon his heart, yet it could not but silence him with confusion. But, leaving the lawyer, it will be more for our purpose to observe some of the many precious things contained in this most interesting account of the wounded traveller and the kind *Samaritan*. Reader! we shall do no violence to the subject before us, if we behold, in this certain man going down from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, our own nature in every individual instance of it, leaving the holy city, which *Jerusalem* represents, and going down to the cursed city, *Jericho*, so declared in the Scriptures of God, Nehem. xi. 1. Joshua vi. 26. 1 Kings xvi. 34. As then this man, leaving the holy city, fell among thieves, which stripped him, wounded him, and left him half dead, so our nature, by the fall, is robbed by Satan, stripped of original righteousness, is made a whole mass of disease with the wounds of sin, and left more than half dead by the great enemy of souls. In soul—that is, *spiritual* death, truly *dead in trespasses and sins*. Ephes. ii. 1. And in body, exposed to *natural* death, certain and sure: and unless relieved, as this poor man was, during the present life, as certain of *eternal* death, both of body and soul for ever. Such is the awful state of every man by nature.

Our LORD describes the passing by of a *Priest* and a *Lévite*, beholding the wounded traveller. The former immediately went on, seemingly regardless of his misery. The *latter* went and looked on him, but passed by on the other side. Probably, by these different characters, both equally unfriendly, might be meant, in allusion to our fallen helpless nature, the inability of either law or

sacrifices, under the law, to heal the wounds of sin. But a certain Samaritan, Jesus describes as doing all the needful offices, nor departing from the wretched creature until he had brought him to an inn of safety. All commentaries, without hesitation, have considered this *Samaritan* as representing the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And there can be no doubt but that he, and he only, proved the divine Samaritan to our ruined nature. Yet, in the first view of the subject, CHRIST, in his human nature, was not a *Samaritan*, but a *Jew*. And moreover, if we trace the subject higher, and look at the SON of GOD, when first assuming our nature, he was indeed no Samaritan, that is, not a stranger, but from being the head, and husband of his Church, when he stood up as such, at the call of GOD, before all worlds, he, and he alone, was the nearest of all relations from all eternity. And his *journeying*, as is here represented, might be supposed to mean his coming down from the *Jerusalem* above, which is the mother of us all, to the *Jericho* of this world, brought under the curse by reason of the fall. But be this as it may, he proved the *Samaritan* to our nature. It is said that he saw him. Yes! JESUS beheld his Church from all eternity. CHRIST saw the Church when presented to him by his FATHER, before all worlds, in her native glory, in excellency in him. She was, from all eternity, a king's daughter, all glorious within, being GOD the FATHER's gift to his dear SON. JESUS saw her, loved her, delighted in her, for so the Scriptures speak: see Psm. xlv. 13, 14. Psm. xxi. 1, 2. Prov. viii. 22, 30, 31. But the seeing our nature in the deplorable state of a robbed and wounded man here described, is in allusion to our *Adam*-nature, and time-state of sin and ruin, into which, by *Satan*, we are involved. And here comes in all those precious blessed offices the history represents, which so exactly corresponds to the mercies of CHRIST. If the *Samaritan* went to the wounded man, and poured in oil and wine, and bound up his mangled body, set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him, JESUS still more. The SON of GOD, in our nature, hath remembered us in our lowest estate, *for his mercy endureth for ever*. He hath indeed not barely poured in the oil and wine, to heal the wounds of sin, but the precious balsam of his own blood. He hath set us not on his own beast, but borne us in his arms, and carried us in his bosom. He hath brought us to his Church, to the richest inn of plentiful provisions, in means of free and sovereign grace and ordinances of gospel worship; and having washed our wounds in the fountain he hath opened for sin and for uncleanness, he hath took care of us with all this care. And now, though as on the morrow of departure he is returned to glory, he hath commanded all his servants, who minister in his name, to be attentive to our wants, assuring them and us, that at his return, which he will assuredly make good his promise in coming, he will make ample amends to recompence all done for us during his stay. The *two-pence* spoken of, is in allusion to a *Roman* coin, about fifteen-pence in value, to our *English* money. Some have considered this two-pence as in allusion to the two Testaments; and some to the two ordinances of Baptism and the LORD's Supper. But perhaps this may be fanciful. Yet though it were not necessary, nor perhaps proper, to strain the history to every minute point, it may be well to gather from the

whole, under divine teaching, what the LORD JESUS evidently intended from such a striking illustration of our ruin, and his mercy over us; so that every poor sinner, made sensible by grace of his lost estate by nature, and his wounded, ruined condition by *Satan*, may cry out, when contemplating CHRIST in the display of such mercy as is here set forth, and say, LORD JESUS! thou divine Samaritan, pass by and behold me, in my desperate circumstances, like this poor traveller. Pour in the precious balsam of thy blood, take me to thy Church, and heal me! The confession of the lawyer could be no other than what the LORD extorted from him. But it is not said that any other effect was wrought by it upon his mind.

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

It should seem, that after this conversation with the lawyer, our LORD and his disciples moved onward in their walk. According to the account given by *John*, JESUS and his disciples were returning from *Jerusalem*, at this time after the feast of tabernacles: and they were now entering *Bethany*, the town of *Lazarus* and his sisters. See *John* vii. 10. The conversation here recited is but short, but it is very striking. The contrast between these sisters, in their different pursuits, is finely set forth by the LORD himself. Oh! what a folly is the diligence of even the most inoffensive employments, bounded by the prospects of this life, when compared to *the desire of the one thing needful*. The Reader will not fail to remark, that CHRIST himself is that good part alluded to, which never can be lost. All else may: all else will. GOD, our FATHER, hath given the Church nothing to have, and hold for ever, but his dear SON. And this first, and best, and comprehensive gift, which includes every other, is given never to be recalled. *Mary's* choice of this is not to be supposed as if resulting from her own natural affection. *If we love him*, it is because *he first loved us*. Nature untaught, uninfluenced by the grace of

GOD, would never make choice of CHRIST to all eternity. But when the LORD's choice of his redeemed, which is always accompanied with the grace of the LORD in the heart, directs the soul to JESUS; then, like *Mary*, our choice flowing from the LORD's choice, and our love issuing as a stream from the fountain of his love, we are made everlastingly secure in the grace of GOD in CHRIST; and CHRIST, with his fulness, becomes a portion to live upon in time, and to all eternity, and which can never be taken away.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! in pondering the several weighty and important things contained in this chapter, let us both look again and again to the Almighty Author of his holy word, to accompany our reading of it with his gracious teaching. JESUS, when he sent forth the seventy disciples here spoken of, to the work to which he called them, sent them forth only to the city, or place, whither he himself would come. And without the LORD's presence with us, what can we hope to enjoy of the LORD's grace and blessing? We see in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* the awful event of Gospel Ordinances, unaccompanied with the divine favor. LORD! in mercy grant the doom of *Capernaum* may never fall on our *British* Israel!

Amidst this awful view, help me, thou dear LORD JESUS, help every truly regenerated Reader to rejoice in what thou hast said of *Satan's* fall, as lightning from Heaven. Oh! for a heart renewed by grace to sing that song which *John* once heard in vision: *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his CHRIST; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.* And oh! the greater joy still, than that of treading on serpents and scorpions, to know our names are written in Heaven. Secured by this in GOD the FATHER's everlasting love, we are One with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us; and sealed by GOD the HOLY GHOST, unto the day of eternal redemption. Oh! HOLY FATHER! taught by thy dear SON, let every renewed soul praise thee, that though these things be hidden, from men who are worldly wise, and prudent in their own eyes, yet hast thou revealed them unto babes. All which we humbly and thankfully refer unto thine own sovereign will and pleasure. *Even so, FATHER, for so it seemed good in thy sight!*

Precious LORD JESUS! give us grace to hail thee, thou great Samaritan! Surely it is thou, and thou alone, which fully answereth to the character, thou thyself hast drawn, when from heaven thou camest down to this our world, to seek and save that which was lost. LORD! thou wilt bring thy whole redeemed home, though wounded by Satan, and dead in trespasses and sins! And oh! for grace, that until that hour comes for thy return, thy people may not be found like *Martha* cumbered with the many things of this unsatisfying, dying, sinful state; but through thy grace giving the power, like *Mary*, we may chuse that good part which *cannot be taken away.*

C H A P. XI.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter our LORD teaching his Disciples to pray. He works a Miracle in casting out a Devil. He preacheth to the People; and pronounceth a Woe upon the Scribes and Pharisees.

AND it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us, day by day, our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come unto me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that

is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

It should be observed in this place, that though the form of prayer here delivered by *Luke*, differs not, in any thing material from that recorded by *Matthew*, chap. vi. 9. yet JESUS was now in *Judea*; whereas, then he was in *Galilee*. And moreover, the prayer was then, according to *Matthew*, delivered in the midst of CHRIST's *preaching*. Here we are told, he himself was *praying*. I need not tell the Reader (indeed the limits and designs of this Poor Man's Commentary would not permit me,) how much hath been said for and against the use of this prayer by the LORD's people. Doubtless it is a very blessed, a very comprehensive prayer, and every petition in it truly spiritual; and contains, more or less, every thing of what the prayer of the faithful ought to be. And, according to what *Luke* hath here said, it should seem to decide the point. He doth not use the same expression as *Matthew* did, when recording the words of CHRIST: *After this manner, therefore, pray ye*; but he positively saith, *When ye pray, say, Our FATHER, &c.*

Our LORD beautifully illustrates the holy importunity of prayer, under the figure of a friend arising at midnight; and at length prevailing over all the arguments brought against him by his unwearied earnestness, which will take no refusal. The LORD loves a fervency in spirit. Scripture hath furnished several striking instances of its effect and success. Gen. xxxii. 9 to 12, and 24 to 29. Luke xviii. 1 to 8.

14 ¶ And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting *him*, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

I have very largely dwelt on this subject in the parallel passage, Matt. 24 to 30. I therefore refer the Reader to it.

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea, rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

There is somewhat very singular in this relation. *A certain woman of the company.* What company? Not of the company of them who

charged CHRIST with casting out devils through *Beelzebub*. Probably of the people that, it is said, wondered at JESUS's miracle, which he had, just before this discourse, wrought, (ver. 14). This woman, it should seem, was so struck with the miracle, and the discourse which followed, that she could not contain expressing her astonishment in the words here recorded. But from our LORD's answer, it doth not appear as if JESUS regarded her as one of his people. Natural feelings will sometimes ascend great heights: but nature is not grace. Numbers heard JESUS, and wondered at the gracious things which proceeded out of his mouth: but here the whole ended. Oh! Reader! how sure is it that the saving effectual call of every sinner is of God!

29 ¶ And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgement with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of of Jonas: and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness,

35 Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of

light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Our LORD's discourse in this place, illustrated as it is by those beautiful histories of *the Queen of the South*, and *the Men of Nineveh*, deserves our awakened attention. JESUS plainly shows that his Gospel, in his own open and free preaching of it, became a candle placed most conveniently for giving light, and not obscurely hid. But such was the prejudice of darkened nature, that the very light arising out of it, like the vicious humours of the body, only tended to render it indistinct. Both the *Queen of the South*, and the Men of *Nineveh*, must alike arise to condemn the generation before whom CHRIST preached. For the former came from a vast distance to hear the mere wisdom of a man; but they passed by in their own streets with contempt, and staid not to hear the wisdom of the SON OF GOD. And the latter fell down in sorrow and sackcloth, at the preaching of *Jonas*, from a single sermon; whereas, the repeated discourses of JESUS were utterly disregarded by them, and despised.

37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him. And he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

We had an account of JESUS eating with a *Pharisee*, chap. vii. 36, which see. And here is the relation of another. Our LORD took all occasions to manifest the object for which he came on earth. And certainly we have abundant reason to bless our gracious LORD for this condescension; for this dinner party, as well as the former visit to the *Pharisee's* house, afford some very sweet and profitable instructions. Our LORD's shewing in what real uncleanness consists, is a rich sermon taught us at this *Pharisee's* table.

42 But, woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgement, and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware of *them*.

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Woe unto you also, *ye* lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves. And them that were entering in ye hindered.

I am inclined to think that though *Luke* hath recorded in this place those words of CHRIST, yet they were not spoken in the house of the *Pharisee*. For we do not read, that when this *Pharisee* desired JESUS to dine with him, that there were any others invited. And if not, how should such a company as it should seem of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* have been so gathered, as for the Lord to preach to.

Moreover, *Matthew* hath related this discourse nearly in the same words as if delivered in the temple; so that unless our Lord preached it twice, once in the temple, and now again in the house of the Pharisee, it should rather seem, that *Luke* hath only recorded it in this place after the Pharisee's dinner, and not as in the *Pharisee's* house. But I pray the Reader to observe, that here, as upon all other doubtful occasions, I never speak decidedly. Let the sermon have been preached wherever it might have been, it is a solemn one indeed; and, coming from him who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, the contents of it are enough to make the ears of them that hear it to tingle with alarm at the awful state of such awful characters! See Matt. xxiii. 13 to the end.

53 And, as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things;

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

I beg the Reader to attend to the expressions in these verses. We read that those sworn foes of CHRIST began to urge him and to provoke him; but we do not read that JESUS felt hurt. What the LORD said, no doubt, was, as the former part of his discourse, full of denunciations against those whited sepulchres, as he called them: but *no guile was found in his mouth*. Precious LORD JESUS! give thy people grace to consider thine unequalled meekness, in *enduring such contradiction of sinners against thyself that we may never be weary nor faint in our minds*. Heb. xii. 3.

REFLECTIONS.

DEAREST LORD JESUS! I would say for myself, and all thy redeemed family, teach us to pray, and with what words to come before the LORD, in all our soul exercises, and wants, and conflicts, and trials. Do thou, dear LORD! by the sweet influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT, both spread thy fullness, cause us to feel our need, excite a spiritual appetite, and open a constant source of communion, *that, from thy fullness, we may all receive and grace for grace!* And oh! for a fervor in prayer, awakened by the HOLY GHOST! that, like the friend at midnight, and *Jacob at Bethel*, never may we go to the mercy-seat, and come away empty; but, like the great father of the praying seed, in the same spirit of faith to tell our God, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*. And, oh LORD! grant that neither the *Queen of the South*, nor the *Ninevites*, may bring reproach upon thy people! No Solomon like our Solomon—no preaching of *Jonah* like the preaching of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Precious MASTER! let neither the awful state of *Pharisee* blindness, nor the wretched delusion of *Jewish* ignorance, be in the lot of thy redeemed, in all gene-

rations of thy Church. Oh! for grace to sit at thy feet, to hear thy word! that through the blessed illumination of God the HOLY GHOST, our whole body, as thou hast said, *being full of light, and having no part dark, the whole may be full of light!* JESUS, the sun of righteousness, shining *as when the bright shining of a candle doth give the people light.*

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

JESUS is here preaching to the People. A Man from the throng complains to him of his Brother. The LORD takes occasion therefrom to reprove Covetousness, and discourseth on several Subjects.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy:

2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered: fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

9 But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.

10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.

11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say,

12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you, in the same hour, what ye ought to say.

I cannot help remarking, upon the several discourses of JESUS, how very much his doctrine is directed against the Pharisees. Let any man gather, from the Gospels, the whole discourses of JESUS, and observe how large a part is spent in condemning that class of persons: and the reason is plain. No set of men whatever, no, not even the openly-profane, are as sworn foes to the full and finished salvation of JESUS as the Pharisees. For by setting up a righteousness of their own, or, what results from the same source, the unhumbled pride of human nature, in part they do, by so much lessen the vast importance of CHRIST and his redemption. Either the whole mass of men are dead in trespasses and sins, or they are not. If they are not, what need have they of a Savior? If they are, what an impudent attempt is it in the Pharisee, of any generation, to set himself up as a part-Savior! Pharisees, in the days of our LORD, were his most deadly foes; and Pharisees, in modern times, are the most deadly foes to his people. Our LORD's discourse, in those verses, very plain and simple as it is, seems to have been founded on the prospect he saw in his Church, what opposition his chosen ones would meet with, all the way through, from that class of people. *Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

13 ¶ And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge, or a divider, over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying,

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

How little this man from the crowd knew of JESUS, or of his business in this world! Sweetly doth the example of JESUS here teach, and ministers especially, to be disentangled from the concerns of the world, and to sit aloof from them as much as possible. It is blessed, however, to observe, how the LORD, took occasion from the request made to him, to raise a very interesting and blessed discourse. This rich fool, in CHRIST's parable, is but too often realized, and found to be a true character in the world. I have often thought what a most consummate fool this man must have been to speak thus to his soul. Why, the soul can neither eat nor drink. All the stores in barns, laid up by the worldling, cannot profit the soul. And what a selfish wretch, to talk of laying up, instead of saying, I will make new barns in the hungry bodies of the poor around me: I will make them my store-houses and my barns! But oh! thou dearest LORD JESUS! is not every man thus by nature, until taught by thy HOLY SPIRIT, of the true treasure which thou causest thy people to inherit in making rich towards GOD? Reader! think, if it be possible, how many die as this rich fool died; who, in the midst of their childish pursuits, are suddenly called away to their awful account! Surely it will be one among the wonders of eternity, the mistaken calculations of such men. And will it not tend to aggravate their misery in eternity in having then a full view of the awful delusion under which they lived and died? in passing by, while upon earth, the cries of common nature, and foolishly hoarding what never gave them real happiness here, but treasured up wrath against the day of wrath hereafter? Compare those Scriptures, Prov. viii. 18 to 21. Job xxi. 7 to 12.

22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life,

what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body is *more* than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Every word in this lovely discourse of JESUS is truly blessed. The images and figures are divinely chosen to represent the interesting subject the LORD had in view. The flower of the field is more strikingly expressive of dependence on the LORD's providence, in allusion to his exposed ones, than that of the garden would have been. For the *latter* is fenced in and watched over, but the *former* is open to the foot of every traveller, and may be bitten off by any beast in his forage. So, in like manner, the fowls of the air differ widely from those of the barn. They have no caterer, no store-house, no shelter; and the bush they roost on one night, may be taken away before the next. Sweetly, by these images, Jesus teaches his apparently unprovided for family, that not one of them is forgotten before God. Reader! pray turn to that most blessed Scripture, Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3; and beg of God the HOLY GHOST to write it down for you, for com-

mon use, in the hourly memorandums of your heart. *In that day, sing ye unto her (the Church). A vineyard of red wine : I, the LORD, do keep it. I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it : I will keep it night and day.*

32 Fear not little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms : provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35 Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning ;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding ; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed *are* those servants whom the lord when he cometh, shall find watching : verily, I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also : for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 ¶ Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all ?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them* *their* portion of meat in due season ?

43 Blessed *is* that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But, and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

I shall have no occasion to offer much comment on this very blessed discourse of Jesus. His language is so plain as to need none. I shall only here and there call the Reader's attention to some of the more striking expressions the Lord is pleased to use. There is somewhat very interesting in Jesus calling his Church a *little flock*. Little, in comparison of the world's wide wilderness; but when all brought home by electing, redeeming, and effectual calling in grace, here in the present life, and to glory above, the Church is said to be a *multitude which no man could number*, Rev. vii. 9. The Lord hath been pleased to dignify his Church with several very striking names; but all highly descriptive. A *beautiful flock*, Jerem. xiii. 20. A *flock of slaughter*, Zech. xi. 4 to 7. An *holy flock*, Ezek. xxxvi. 38. And by his same servant, most blessedly doth he call it, *My flock*, Ezek. xxxiv. 17. All which prove the special and peculiar character of the Lord's people, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And it is equally worthy the Reader's attention what Jesus saith in relation to *the kingdom*. It is said to be *given*. *Fear not, little flock, it is your heavenly Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*. So that it is not man's purchase by merit, but God's gift by grace. And it is not only a gift, but a free gift, and wholly the result of God's good pleasure, Isaiah xliii. 21, Matt. xi. 26. Jesus's direction to his disciples, to wean themselves from earth and earthly connections, is very striking. And the figure of a man with his loins girded, and his light burning, is a beautiful allusion to servants of the east; whose long vestures were always

tucked up, and fastened to their girdles, when in waiting, that they might be able to run with speed, when their master's services required it. And this explains to us what the Prophet saith of the ministers of the Gospel, whose feet are uncovered when they run on the mountains, Isaiah lxii. 7. But the most lovely of all the similitudes in this discourse of Jesus, is that in which he describes himself as *girding himself, and coming forth to serve his faithful servants, whom he will make to sit down to meat*. It is indeed impossible to form equal apprehensions of the grace and humility of the LORD JESUS. He who washed his disciples' feet, when in the moment he knew himself to be LORD of all, and all things were given into his sovereign hand, who shall calculate the wonderful extent of such grace? But without straining the expressions to the utmost limits, in beholding Jesus serving *them*, whose very happiness must be made up of serving *him*, it may serve to shew, in some measure, the overflowing love of his heart, which is wholly theirs; and every act of it directed for their happiness here, and to all eternity, Song ii. 14.

49 I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?

50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Various have been the judgment of the godly concerning those expressions of our LORD, in the opening of this paragraph. What fire the LORD JESUS alluded to, doth not seem decidedly plain, so as to determine whose judgment is correct amidst the various opinions which have been formed, in relation to it. Some have conceived that it had respect to the work of God the HOLY GHOST, Isaiah iv. 4. Malachi iii. 2. And others refer it to the consequent persecution which followed CHRIST's preaching: and they conclude that the words of JESUS so explain it. And in relation to the baptism Jesus speaks of, equal difficulty, in point of determination, hath arisen. It could not mean the baptism of water, for this CHRIST had gone through. Neither of the HOLY GHOST, for Jesus was full of the HOLY GHOST, Luke iv. 1. The general tide of commentators runs in the supposition that he re-

ferred to our LORD's sufferings. But I confess it doth not strike me in that point of view; for what was the whole life of JESUS upon earth any more than a baptism? if so, from sorrows and exercises. But I leave the decision of it with the LORD, only begging to observe, that if JESUS was so straitened for the accomplishment of this baptism, whatever it might be, how ought the LORD's people to be on the continual look out, and humble waitings, for the baptisms of God the HOLY GHOST?

54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower: and so it is.

55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?

58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, Thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite.

We have those Scriptures already noticed, Matt. xvi. 2, and Matt. v. 25, to which I refer.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! the HOLY GHOST is blessedly teaching the Church, in this chapter, sweet lessons of grace and of providence. In the view of the multitude pressing upon JESUS to hear the word of God, we are taught how precious ordinances are, where the LORD is present to bless them. And in the discourse of JESUS on the LORD's care over the birds of the air, and his glory displayed in the lilies of the field, we learn how everlastingly secure and provided for must be his redeemed ones. And in the contemplation of the foolish worldling, how strikingly doth JESUS shew the little value of riches, unsanctified by the blessing of the LORD. And should these reflections meet the eye of one of the LORD's timid fold, oh! for God the SPIRIT, to make that sweet Scripture blessed. *Fear not, little flock, it is your FATHER's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Hail! thou blessed Master of thine household, which promiseth such rich rewards to thy waiting servants! But wilt thou indeed condescend

to such acts of humbleness as to gird thyself, and serve them? Was it ever heard of in the annals of mankind that ever a Lord did so? *Solomon* was struck with astonishment, that he, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, should visit the house he had built with his presence. But what would this eastern prince have said, had he beheld *Jesus* the Son of God washing the feet of poor fishermen? Oh! for grace to know that love of *CHRIST*, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God!

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

The LORD is here discoursing to the People. He speaks of the Galileans, and of the Barren Fig-Tree. He cureth a Woman of her Infirmary. Makes a circuit through the Villages; and laments over Jerusalem.

THERE were present at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

We have no account of this discourse of *JESUS* by any other of the Evangelists. It will be proper, therefore, to notice it in this place. And it is remarkable also, that no historian hath noticed this act of *Pilate*. It differs from one related by the writer of the Jewish history, concerning *Pilate's* slaughter of certain Samaritans; so that it cannot be the same. The contempt *Pilate* manifested to their sacrifices, serves to shew the awfulness of his character. This pool of *Siloam* hath been supposed to have been the same with the waters of *Shiloah*, *Isaiah* viii. 6; and others make it the same as the pool of *Bethesda*, *John* v. 2. But these are but conjectures. I rather would call the attention of the Reader to what may be considered as improvable from the whole passage. The repentance *JESUS* speaks of, I humbly conceive not to be intended as if it was an act of their mind, and in their own power; for this would be contrary to the whole tenor of the Gospel. It is the act of sovereign grace to work

this in the sinner's mind. And all the persons of the GODHEAD are engaged in the gracious work of creating it in the mind of the people. GOD the FATHER pledgeth himself to give it, Ezek. xxxvi. 24 to 27. CHRIST is said to be *exalted as a Prince and a Savior for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, Acts v. 31. And no less GOD the HOLY GHOST is said to be *a spirit of grace and supplication*, that they on whom it is poured, may *look unto him whom they have pierced, and mourn*, Zech. xii. 10. Hence, as this is GOD's work, and not man's, and repentance is but an *effect* of this work, and not the *cause*, it never was meant, neither could it be expected, as a means of bringing sinners into a salvable state, but rather an evidence of their being brought. So that when the LORD saith, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*; this included *Jerusalem* sinners, as well as the sinners of *Galilee*; yea, all mankind in whom no saving change was wrought. For according to the unalterable language of CHRIST, without the new birth, and which (as a *great* principle includes the *less*,) comprizeth *repentance also towards GOD, and faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST*, there could be no salvation. John iii. 3. Acts xx. 21. Reader! do not fail to mark in this discourse of the LORD JESUS, with which this Chapter opens, how sweetly CHRIST is preached, even where at the first view, we might least have expected him.

6 ¶ He spake also this parable: A certain *man* had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it.

9 And if it bear fruit, *well*; and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.

They who read this parable of the LORD JESUS, through the medium of the *free-will* mind, (which every man by nature is strongly tinged with,) will consider that this representation of the barren fig-tree, is intended to set forth the free will and ability of the human heart to accomplish his own salvation; while they who going upon the scriptural bottom of *free grace*, admit not for a moment the possibility of GOD's grace depending upon man's will, and therefore refer the whole into the sovereignty of GOD.

In the view of opinions so diametrically opposite, in order for the discovery with whom the truth is, (for both cannot be right,) and for the better apprehension of our LORD's design, it may be proper to consider upon what occasion JESUS spake this parable, and to whom it was addressed.

Now we find, that the LORD had been discoursing on the general apostacy of human nature, and had declared, that all men, without a saving change by grace wrought upon their hearts, would perish. And, in the further illustration of this doctrine, JESUS added this parable. A barren fig-tree is represented as in the vineyard, that is, the Church of God, (See Isaiah v. 1—7.) which under the highest cultivation, even of our LORD's own personal ministry, for *three years*, (the time which at the delivery of this parable, JESUS had labored in his word and doctrine,) had produced nothing. The sentence by the owner of the vineyard is then given; *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.* The dresser of the vineyard is represented as interceding for another year; and then consenting to the destruction of it, if still remaining fruitless.

If the Jewish nation be considered as this barren fig-tree, every thing in the parable bears a just resemblance to the several features of it. The children of Israel as a nation and people, had all along Church privileges. *To them, (saith Paul,) according to the flesh, pertained the covenant, and the giving of the law, &c.* But *they, (saith he,) are not all Israel, which are of Israel.* Rom. ix. 3—6. Outward privileges are perfectly distinct things from inward grace. *Capernaum* was exalted to heaven in advantages of this kind; but her end the LORD said, should be to be brought down to hell. Matt. xi. 20—24. In like manner this barren fig-tree was doomed for destruction; and as CHRIST predicted, the event actually took place, when the Jewish nation, as a nation, was soon after overthrown by the *Roman* army, verse 35. And to this agrees the whole purport of the Bible. When God created our nature, it was, as the LORD himself saith, *a noble vine, and wholly a right seed.* But, when in the Adam-nature of the fall, *it was turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine*, of consequence nothing but *blossoms as the dust, and grapes of gall*, could it bring forth. See Jerem. ii. 21. Isaiah v. 24. Deut. xxxii. 32. Intercessions for the sparing such corrupt stock, form no part in the covenant of grace. JESUS himself saith, *Every plant which my heavenly FATHER hath not planted shall be rooted up.* Matt. xv. 13.

But, who then is this dresser of the vineyard? Not the LORD JESUS CHRIST, I venture to believe. For we do not find among all the offices of the LORD JESUS, enumerated in scripture, such an one as a vine-dresser mentioned. But we read indeed, in allusion to Gospel days, that the LORD would appoint *the sons of the alien to be the Church's plowmen and vine-dressers*, as so many degrading employments, whilst all the LORD's people should be named *the priests of the LORD, and men should call them the ministers of our God.* Isaiah lxi. 5, 6. Rev. i. 6. But, not to dwell upon these things, it cannot for a moment be supposed, that, on the presumption this barren fig-tree represented the Jewish nation, CHRIST is here set forth by himself as the dresser. For in that case, his all-prevailing office of Intercessor must have failed; the nation soon after (and as he himself predicted,) being cut down. A doctrine which the most violent *free-will* men will hardly venture to think possible.

The question again recurs, if the LORD JESUS himself be not meant by him, in the character of this dresser, whom doth the LORD mean? I venture to say in answer, though not to decide, may it not be all such as in the warmth of their natural feelings, overstep the modesty

of grace, and intercede, without being taught so to do by the LORD. Such was *Abraham*, when he interceded for *Sodom*; and led away by nature, he asked for *Ishmael* before he knew *Isaac*. Gen. xvii. 18. Gen. xviii. 23, &c. Such was *Moses*, in the case of *Israel*. Exod. xxxii. 31, 32. And *Paul* felt somewhat of the same nature. Rom. ix. 3. All this is nature, not grace. And in the highest characters such remains of nature are found. But none of those things belong to Him, or are found in his offices, whose decision is, *All that the FATHER giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* John vi. 37. The glorious advocacy of JESUS, is in exact conformity to covenant settlements. It is liable to no peradventures, no questions, no doubts. And how solemn soever the doctrine of this parable is, yet far better is it that God's sovereignty should be seen in it, than that man's pride should be gratified, in rendering that questionable which JEHOVAH's word and oath hath made certain; and leaving the intercession of the LORD JESUS at an hazard, whether God's free grace, or man's free will, shall finally triumph!

10 ¶ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The LORD then answered him, and said, *Thou hypocrite*, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed : and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

How lovely is it to see JESUS so mercifully engaged on his own day ! Oh ! what a lesson, beyond a thousand precepts, to his servants who minister in his word and ordinances, to be active on those holy occasions in holding forth their divine Master.

There are numberless beauties in this miracle of our LORD, not one of which ought to be overlooked, but under the HOLY GHOST'S teaching brought home to our hearts. And, first ; let such as are too easily prevailed upon to stay from ordinances for trifling sicknesses, and frivolous excuses, behold this poor woman, whom eighteen years' infirmity, and when bowed together, unable to lift up herself, could not keep back from the synagogue. Oh ! who shall calculate the mass of sin on this one account only, in this CHRIST-despising day of our sinful country ! Let any of CHRIST'S little ones, of long infirmity, look at this woman and take comfort. She was a daughter of *Abraham*, no doubt spiritually so, and yet how long and deeply exercised ! Let them consider this. Next look to JESUS. He called her before she called on him ! Yes ! it is sweet to trace the openings of grace. There is no warmth, no love in the sinner's heart, till JESUS puts it there. Observe the instant power of JESUS. Oh ! how soon, thou dear LORD, canst thou make thy people whole ! And, observe the blessed effects in the poor woman's heart. She glorified God. This will always be the sure consequence of grace. When the LORD leads us to see our mercies, the same grace leads us to acknowledge them.

But, Reader ! mark the contrast, in the ruler of the Synagogue. Was there ever such barefaced impudence, and hypocrisy ! To pretend to a reverence for the Sabbath ; and yet manifest such bitterness against the LORD of the Sabbath. But how blessed the answer of JESUS ! And how blessedly the matter turned to the disgrace of the ruler, and to the triumph and glory of CHRIST. I cannot pass away from the view of this man, and those adversaries of JESUS that were present, without begging the Reader to remark with me, how much the LORD'S preaching was directed against this class of people. His threatenings are all against Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. Publicans and harlots the LORD encouraged to come to him ; but those Pillars of the temple as they considered themselves, the LORD pronounced upon the whole of them the most awful woe. Matt. xxiii. 13, to the end.

But the most beautiful part in the miracle remains to be noticed. This poor woman was a daughter of *Abraham* ; but yet Satan had bound her ! Yes ! she, and every son and daughter of *Abraham*, though they belong to CHRIST, in the union-grace of the Church, being chosen in CHRIST, before the world began ; yet are they all involved in the *Adam*-fall of nature, until CHRIST claims his own, and brings them out. Reader ! what saith your apprehension of the truth of God to this statement ? Certainly you cannot but know the bondage of sin and Satan, whether eighteen years, or as many more

or less, if one like the Son of Man hath made you free. Bowed together you once was, and unable to lift up yourself, if so be JESUS's power and sovereignty in grace you have felt, I pray you to read that sweet Psalm cxlii. and see the case described; and then let your heart answer to yourself, what you know of it, by soul experience.

18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden: and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Our LORD's figures and similitudes are most beautiful and striking. The *grain of mustard seed*, and the *leaven*, are both to the same purport, to show how the small, and, to human observation, the unperceived entrance of grace into the heart, induceth such wonderful effects! Blessed JESUS! be thou the sweet leaven of my soul; for sure I am the blessed influences of thy Spirit will leaven the whole of my nature!

22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

23 ¶ Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? and he said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are:

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not

whence ye are; depart from me all *ye* workers of iniquity.

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

The whole of this passage will be at once abundantly clear, if we consider the very different characters which the LORD JESUS describes under those striking particulars; and whom he had in view. JESUS is here drawing that line of everlasting discrimination, between those who have indeed all the advantages of Gospel privileges, but who never felt their power; and the true seed of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, who are in the Covenant of Redemption. If the Reader will only attend to the features the LORD hath marked, he will at once discern them. They strive to enter in; but it is in their own strength. They plead the privileges they have had of ordinances; they have eaten and drunk in CHRIST's presence; yea, many had heard CHRIST preaching; and yet there is not one atom of grace in all this. These are all *outward* things, and may be very punctually attended, and yet never bring the heart to God. Gentiles who never heard of CHRIST may be brought into a saving acquaintance with CHRIST; while those Jews, who professed their apprehension of JEHOVAH, from being favored with the principles of revelation even in the midst of the blaze of the Gospel, should be so wholly unconscious of its power. So that the *Gentiles*, which were last and afar off, become first; while the Jews, who were first in Gospel privileges, were last, in rejecting the counsel of God, against their own souls,

31 The same day, there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence; for Herod will kill thee.

32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.

33 Nevertheless, I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until *the time* come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

I pass over every thing in this passage, as being of a plain and self-evident nature, to attend to what our LORD hath said, concerning *Jerusalem*, the beloved city. JESUS here expressly refers to some period, antecedent to his tabernacling openly in *Jerusalem*. And I beg the Reader not to overlook it, neither hastily pass it by. But when was it that JESUS would have done those frequent acts of mercy to his beloved *Jerusalem* before the period of his coming openly in our flesh? Though we cannot follow the question in all its bearings, yet we must conclude that those frequent manifestations of JEHOVAH in the Old Testament which we read of, must have been in the Person of CHRIST. And let the Reader observe further, what love must there have been in the heart of CHRIST, thus to have watched over his Church, by the secret workings of his holy Spirit, through so long a period before his coming. And when the Reader hath duly pondered these things, let him think what the LORD JESUS is carrying on now, over his people, in the ten thousand times ten thousand instances of his affection, which he sheweth to them, *otherwise than he doth to the world*? Every ordinance of JESUS, is with this express view, in order to lead his redeemed into an apprehension of his love for them, and his grace to them, as evidences of his good will. Are not all these similar tokens to those of JESUS over *Jerusalem*, when with the tenderness of an hen over her little brood, she spreads her wings to shelter them from all danger?

But while we behold the beauty of the Scripture, thus explained with an eye to JESUS, in his watchful care over his Church, as his Church and people, let the Reader no less notice how CHRIST is here describing the ruin of *Jerusalem*, as a *nation* and *people* unconnected with his Church (except in outward privileges), and to whom were never extended the real union of interest with the Church in CHRIST her LORD. *How often* (saith JESUS) *would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not*. Not gathered them in grace, for the *Pharisees* to whom JESUS was then speaking, and concerning whom he was then speaking, were never children of grace, and consequently never to be gathered. Neither is JESUS speaking of gathering to CHRIST; but gathering *together*, nationally considered. Had they, as a nation and people, received CHRIST, instead of crucifying *the LORD of life and glory*, they would have been saved as a *nation*, and the Romans not have taken away (as they afterwards did) both the *nation* and *people*. How totally ignorant must those men be, who

construe our LORD's expressions here concerning *Jerusalem*, into a sense with which it hath no connection; and, instead of considering it as our LORD's lamentation over the *temporal* ruin which was coming upon his countrymen, as a nation, which he foresaw and foretold, take a latitude from it, as if a man might outstay the time of grace, and lose, contrary to God's design, his own eternal salvation. It is a *national*, not an *individual* ruin, CHRIST referred to. It is a *temporal*, not an *eternal* business, the LORD is speaking of. It is the *house* that is left to them desolate, not the *soul*. Here is not a word of grace in all this, in reference to a man's making his peace with God; but so acting by an *outward* profession as to secure the peace of the *nation*. And when that desolation came upon Jerusalem, then was the LORD's words fulfilled, *When the sinners in Zion were afraid*; and they were constrained to cry out, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD*! Isaiah xxxiii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us both, as we contemplate the LORD's visitations on those *Galileans* and men of *Siloam*, gather improvement from what JESUS hath said, and solemnly remember, that without faith and repentance, which are both the gifts of God, and arising from the LORD's regenerating the heart, we shall all likewise perish. And, Reader! in the barren fig-tree, growing without fruit within the pale of God's vineyard, the Church, let us behold the awful state of all those who have a name to live, but yet are virtually dead before God. Oh! the blessedness of being found trees of the LORD's planting, made fat and fruitful by his blessing!

Precious LORD JESUS! do thou graciously come into our synagogues, thy Churches, on thine own day, and every day in thine ordinances! Oh! how many of thine, like this daughter of *Abraham*, are bound in the *Adam*-nature of sin by *Satan*! And wilt thou not, dear LORD! call them all to thee? lay thine Almighty hand upon them, and make them whole? All thy redeemed will glorify thee for all the gracious manifestations of thy love. And do thou, dearest LORD! give thy people to see thy unremitting watchfulness and care over them. All the tenderness and solicitude of the hen cannot describe the boundless love of JESUS, in gathering his little ones to him, and covering them with his wings, while thy faithfulness and truth become their shield and buckler. And oh! thou gracious God of our salvation, cause us to note down, in the strongest characters, thy distinguishing grace! While nations and individuals, like *Jerusalem* of old, become Gospel despisers, and perish, and refuse to have thee to reign over them, do thou, LORD! strongly impress the wonderful truth upon the hearts of all thy redeemed, that it is all of grace wherein they differ, and that to thy grace they may cheerfully ascribe all the glory.

C H A P. XIV.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS dineth with a Pharisee. He healeth a Man of the Dropsy. He puts forth a Parable. Describes his Gospel under the Similitude of a great Supper; and adds a blessed Discourse.

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?

4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;

5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

Our LORD, we find, frequently visiting the Pharisees, though from the complexion of that sect, none of them had the least regard to his person or doctrine. Here we find, in the midst of this seeming kindness to JESUS, they watched him; that is, they waited to reproach him. It is not said how this man with the dropsy came to the house of the Pharisee; but it afforded a blessed occasion for the display of the LORD's grace and power, and their resentment. That the cure JESUS wrought made them angry, is evident, from the LORD's answer. We find a similar instance in the preceding chapter, Luke xiii. 15. See also Matt. xii. 9—14.

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any *man* to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say unto thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Reader! what a lovely quality is grace, which truly makes men great, in making them humble; and induceth the very reverse of nature, which, by the fall, hath made all mankind proud, when, by reason of sin, it ought to have made all humble. In the unequal pattern of the LORD JESUS, we are made to see what true humbleness is. He who was LORD of all, became servant to all; and in the same hour, when he knew that the FATHER had given all things into his hands, actually stooped down, and did wash the feet of poor fishermen. See John xiii. 3 to 5. Reader! do not, if possible, ever lose sight of this. Was there ever an instance of the kind known among the great ones of the earth? And let me ask, was there ever an instance of real greatness like this, of unequalled humility? Did ever the SON of GOD in our nature look more lovely, more blessed, and call forth the affections of his people in a more awakened manner than upon this occasion? Oh! for grace to copy what none can ever equal! Precious JESUS! let me never forget this scene, but gladly take the lowest room in recollection of thee! And, Reader! let such a precept, backed by such an example, have its due weight with both our hearts: and let us be comforted with this assurance, JESUS, who thus stooped *then*, will be gracious *now*. LORD! the lower thou wilt come down to our wants, the higher thou wilt be exalted to our love and praise. See Philip. ii. 5—11.

12 ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours: lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed *is* he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

Our LORD's directions are here specially given to his people. It is true, JESUS addressed the man at whose house he then was; but as the LORD speaks of the resurrection of the just, the justified soul in CHRIST must be meant by the expression; and therefore it was such the LORD had in view. And with respect to the recompense spoken of, it will be indeed an ample recompense in that great day of GOD to be noticed by CHRIST, in having so loved his members, when upon earth, as his members. Who shall calculate the joy? Our LORD hath more particularly explained it, Matt. xxv. 34—40. All other recompense, and which the self-righteous are seeking after, will be an awful retribution. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

16 ¶ Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many;

17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done, as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Our LORD took occasion, from the observation of one that sat at the Pharisee's table with him, to deliver this precious discourse. It is much to the same purport as that sermon delivered, Matt. xxii. 2, &c.

The prophet Isaiah was taught by the HOLY GHOST to represent the Gospel under the figure of a royal feast, Isaiah xxv. 6. The only difference in the representation is, that in one place it is called a *dinner*, and here the LORD calls it a *supper*. Perhaps, the *former* was in allusion to the early manifestations of grace; and the *latter* to intimate the final revelations in the person of CHRIST himself. Heb. i. 1, and ix. 26.

By the certain man, no doubt the LORD JESUS meant GOD the FATHER; for CHRIST is GOD's salvation to the ends of the earth, Isaiah xlix. 6. And by the servant sent to call them that were bidden, must mean CHRIST; for so GOD speaks of him, Isaiah xlii. 1, &c. And in the great work of redemption, for the recovery of his Church from the ruin into which, by her Adam-nature, she was fallen, CHRIST came as JEHOVAH's servant, Philip. ii. 6, 7. This being *bidden* can mean nothing more than the *outward* ministry of GOD's word to the Jewish nation. With them were committed *the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of GOD, and the promises*. But *all are not Israel which are of Israel*, Rom. ix. 4, 6. For when CHRIST came to his own; that is, his own nation, *his own received him not*. John i. 11. So that the special distinguishing grace, which distinguished the people, differed widely from this outward call; that being accompanied with an *inward* work upon the heart, inclining them to come. Psm. cx.

The different excuses form a most apt representation of the several causes, which prevent, according to the view of natural causes, all the unawakened and unregenerated world from coming to CHRIST. The piece of ground, and the yoke of oxen, and the married state, are strikingly expressive of the three great causes John describes: namely, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*. 1 John ii. 16. Under one or other of these all of the unrenewed of mankind may be found. And what an awful state the whole is!

The dismissal of the servant to the highways, and lanes, and streets of the city, to call in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, is, in the language of the Gospel, to shew that GOD hath given *the heathen to CHRIST for an inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for his possession*, Psm. ii. 8. And the characters here described are to be considered *spiritually*. It is the poor in spirit, it is the maimed by sin, it is the halt in the faculties of soul, and the blind, who by nature are strangers to CHRIST, and all whose minds, by the gracious call of GOD, are brought into a sense of their lost and utterly helpless state in themselves, which are here set forth. And what a beautiful view doth the representation afford of the infinite fullness of GOD's provision, that when multitudes are brought, and are feasted with grace and salvation, the LORD sends again to use an holy violence, and to compel every poor, needy, self-condemned, and sensible sinner to come, that CHRIST's house may be filled.

Reader! pause over this delightful view! Behold and observe what the language of grace saith, *Yet there is room*. Yes, there is room as there was *then*, so *now*, in the fullness of covenant settlements formed among the whole persons of the GODHEAD before the world was made. The thousands that were then unborn when JESUS spake

this parable, and which have since been born in nature, and new born in grace, have found the blessed truth to their soul's everlasting joy : and still room for the thousands yet to be born until the consummation of all things, equally interested in the covenant of promise. Room in the everlasting love of all the persons in the GODHEAD, chosen by GOD the FATHER, preserved in JESUS CHRIST, and called by the gracious and regenerating mercy of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And as there hath always been, and is, and always will be, room for all whom the FATHER hath given to the SON, both Jew and Gentile, for all the purposes of manifesting grace here ; so is there, and everlastingly must be, room in the upper and brighter world of glory hereafter, for all the blessings prepared for the Church of GOD, in that eternal kingdom of GOD and the LAMB. John xiv. 2, 3.

There is no difficulty of apprehension, concerning those who were first bidden to the feast, but by their contempt of it for ever rejected, if we keep in view that the chief scope from the parable, is to shew the difference of *outward* means to *inward* grace. The Gospel hath been, and from the very necessity of the case must be, openly published and proclaimed, like the public bell, which causeth to assemble, in the hearing of all. But herein is the wisdom and equity of GOD manifested. The enemies of GOD and his CHRIST reject the counsel of GOD against their own souls. CHRIST is the one ordinance of heaven, and the only one for the recovery of our *Adam*-nature from the ruins of the fall. If this be slighted and despised, there is no other, Acts iv. 12. The Scribes and Pharisees fell under this condemnation ; and those Scriptures in them were fulfilled. *Many are called, but few chosen. Go to this people, and say, Hear ye indeed, but understand not : and see ye indeed, but perceive not.* Isaiah vi. 9. Matt. xiii. 14, &c. And thus the sovereignty of JEHOVAH is manifested, and their rejection of his appointed means becomes an everlasting testimony to his justice.

25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with him : and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

As my view of this Scripture, in those two verses, differs altogether from every Commentator which I have read upon it, I beg the Reader's indulgence to be somewhat more particular in his attention to my remarks. I shall very freely state the sense which I have of the passage ; and if I err, I pray the LORD to forgive the unintentional error, and guard the Reader from adopting it.

It is plain, from the occasion in which JESUS delivered himself on this subject of hatred to our nearest relations, in the bonds of nature, that he meant to inculcate the higher claims of grace ; and, as great multitudes were then following him, the LORD gave them to understand, that the life of a real disciple of his, was attended with greater sacrifices than they at first might suppose. But few have

considered the term of *hatred* to mean any thing more, than, in a comparative way, and similar to that passage in *Matthew*, not to love any person or thing *more* than CHRIST, or *equal* with CHRIST. Matt. x. 37. But *first* I would observe, that the word in the original, which in our Testament is translated *hate*, will admit of no softer expression. It is one of the plainest words in the Greek language, as every one conversant with the original cannot but allow. And *secondly*, it should be further observed, that the doctrine is not the language of the New Testament only, but of the Old. *Israel* was enjoined to have no pity upon the friend, which was as a man's own soul, if that friend enticed him to leave the LORD: *Thine hand* (saith the law) *shall be first upon him, to put him to death, and then the hand of all the people.* See Deut. i. 13, throughout. And the hatred which the LORD JESUS is here speaking of, is wholly commanded upon this principle: namely, that any of those tender affinities of *nature* rise up to the injury of the more important claims of *grace*. And they must be indeed really and truly objects of hatred to the soul, if they have a tendency, or make use of their influence to thwart the soul in pursuits of the divine life.

And what, in my view, tends most clearly to prove this, and to throw a light upon the whole doctrine, is the concluding sentence in the passage, in which JESUS, having declared the necessity of hating the nearest ties in nature, if opposing the pursuits of *grace*, hath added, *Yea, and his own life also.* Here the point, according to my apprehension, is at once shown. For if a man is to hate his own life, namely, his corrupt, unregenerate, unrenewed part, because he feels daily an opposition in this body of sin and death, to the holy desires of the renewed soul, nothing can be more plain than that JESUS meant exactly what the words express: and in following CHRIST in the regeneration, there will be daily cause of hatred arising in the soul, to the remains of indwelling and corrupt affections, which oppose the soul, and too often bring the soul into leanness, and distress, and sorrow.

And I would ask every real believer, every truly regenerated soul of the LORD's people, whether, on this very account, he doth not groan daily, being burthened? Let him determine the question with his own conscience! let him study the subject, as it relates to holy men of old gone before. What were the woes of *Isaiah*, the self-reproaches of *Job*, of *David*, of *Paul*, but on this account? See *Isaiah* vi. 5. *Job* xlii. 6. *Psm.* li. 2, 3. *Romans* vii. 23, 24. Men who have taken up, with a flimsy view of godliness, and not learnt, from divine teaching, the plague of their own heart, may, in the pride of their heart, be content with a Pharisaical righteousness, and *talk* of what they never truly *enjoyed* in themselves, a progressive holiness; but he who is learning in the school of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to be more and more in love with JESUS, will learn from the same lesson, practically, to be more and more out of love with himself, and while he hates the world, and sin, and Satan, he will hate his own life also from the same cause; namely, the opposition he meets with from that quarter; and as *Job* expresses it, will *abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

And, Reader! suffer me to add, (however largely I have already

trespassed,) is it not this self-hatred, by reason of a body of sin and death, which makes, in part, a cause for the true believer to be reconciled to the prospect of death? Yea, doth not JESUS sweetly and graciously over-rule even this malady of nature to the higher prospects of grace, and cause his faithful ones to feel as *Paul* did, and rejoice in the hope as he rejoiced, in the desire to *depart, and to be with CHRIST, which is far better?* Philip. i. 23. But I proceed no further. I am free to confess that the language of our LORD, in this memorable passage, strikes me in the sense in which I have represented it. Here, therefore, I leave it with the LORD, and to the Reader's reflection, under the divine teaching.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

All these are so many beautiful illustrations of one and the same thing; namely, of the wisdom and safety of counting the cost, in every undertaking, before we enter upon any. The builder and the warrior are strong figures to explain: and what builder, like the Christian, who is building for eternity? What warrior like him that

contends for everlasting life? And unless the LORD JESUS CHRIST be the Founder of the one, and the General of the other, what success can follow? And in application to what went before, they both are beautiful. See on ver. 34. Mark ix. 49, 50.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us not turn away too hastily from this beautiful chapter, and those soul-teaching, and soul-refreshing discourses of CHRIST. While the *Pharisees* watched JESUS, to find somewhat offensive, as according to their corrupt hearts they would have made it, let you and I listen to his heavenly doctrine, and behold, with delight and joy, his mercies to the body in healing the man with the dropsy, while mingling sweet words for consolation to the soul. and oh! for grace in contemplating CHRIST thus discoursing at the *Pharisee's* table! to be earnest to discourse of JESUS at our own! What can be more suited, more grateful, more blessed than, while partaking of the LORD's bounties, to speak of the LORD's love? and while sitting with our family at *our* supper, to mingle with our food gracious conversation of the LORD's?

Reader! do not overlook the very wonderful condescension of JESUS in the various methods the LORD was pleased to adopt in setting forth the plentiful provisions of his Gospel. What a feast indeed of fat things it is! What bowels of mercy and grace in the Great Provider! And what company are the guests invited? such as the great ones of the earth would not look at, much less consort with. Oh! how utterly lost, how utterly inexcusable must those be who refuse such great salvation! Hasten, my soul! hasten, Reader! for it is the poor and the maimed, the most sensibly wretched and miserable, that are most welcome.

And doth my LORD say that his followers must be self-haters, must bear a cross, must hate all which would stop the way? Oh! for grace to be of that happy number! LORD! help me to pluck out an eye, cut off an arm, leave all for JESUS and his great salvation, so that I may be found the true disciple of the LORD! Amen.

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

The LORD is here teaching by Parables. Here are three contained in this Chapter; namely, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, and the Prodigal Son.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

The imagination can hardly form to itself a more striking portrait than what those verses represent. Figure to yourself, Reader, a company of poor, despised outcasts of society, in a body, of publicans and sinners, drawing nigh, with looks of hope and desire to CHRIST, as if to say, Can there be mercy for us? And on the other side of the representation, look at the proud, disdainful, self-righteous Pharisees and Scribes withdrawing from the LORD, with countenances of the most sovereign contempt, as if JESUS and his company should pollute their holiness. *This man* (say they) *receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* Precious JESUS! Well is it for me that thou dost; for what must have become of me had this not been the case? How truly lovely doth the SON of GOD appear by such marvellous condescension! And what can more endear CHRIST to his people?

3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me: for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

The grace of heaven, in the reception of sinners, is proclaimed in every part of the Bible. Here it is eminently illustrated by our LORD himself, under the similitude of the most beautiful parables. I would not, methinks, strain Scripture into the most distant idea of any thing fanciful; neither suppose what was never intended; but I cannot help observing, that, according to my views, the LORD JESUS intended, by the *three* striking parables in this chapter, more immediately to set forth and represent the office work and character of each glorious person of the GODHEAD, as they have manifested their love, and grace, and mercy, to our fallen nature. It is a well-known and fully-allowed truth, in the doctrine of the pure *faith*, *once delivered to the saints*, that our salvation is the joint work, resulting from the joint love and mercy of the whole persons of the GODHEAD; each glorious person concurring, co-operating in the work. It is a blessed subject to trace the subject in all: and here, if I mistake not, the LORD JESUS, by a beautiful parable, sets it forth.

The first parable in the chapter is contained in the verses just read,

in which CHRIST himself is represented in his well-known character and office-work of a *shepherd*. The LORD represents his Church as one sheep of an hundred: and the Church, in point of bulk, compared to the whole creation of GOD, is but as one world to many. Hence called a *little flock*, Luke xii. 32. Sometimes called a *beautiful flock*, Jerem. xiii. 20. The flock of *slaughter*, Zech. xi. 4—7. JESUS himself calls it *one flock*, and of which there is but *one shepherd*, John x. 16. Song vi. 9. And the LORD JESUS hath a variety of names, all descriptive of him, as the Shepherd of his people. JEHOVAH's Shepherd, Zech. xiii. 7. *One Shepherd*, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. The *good Shepherd*, John x. 11. The *great Shepherd*, Heb. xiii. 20. The *chief Shepherd*, 1 Pet. v. 4. And as in this chapter, so in others, and particularly in the writings of *Ezekiel*, a whole chapter is made use of in describing the LORD seeking out his sheep, and bringing them home from wandering, when scattered upon the mountains, and upon the face of the earth, Ezek. xxxiv.

The joy of the shepherd, when taking home his lost sheep, affords a most delightful representation of JESUS, in manifesting that his happiness is blended with that of his redeemed; and that he cannot enlarge his grace and mercy to any of his wanderers in bringing them home, without glorifying himself in their salvation. And the joy of his neighbours and friends, probably meaning angels and the inhabitants of heaven, is also a beautiful testimony how much the whole pure creation of GOD take part in the Redeemer's triumphs. And as it is said, that at creation, *the morning stars sung together, and all the sons of GOD shouted for joy*: so at redemption, the multitude before the throne are represented as *singing their hallelujahs to GOD and the Lamb*. Job. xxxviii. 7. Rev. vii. 9, 10, &c.

8 ¶ Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me: for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of GOD over one sinner that repenteth.

Here, if I do not err, is represented, under the similitude of a lost piece of money, our lost estate by nature. And, without torturing the figure, may be not unaptly supposed, by the lighting of a candle, and sweeping the house until it be found, is represented the blessed office of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in enlightening, regenerating, and renewing grace. Our whole nature, when first formed in the image of GOD, had the pure impression. But in the Adam-apostacy, like a lost piece of money, the image was marred. It is the work of GOD

the SPIRIT to restore : and this is effectually done, when, by illuminating grace, *he commandeth the light to shine in the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of JESUS CHRIST.* 2 Cor. iv. 6. And the same blessed effects are said to follow upon this occasion of recovery, as in the former. Holy joy breaks forth afresh in the streets of the new Jerusalem, with more rapture, on every instance of a sinner raised from the *Adam-fall* to the image of God in CHRIST, than over the unchanging state of the elect angels, who never fell, and therefore needed no repentance.

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons :

12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them *his* living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land : and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger !

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have

sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet;

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and his found. And they began to be merry.

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant?

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come: and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

In this parable we have the same blessed doctrine read to us, by way of magnifying the riches of grace, as in the two former. And if those before may be supposed, without violence to the subject, to represent the office character of CHRIST and the HOLY GHOST, we may, with equal safety, conjecture that here is particularly repre-

sented the clemency and grace of God the FATHER, who is the FATHER of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

The certain man here spoken of, can mean no other than God the FATHER; for although, properly speaking, it was neither the person of the FATHER, nor the person of the HOLY GHOST, which took the nature of manhood, yet it should be considered, that this is but a parable, and therefore, to answer the purposes of the similitude intended from it, the LORD JESUS so represents God the FATHER.

The two sons are very generally supposed to be meant, by CHRIST, as the two branches of the Church, the elder as the *Jew*, and the younger as the *Gentile*. I cannot conceive that this was our LORD's design; indeed it is not correct. The Jew is not elder, for, strictly and properly speaking, both Jew and Gentile form but one Church; and this Church was given to CHRIST, and the Church chosen in CHRIST before the foundation of the world. See Psm. ii. Ephes. i. 4. Prov. viii. 22 to the end. Isa. xlix. 6. Ephes. iii. 5 to 11. I rather think, that by the two sons, one always living in the house, and the other departing, are meant the elder living in the constant use of ordinances, without any saving effect; and the younger living without ordinances, and *without hope, and without God in the world*, till brought home, and made nigh, *by the blood of CHRIST*. Ephes. ii. 12, 13.

I must not allow myself to swell the pages of my *Poor Man's Commentary* with enlarging, by many observations, on this most beautiful and highly-finished parable; but otherwise, here is enough to call up the most awakened feelings of the mind. Indeed, they are already called up, as the several parts of the parable arise to our view in our LORD's own precious words. I shall only beg to point out what our LORD might be supposed to mean in some of the terms and characters made use of, by way of illustrating the LORD's great design. The younger son, in the ruined state of our *Adam*-nature, when brought to penury, and joining himself to a citizen of that country, is finely described. Ruined sinners, unawakened by grace, will join themselves to any thing and every thing, rather than return to God. There never was, there never can be, in any son or daughter of *Adam*, the least disposition to seek God, before that God first seeks us. The wandering strayed sheep will wander and stray for ever, if not brought home. So true is the Apostle's words: *If we love him, it is because he first loved us*.

By this citizen, I understand a man of this world; *not a citizen of the saints and of the household of God*. Ephes. ii. 19. The text saith, a citizen of *that country*; that is, this country, this world, a man of the world, under whatever character he be considered; whether a professor, a minister, of the *letter*, and not of the *spirit*. A poor miserable sinner, like this prodigal, when all his substance is spent, and he finds himself in want, will join himself to any person or congregation, with a view to ease his misery; for in this unawakened state he yet knows not the LORD. And as this citizen sent him into the field to feed the swine, and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks, which the swine did eat, and no man gave to him, so the sinner is sent by such into the field of his labors to feed as swine feed on husks, that is, the shell and carcase of religion, outside things, an attempted reform of life and manners, which never

did nor never can bring real comfort to the soul. And though the poor wretch would fain have satisfied himself with these things, yet he could not. And no man gave them to him. No services, no ministry of this kind, can satisfy a soul whom the LORD, by sharp soul afflictions, is preparing for himself. Reader! I beseech you pause a moment over this view of the subject. Whether I have or have not fully explained it, yet depend upon it, this part of the parable is not the least beautiful and striking, if considered in this light. And who shall calculate the number of precious souls, that from day to day continue under their bondage frames, while joining themselves to such citizens of this country, and who can send them no where for soul satisfaction but into the fields of their ignorance, that they may feed with the swine on the mere husks of Pharisaical righteousness?

And when he came to himself; that is, when grace first entered his soul; for all before this, he had been but in the phrenzy of a ruined state, and unconscious both of his cause of misery and the means of cure. Like *Ephraim*, grey hairs were upon him, but he knew it not. The spots of death were covering him, and he ignorant of any disease.

I detain the Reader at this part of the parable just to remark, that the first awakening of a sinner, like this prodigal, *dead in trespasses and sins*, is, as far as it concerns the personal mercy vouchsafed the sinner, to his own apprehension, one of the greatest, if not the very greatest act ever to be shewn a child of God to all eternity. For all the after-stages of grace is but a progressive going on, from grace to glory, and in heaven itself, from one degree of glory to another. But until this quickening of the soul by God the HOLY GHOST is done, there is no real spiritual life formed in the soul. And notwithstanding that soul is given of God the FATHER to the SON, before all worlds, and God the SON hath betrothed the person of this gift of the FATHER to himself, from everlasting, yet until God the SPIRIT hath graciously wrought his sovereign work also, and brought forth the soul into actual life of union with CHRIST, there is no possibility of any one act of spiritual life, or of spiritual enjoyment in the soul. So that this great, this vast, this momentous work of regeneration, is, to the personal joy of the poor sinner, the greatest work ever to be received in time or to all eternity. For it is lifting the sinner over the gulph, which, without passing, would separate for ever. It is passing from death to life; from nothing to every thing; from the service and kingdom of Satan to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Reader! what saith your personal experience to these things? Hath such an act of sovereign grace passed upon you? Are you born again?

I must not enlarge on the several features of the parable in what remains to be noticed. Our LORD's own words need no explanation. The son's return, the father's reception of him, the joy of his house and family upon the occasion, are all very blessedly shewn. And the clothing him with the robe of salvation, putting on the ring of marriage, and the feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; all these, in illusion to the mercies of redemption, are too plain to need enlargement. See another beautiful representation of the same grace and mercy, *Jeremiah xxxi. 18, &c.* But if I may trespass one moment longer, it shall be to observe, what, perhaps, at first view,

may not be so immediately plain to every Reader; I mean concerning the unjust and unreasonable anger of the elder brother. And this view of the character, according to our LORD's description of him if there were no other, would form a sufficient discovery to know who CHRIST meant. For surely one should think none but the devil himself could envy the mercy and grace shewn to a poor sinner. And yet we find the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were indignant beyond measure at our LORD's favourable reception of poor sinners. *This man* (said they) *receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* And who is it now that takes most offence at the free and full preaching of the Gospel? Not the world at large; for the pleasurable part of the world, the busy part of the world, the high in rank of the world, all these are, for the most part, like *Gallio*, *they care not for such things.* But it is the self-righteous *Pharisee*, like the elder brother in the parable, who wishes to be no further obliged to CHRIST than according to his view is barely necessary. This is the character which takes most offence at the preaching of a free and full Gospel; and, like the brother whom the LORD JESUS describes, takes the confidence to say, *Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither at any time transgressed I thy command.* Of all the awful deceptions of the human mind, this, perhaps, is the greatest; and it is worthy the most serious consideration, that against such CHRIST expresseth himself most angry. Matt. xxiii. throughout.

I must detain the Reader yet further to explain my view of the father's answer to the elder son, when he said to him, *Son! thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.* What can be supposed is meant by this? I apprehend, nothing more than the portion of worldly goods which came to him by lot, as it is said before, that when the younger son went away, he divided unto them his living. Hence, all that he had of this world's portion, like another *Esau*, was his, the fatness of the earth, and his dwelling therein; for these things he chiefly desired. Gen. xxvii. 39. Here is not a word said of spiritual things, no gracious manifestations, no awakenings from sin, and conversions of the heart to God, through the Spirit; but simple outward privileges and sensual gratifications. The father calls him son. Yes; so he was in nature, but not by adoption and grace. See Luke xvi. 25. Oh! the felicity of one like the younger brother, brought home by a saving conversion of the heart to God. In all such cases, it is indeed very might, right, and our bounden duty, that the whole redeemed creation of God should make merry and be glad, when thus a brother, *who was dead, is alive again, who was lost, and is found.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us not hastily pass away from the review of this most blessed chapter, but ponder over again and again the sweet and gracious contents. And as from divine teaching in the Scriptures of eternal truth, we discover that the whole three persons in the GOD-HEAD have mercifully concurred in the salvation of the Church, let us delight upon any and every occasion, to behold an illustration of their joint grace and favor, whenever the word sets forth their office-work, as manifested to the souls of the LORD's people.

Precious LORD JESUS ! do we not behold thee in that lovely and endearing representation thou hast here drawn of the tender and affectionate shepherd ? Surely the fold, the Church, is thine, both by the FATHER's gift, thine own purchase, and the conquest of thine HOLY SPIRIT. And when one of thy little ones wander from thee, wilt thou not seek it on the mountains, until thou shalt find it ? and when thou hast found it, wilt thou not bring it home, as here described, on thy shoulders, rejoicing ? Is it not JESUS's joy, as well as the happiness of his redeemed, when this is done ? Blessed be my LORD, my Shepherd, who, when in the *Adam*-nature of my fallen state, I had wandered on the dark mountains, JESUS sought me out, and found me ; and hath not only brought me home, but now watches over me for good, and feeds me, and sustains me, and causeth me to lie down in green pastures.

And no less, thou HOLY and eternal SPIRIT, GOD the HOLY GHOST, do I pray for grace from thee, to look up to thee, and bless thy Almighty Name, that when, like a piece of lost money, I was fallen in the nature of sin, thou didst, by thy sweeping judgments and enlightening grace, find me, and restore me to the image of GOD in CHRIST. *Spirit of Truth ! do thou lead me into all truth !*

And oh ! thou FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all comfort ! receive me, LORD, as the father in the parable did his returning prodigal. *I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost.* But thou, in thy rich mercy, hast received me ; and by thy grace in me, caused me to return. Thy bowels of love yearned over me in my lost estate, *for thy mercy endureth for ever.* And now, LORD ! through thy grace, I shall go out no more. Thou hast killed for me indeed the fatted calf, and clothed me with the robe of CHRIST's righteousness. Oh ! for grace to live to thy glory, daily crying out with the Apostle, *Now thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift !*

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter our LORD's account of an unjust Steward ; and CHRIST's Observation upon the History. The Relation, also, of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward ; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee ? give an account of thy stewardship : for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What

shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? and he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and mammon.

I differ from all writers who class this account here given, of an unjust steward, among the *parables* of CHRIST. To me, I confess, it

differs altogether from the plan and design of all our LORD's parables, and cannot, I think, be explained upon any principles whatever in relation to GOD, as the certain rich man here spoken of, or any of the LORD's stewards. I am led to conclude, that it is a real history, which JESUS knew, and from which the LORD took occasion to raise instructions of profit to his people.

The certain rich man, cannot mean GOD, for though he, and he only is rich; and all mankind are, in a certain sense his stewards; yet his servants, who are the stewards of the mysteries, are anointed with the HOLY GHOST, and as such, are faithful. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. And although it may be said that *Judas* is an exception, yet none of the characters given in the history of this unjust steward, answer to him. But it is highly probable, that both the rich man and this unjust steward, were men of this world; for the *servant*, acting with the worldly policy he did, and the *master* commending that policy, very strongly prove that they were both under the sole influence of worldly motives; but CHRIST's stewards are not of this world. John xvii. 16.

The mistake in supposing that GOD is the rich man intended to be set forth, perhaps arose from the general scope of our LORD's parables on this ground; and also from supposing, that when JESUS said the LORD commended the unjust steward, he meant GOD the FATHER, or himself the LORD JESUS CHRIST. But not to observe how impossible this could be, from causes too plain to insist upon, if the Reader will read the whole attentively, he will find that it is the steward's LORD which commended him for his worldly wisdom, in providing an home to go to, when he was turned out of his, and not the LORD JESUS. What shall I do? (said the steward,) for *my Lord* taketh away from me the stewardship. It is the same LORD which is said to commend him, and that for his policy.

And that this is the case, is still farther evident from our LORD's words which follow, where JESUS speaks to his disciples by way of making improvement from this history. He speaks in the *first* person when speaking of himself; but when speaking of the LORD of this steward, he speaks of him in the *third* person. I say unto you (saith CHRIST) make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, &c. Whereas, when JESUS summed up the close of this man's history, he said of him: And the LORD (that is the LORD of this unworthy servant) commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely. And here ends the relation of the history; for the next words are CHRIST's first observation upon it: *For the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.* A strong, but melancholy truth: and the children of light, to their sorrow, but too fully know it; for while men of the world are up and alive to every worldly artifice and contrivance, like this unjust steward, the children of GOD are cold, and lifeless, and barren in their grand concerns. And the reason is plain. Instead of walking by faith, we are too much engaged by sight. We are more flesh than spirit; have more of nature than grace. LORD, *increase our faith!*

But the most difficult part of this subject remains yet to be considered; for when our LORD adds, *And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they*

may receive you into everlasting habitations. Certainly it requires much wisdom from the LORD, and much attention to CHRIST's expressions, to have a clear apprehension of his meaning. Some have supposed our LORD recommends, that by being generous to the poor, in the wise use of riches, which is the *mammon* of this world, that we should make to ourselves friends from those acts of mercy. But this would be like the Pharisees indeed, to seek God's favor by good deeds, and to bolster up the mind with pride, instead of lowering the soul in humility. CHRIST never preached a doctrine of this kind, but the reverse. Neither are the friends which Jesus exhorts his disciples to make, the poor whom they relieved by their bounty; for their good wishes go but a little way towards the soul's salvation; and they have no habitations, much less *everlasting* habitations, to receive their benefactors into, when they need them. I am free to confess, that no small difficulty lies in our way to enter into the full sense of our LORD's meaning; while I venture to believe, that the friends the LORD JESUS recommends his disciples to make, in order that they may be received, when they themselves fail, into everlasting habitations, cannot possibly mean that their wise use of riches will procure them. But amidst all the difficulty in explaining this passage, I conceive some light may be thrown upon it, from considering the drift of our LORD in the whole discourse.

It should be considered, that our LORD had been shewing how an unjust man, by worldly policy, contrived to get some men like himself to take him into their houses, when his LORD turned him out of his. Now (saith JESUS) as this man made himself friends of a worldly nature, do you seek to make to yourselves friends in grace. And as none but God can provide you with a perfect security of this kind, seek the LORD's friendship, detached *from* (for so the word may be rendered), that is, while you are in the midst of *the mammon of unrighteousness*; and from the body of sin and death you carry about with you, and from the remains of indwelling sin which is in you, and in all the world around you, that when ye fail, as that all things out of CHRIST must shortly fail, they may receive you; that is, God, in covenant in CHRIST, may receive you into everlasting habitations. If this sense be admitted, the doctrine is agreeable to the whole tenor of the Gospel. And then, from the same kind of reasoning, the proverbial expressions which follow in the succeeding verses, may be explained on the same principles.

14 ¶ And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

It was very natural to expect the hatred of the Pharisees would be called forth from our LORD's discourse. Pulling down to the ground the haughty pretensions of such men to divine favor, could not but

excite their bitterest displeasure. And, Reader! what is it now? Let a real child of God venture to call in question the apparent zeal of the present day, and whisper only his doubts in the same words as JESUS hath here used: that what is *highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God*, and it will be well if he escapes as JESUS then did, with the derision only and scorn of the self-righteous *Pharisee*.

16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from *her* husband, committeth adultery.

The last of those verses hath been very fully considered in the subject, Mark x. 1, &c. And the first of them in the doctrine, hath been also somewhat noticed, Matt. xi. 12. But on this subject I would take occasion in this place to add, that the pressing into the kingdom of God could never be meant by our LORD as intimating an *holy pressure*. That multitudes flocked to hear *John* preach, and so they did to hear CHRIST, is true; but this, for the most part, was mere curiosity, and, as JESUS told them, for *the loaves and fishes*. John vi. 26. The kingdom of heaven *suffering violence*, means more, a persecution from the world than from the haste which mere sermon followers run to hear them, or from the earnest petitions of truly-awakened souls, who seek acceptance in CHRIST. And our LORD evidently in this place, as well as in the parallel one of *Matthew*, meant to say, that while his sheep knew his voice, and followed him, and he gave to them eternal life, the great mass of the CHRIST-despising age he was going in and out among, only pressed upon him to hear, but not to regard. See Matt. xi. 16—26, and note.

19 ¶ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's

bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried :

23 And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom :

24 And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time, receivedst thy good things; and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot: neither can they pass to us that *would come* from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead.

We have here a most interesting relation, given by our Lord under the similitude of a parable, in a wonderful contrast between a rich man clothed in *Tyrian* purple, and a poor man as miserably wretched in respect to this world's good, as the possibility of the human state could admit. Yet, notwithstanding these outward circumstances, the poor man is shewn to have been a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom, while the rich man was found to have been a child of the devil, and an heir of hell. The circumstances of both are drawn by CHRIST in the most striking and finished manner; and the improve-

ments the LORD intended from the representation to the Church, are too plain to need a comment.

Every thing in the picture of the poor man but one feature corresponds to CHRIST himself; and were it not for that one striking particularity, we might be led to conclude that the LORD JESUS is the Lazarus of the parable. But that one wholly precludes such an application; for though the LORD JESUS was poor indeed, yet not a beggar: for had he been so, he could not have answered the law, which suffered no beggar in Israel. But in every other sense, the humbled and debased state of CHRIST was in correspondence to Lazarus. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.* His death, his ascension to glory, and the rejection of his name and Messiahship, brought on the awful judgments which followed. But on these points we need not enlarge in this parable.

The awful close to the rich man's luxury, and the cries uttered by him in hell, are strongly marked. And the total impossibility of any recovery from thence, is not only read here, but through all the word of GOD. There can be no change without grace in the heart; and where there is no grace, there is no salvation. See an equally awful account, Psm. xlix. 6—14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! in beholding the character of this unjust steward, let us learn to seek from GOD grace, that we may be found faithful. And let us, in putting the question to our own hearts, which he put to every one of his LORD's debtors, do the reverse of what he recommended, and instead of lessening our account, learn to discover that they far exceed our own views of them. Oh! thou blessed LORD! I owe thee more in nature, providence, and grace, than any calculation can number. So much so, O LORD! that I am insolvent for ever. But, LORD! let thy grace still exceed even my unworthiness. Oh! grant that I may be received into thine everlasting habitations!

Blessed JESUS! cause me to learn, in the history of this rich glutton, how short-lived all pamperings of the flesh are; and what an awful close terminates the career of all who live without GOD, and without CHRIST, in the world. And let me be content to be as *Lazarus*, poor, if need be, here below, if *rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom*. Be thou, dear LORD! my portion, and then all is well. Every state sanctified in CHRIST is, and must be, blessed. LORD! grant that I may exercise an holy jealousy in all; and by making thee what GOD the FATHER hath made thee, both *Alpha* and *Omega*; my LORD may be the first in all my desires, and the close of all my joys; for then in life and death, both here and hereafter, JESUS will be my everlasting portion.

CHAP. XVII.

CONTENTS.

*Some very blessed Discourses of CHRIST are contained in this Chapter.
The History of the Ten Lepers. Some of CHRIST's Prophecies.*

THEN said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come!

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

It was exceedingly to be wished that the carnal and ungodly part of mankind were to consider this. If they did, would they dare to do as they now too often do, to smite the Lord's little ones? But whether they will regard this counsel or not, let no child of God forget how highly Jesus prizeth the humblest and poorest of his people. *Whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* Zech. ii. 8.

3 ¶ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

There is somewhat very striking in this prayer of the Apostles, and the suddenness of it, and the occasion upon which they so expressed themselves, is also striking. It should seem that they were astonished at the infinite benignity the Lord Jesus had just expressed on the subject of forgiveness; and in the moment, as if longing to be always in the exercise of it, they begged for an increase of faith, by which alone they knew they might practise it. Reader! let us daily do the same; and ask our dear and compassionate Jesus for larger tokens of this precious faith. 2 Pet. i. 1; that on the view of the divine mercy of the Lord Jesus to our daily offences, we may find grace to exercise bowels of mercy to the infirmities of our brethren. Read that sweet Scripture by way of strengthening this lovely grace. Coloss. iii. 12, 13.

7 But which of you, having a servant plowing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go, and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

This is a beautiful illustration in the supposed case of a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, (which were among the lowest offices with the Jews. Isaiah lxi. 5.) to shew how utterly unprofitable, as it relates to the Lord, are the best services of the best men. And as this was particularly spoken to the Apostles, it should seem that Jesus had an eye to the ministers of his word and ordinances. Oh! how low, how very low before God, must every man lay, both ministers and people, who, taught of God the HOLY GHOST, have learnt their own nothingness, unworthiness, and short coming. Reader! depend upon it, if the blood of the Lamb was not sprinkled upon our most holy things, our very prayers would come up unholy before the Lord. Read that solemn Scripture, Exod. xxviii. 38. and behold there how the Great High Priest, under the law, typified CHRIST, our Almighty High Priest, under the Gospel: Oh! the blessedness of being *accepted in the Beloved*! Eph. i. 6.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Our LORD was now, for the last time, going to Jerusalem, for the blessed purpose of finishing his redemption-work, by his sacrifice and death. It is very probable, that these ten men had heard of JESUS's mercy to poor lepers, and therefore, in a body, presented themselves all at once before him. But though coming to him as they did, like lepers conscious of their uncleanness, they stood afar off. See Matt. viii. 1, &c. Levit. xiii. 46. If my Reader hath the Poor Man's Concordance by him, I would refer him to consult it, under the word *Master*, for a full apprehension of that name as especially applicable to JESUS. I beg the Reader to observe the method the LORD JESUS was pleased to adopt in the healing of these men. JESUS said unto them, *Go, shew yourselves unto the priests*. Now this was GOD's command in the Old Testament dispensation, by way of the priests ascertaining the reality of the disease itself. See Levit. xiii. 2, 3. We may suppose, therefore, that in the case of these ten men, the thing had been already done; for they were shut out, in consequence of the disease, from civil and religious communion. When, therefore, the LORD JESUS commanded them to go and shew themselves to the priests, this was in conformity to the precept when the leprosy was healed. See Levit. xiv. 2, 3; and as a thing already done. What a beautiful view doth this give us of CHRIST's power and GODHEAD? No wonder, therefore, that when, by faith, they all, with one consent, departed to go to the priest, they were healed as they went. Reader! you and I may gather instruction here. It is blessed to be found in the way and in the use of means which the LORD hath appointed. But it is blessed also, as we go, to watch and discover the sovereign power and goodness of the LORD without means.

The striking character of the one, which instantly returned to JESUS on the discovery of his cure, opposed to the nine, which, if they went as JESUS had commanded them to the priests, returned not to thank their benefactor, is full of instruction. It is evident that this Samaritan had a lively sense who CHRIST was, by the display of this miracle. None but God could heal the leprosy. This, in his instance, CHRIST had done: and consequently in this view, CHRIST was GOD. And as such, with a loud voice that all around might hear, he glorified him. And now no longer unclean, he did not stand afar off, but fell down on his face at the feet of JESUS. But the most remarkable feature to be noticed in this miracle, as it related to this man, is that the LORD JESUS said unto him, his faith had made him whole. How is this? The whole ten were healed by CHRIST: and was there then any thing *special* in this man's case? I would not

be understood as speaking decidedly upon the subject; but I am inclined to think that there was, and that those persons differed widely in their characters, and in the mercy received. They were all healed of the leprosy of the body; but this man, only of both leprosy of soul and body. And hence the different effects. When the *ten* felt their cure, nine of them had all they desired, all they asked for. But in this man, grace entered his soul, and healed a far deeper and more dreadful leprosy there; and, therefore, led by that awakening grace in the heart, he had for ever done with Jewish priests and legal sacrifices, and fled to CHRIST the author and finisher of his salvation. Reader! if my views be right, we see at once the effect of distinguishing grace. Nine lepers, or in nine thousand, if only healed in *body*, will rise from beds of sickness as they lay down, never discerning the hand of that LORD, whose name is JEHOVAH ROPHE: *I am the LORD that healeth thee.* Exod. xv. 26. But the poor sinner, who feels and knows the leprosy of the *soul*, no sooner finds that CHRIST hath made him whole, but falls at his feet with a loud voice of thankfulness. Oh! the mercy of mercies, JESUS CHRIST. He goes no more *to the law of a carnal commandment, but to JESUS, the High Priest, made after the power of an endless life.* Heb. vii. 16.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21 Neither shall they say, Lo, here; or lo, there: for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Every enquiry of those Pharisees was with an evil design. But the LORD hath taken occasion from them to raise instructions to his people. Reader! while the men of that generation were looking for a temporal kingdom, and carnal men like them of every generation, have no higher object in view! Oh! that it may be our mercy to understand our dear LORD's words. The kingdom of the LORD JESUS CHRIST is set up in the hearts of his redeemed. It is from the gift of GOD the FATHER, the finished salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the saving work of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Hence Paul speaks of it, Rom. xiv. 17, 18.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

23 And they shall say to you, See here, or see there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.

24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other

part under heaven ; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered in the ark ; and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot : they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded ;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all :

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away ; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

Our LORD took occasion, from this ill-designed question of the Pharisees, to instruct his people in respect to the day of visitation, partly, perhaps, with an eye to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and partly in relation to the last day. All shall be sudden and unexpected as the days of the flood, or as the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. I cannot help noticing what JESUS saith respecting the destruction of the cities of the plain ; that in the same day that Lot went out of *Sodom* it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. If the Reader will turn to the account of this awful event, as it is related by Moses, (Gen. xix. 24.) he will there observe, that it is said, that *the LORD rained from the LORD out of heaven* ; a strong expression, as if JEHOVAH the FATHER answered what that glorious person (which seems to have been CHRIST himself,) who was present to this destruction as soon as Lot had entered *Zoar*, declared ; and both concurred in the judgment. And let not the Reader overlook that such, JESUS saith, will be the final overthrow at the second coming

of CHRIST. Beautifully the LORD refers to the awful consequence of an hankering after any thing when the judgments of God are abroad, as in the instance of the wife of *Lot*. It is blessed to sit loose and detached to any thing, and to every thing here below, that when the angel of death comes, we may be ready to fly with him to our *Soar*, CHRIST JESUS!

34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? and he said unto them, Wheresoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

In these figures, the LORD very plainly and fully confirms his doctrine of distinguishing grace. And every thing in life as decidedly answers to our LORD's discourse. What a blessed account of it JESUS hath given! Matt. xi. 25, 26. And what a testimony the experience of God, in all ages, bears to it! 2 Timothy ii. 19. Reader! let not you or I put the unnecessary question, Where, LORD? For every where, and in all things, where the carcase of the ungodly is, destruction, like the eagle, will smell the scent afar off: and wheresoever JESUS is, thither will his people fly, *as doves to their windows*. Isaiah lx. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! thou blessed LORD JESUS! well is it said by thee, that offences will come. Yes! thou, dear LORD! art thyself, to every carnal, unawakened sinner, *a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence*. Thy humble birth, thy meek deportment, thy cross, thy despised followers, to those who looked for temporal prosperity, was indeed an offence that nothing but sovereign grace could overcome. Blessed be that distinguishing grace of my God bestowed upon my poor heart, that I am no longer offended in thee!

Oh! for grace to every sensible, awakened sinner, to come to JESUS under the leprosy of sin. Would to God, I would say, like the poor captive servant in *Syria*, that all such were with my LORD, the LORD God of the prophets, that is LORD over Israel, JESUS. He can heal all of their leprosy of sin. Blessed JESUS! make all thy people sensible of this, according to the covenant promise *in the day of thy power*.

My soul! seek not for CHRIST's kingdom, in the mere outward things of observation; but seek it in the power of grace within, in the LORD's empire in the heart. Seek it in the FATHER's testimony of his dear

SON; seek it in the complete, full, all-sufficient, and all-justifying righteousness, and blood shedding of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and seek it in the precious, blessed, regenerating, and renewing grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Here JESUS manifests his distinguishing love and mercy in the taking of one, and leaving the other; for while *many are called, few are chosen*.

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the Relation of the Importunate Widow. The Parable of the Pharisee and Publican. Children brought to CHRIST. Our LORD's Discourses; and the History of the Blind Man, near Jericho.

AND he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always *to pray*, and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

The scope of this beautiful parable is not to insist upon the necessity of prayer; for the LORD's people are supposed to be a praying people. Psm. xxvii. 8. No sooner doth grace at regeneration enter the heart, than the new-born soul breathes in prayer. *Behold, he prayeth!* is the first account the LORD himself gives at the conversion of *Paul*. Acts ix. 11. But it is the perseverance in prayer, the holy vehemency and importunity of a soul in prayer, which, like *Jacob*, will not leave the mercy-seat without a blessing. Gen. xxxii. 26. This is the great point, which the LORD JESUS so graciously teaches his redeemed and exercised ones, by the design of this parable. He who best knows how matters go on at the court of heaven, here instructs all his people how to hold on, and hold out, upon earth, until the needed mercy is obtained. *In due time we shall reap if we faint not.* Gal. vi. 9. Reader! do not overlook this great design of the parable. Neither forget who it is that designed it. He who is the Almighty Advocate at the throne, in whose hands all petitions are lodged, and from whose prevalency in his priestly office, blood-shedding and righteousness, all success must be obtained. It is JESUS, all-precious JESUS, that thus recommends; and, in that recommendation, gives grace to perform. This GOD-man directs his people to carry all their sorrows, exercises, trials, temptations, fears, and unbelief to him, at his pardon-office, and there wait. And he gives an instance, by the similitude of a parable, how sure they are to succeed.

The LORD first gives the outlines of character in an unjust judge. The portrait JESUS draws of him, is but in two features; but the LORD

hath so strongly marked them, that they convey the whole countenance, both of head and heart. *He feared not God, neither regarded man.* What an awful character in himself! and how unsuited for the office of a magistrate! It is true indeed, that every man by nature, and while remaining in a state of unregeneracy, hath not the fear of God before his eyes; but here is a monster of iniquity that sets God at defiance. Not content with living regardless of God, he prided himself in the contempt of God. He was arrived at that consummate degree of impudence as to boast of it; for he scrupled not to give his own character, in openly declaring, that *he feared not God, nor regarded man.* To this infamous man a poor defenceless widow was compelled to bring her cause. What hope could there be that one who made no conscience of his ways would listen to her petition? Can any that have thrown off the fear of God be well disposed towards man?

The parable goes on: *And there was a widow in that city* (saith JESUS), *and she came to him, saying, Avenge me of mine Adversary.* Reader! do attend to the several features of character in which JESUS hath drawn her picture; and if, with an eye to the Church; in the case of every individual of CHRIST's mystical body, you consider the subject (for very evidently it was in this light JESUS intended it), the matter will become more striking. It is CHRIST's poor, despised, oppressed followers, the LORD meant by this widow. Not indeed that, in the strictest sense of the word, the Church is a widow, for CHRIST, her husband, is not dead, for he ever liveth. But the Church is called a widow. Lament. i. 1. And while CHRIST is absent from her, she is considered as one in a widowed state. John xiv. 18. It is said that JESUS will come and bring home his wife to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Rev. xix. 9. Hence, therefore, during the present day of grace, the Church may be considered as in the city of an unjust judge; and surrounded with many adversaries, both from within and without; and continually longing to be delivered from their power. It is the case of all the LORD's tried ones.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man:

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

It is on this point the LORD particularly lays the stress of the whole parable. Here is an unjust judge, one who is regardless both of God and man; fears not the one, nor loves the other; and yet, from the unceasing importunity and clamorous demands of a poor woman, determines in himself that he will do as she desired. From hence the LORD JESUS draws his unanswerable conclusion of the efficacy of prayer in the saints of GOD. It is as if the LORD JESUS had said, See what perseverance will do. Here's an unjust, unfeeling, time-serving wretch, at length over-ruled, overawed, and actually compelled to do a violence to his own feelings. *I will* (saith he) *avenge her*: not to save her, but to ease myself.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you, That he will avenge them speedily, nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Now our LORD most blessedly makes application of the parable. *Hear* (saith CHRIST), *hear what the unjust judge saith*. As if JESUS had said, Hear, my poor afflicted redeemed ones, what an unfeeling judge saith, when overcome by the ceaseless and unremitting importunity of a poor widow, and take comfort and encouragement in all your approaches to the throne. After such an instance as this, never never despond. *And shall not God avenge his own elect?* There is an uncommon beauty and strength in the expression, *His own elect*. Not simply an elect, but God's elect; not only a chosen seed, but God's chosen, and which God delights to call his own. Not simply a people set apart, and set apart for God, but set apart by God himself. *His own elect*. I cannot say enough in endeavouring to point out to the people of God the blessedness, and the peculiarity of the expression. *His own elect*. They are his. And they are his choice, his elect. And they are so *before* all others, and in preference to all others. And the FATHER gave them to his dear SON, not only before all others, and in preference to all others, but as a choice manifestation of his love. In short, his own elect. Reader! pause over the blessed thought, for it is a very blessed thought! and learn, that amidst all the cavils and disputes of infidels, that God hath an elect, and which are specially and personally his own. And learn, at the same time, that though they are God's elect, yet are they as this poor widow was, much oppressed by the adversary; yea, they have many adversaries: and do not forget also, that as they are God's own, God cannot but regard them.

And (saith Jesus) *shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?* Shall this time-serving wretch, this unjust judge, be at length overcome to do, what he delighted not to do; and shall not God do that, which is his glory and his pleasure to do? Shall this poor widow prevail with an unjust judge, and shall not the married wife of Jesus prevail with a just Father? Shall a cruel unfeeling man be at length overcome, and shall not a merciful tender God be gracious? Is it possible to suppose, that she, who had no one to speak for her, and no interest in the mind of this earthly judge to aid her petition, should yet at length by importunity succeed; and shall not the poor of Jesus's family be successful who have CHRIST to speak for them, and have in the very bosom of God our FATHER an advocate in his own everlasting love, which in CHRIST must ensure their acceptance? *Yea*, saith JESUS, (thus putting a blessed positive emphasis upon it,) *I tell you, he will avenge them speedily*. But, Reader! what a humbling thought is it at

the close of the parable in the LORD's question, when JESUS saith; *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?* It is a kind of question which carrieth with it its own answer, as if he had said; No! he will not. For, notwithstanding all the covenant faithfulness and promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, who is there that lives up to the enjoyment of the whole by faith? Reader! what a reproach is it to the truly regenerated soul, that JEHOVAH's word and oath, with all CHRIST's precious salvation, should be so little rested upon by faith?

9 ¶ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, This man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Here is another beautiful parable of our LORD's, and the occasion for which he spake it is declared. I do not think it necessary as in the former, to enlarge upon the several features of it. Every circumstance in both the characters CHRIST hath drawn, is descriptive of the different ground for which they stood for seeking acceptance with GOD. And it should be observed, in order to give weight to the design of our LORD's teaching, that the *Pharisee* and *Publican* are as much living characters now, as then, in the days of our LORD. Every man is a *Pharisee* that is seeking acceptance with GOD either whole or in part, who prides himself upon his own good deeds, and prayers, and sacraments, and almsgiving; and hath recourse to CHRIST no further according to his will than to make up (if there should be any) his own deficiency. And every man may be called a *Publican*, in the sense of this parable, who from the teaching of GOD the SPIRIT hath been led to behold the *Adam*-nature in which he was born, and the condemnation in which he is involved, both by original, and by

actual transgression; and led by the HOLY GHOST to GOD in CHRIST, acknowledgeth himself unmeriting forgiveness, while in sorrow and contrition he seeks it. Justification is of GOD in CHRIST. And therefore the self-condemned, and not the self-righteous, find justification before GOD.

15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them : but when *his* disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

We have a parallel passage, Matt. xviii. 1, &c. to which I refer; and shall only in addition observe in this place, what an endearing and tender representation is given of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in such a beautiful and interesting trait of character, in thus folding in his divine arms little children. What an encouragement for believing parents to bring their offspring often before him!

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none *is* good, save one, *that is* God.

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

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful: he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

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

26 And they that heard *it*, said, Who then can be saved?

27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Both *Matthew* and *Mark* have recorded, and nearly in the same words, this interview which JESUS had with this ruler. Matt. xix. 16. Mark x. 17. I refer to the observations there offered upon it. Every incident in our Lord's ministry becomes interesting, but to notice the whole would lead into endless discourses. Truly it must be said, and without a figure concerning the person and work of the Lord JESUS, *there is no end of his greatness.*

31 ¶ Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully intreated, and spitted on:

33 And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again.

34 And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

I request the Reader to remark with me how graciously the Lord JESUS, by little and little, as they were able to bear it, prepared the minds of his disciples for the great events which were now coming on, and very shortly to be accomplished at *Jerusalem*. The Passover, which was now at hand, the Lord JESUS well knew would be his last.

And I beg the Reader to observe yet further, how sweetly Jesus directed their minds to the study of those scriptures which referred to him on the subject, that when the great events foretold should be accomplished, they might the better be enabled to compare the prediction with the event. And let me add, that the Reader will do well to be occupied in the same. For this purpose, let him consult those scriptures to which in the prophets we may suppose CHRIST here referred, Isaiah liii. Psms. ii. xxii. and lxix. Isaiah l. Dan. ix. 24, 25, 26. Zech. xi. 12, 13. These holy records will be truly blessed, when opened to us by GOD the HOLY GHOST; if we take them with us in our hands, and feel their power in our hearts, when by and by we come on to that part of *Luke's Gospel*, where we follow the LORD JESUS CHRIST from the garden to the hall of Pilate, until we take our stand at the foot of the cross. Oh! the preciousness of entering into an heartfelt participation of those momentous truths, when with the eye of faith we behold the LORD JESUS as *Paul* describes him, *witnessing before Pontius Pilate a good confession.* 1 Tim. vi. 13.

35 And it came to pass, that, as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant?

37 And they told him, That Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

40 And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him,

41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? and he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.

The history of this miracle hath been so largely dwelt upon, in the review taken of it in *Mark's* Gospel, x. 46. that I need only refer the Reader to it in that place.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us both beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST, for his sweet and gracious office it is, to lead to the mercy-seat, to endite our prayers when there, and to give us every thing suited to that sacred place; that He will of his rich mercy so help us in our infirmities, that we may be enabled to do as JESUS here commands, *always pray and not faint*. And oh! what unanswerable motives the LORD hath here furnished us with, in beholding a cruel, time-serving, unfeeling judge, at length prevailed upon to give way to a poor widow's unceasing importunity; when we call to mind that the LORD to whom we go in CHRIST, is our righteous, gracious, compassionate tender FATHER; and who himself hath expressly said: *It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear!* Oh! for faith, to believe the record GOD hath given of his dear SON!

LORD hide pride from our eyes, that no child of thine may be tintured with pride, like this haughty blinded *Pharisee*; but give to all thy redeemed grace to be humbled like this poor *Publican*, that with self-contrition as his, we may each smite upon his breast as he did, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner!*

And oh! for the continual teachings and leadings of the HOLY GHOST, that as babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, we may come to JESUS; and never be sorrowful, as the young man rich in this world was, when called upon to leave all for CHRIST. Do thou, blessed LORD! do by us as by the blind man near *Jericho*, put a cry on our heart, and the more the ungodly rebuke for following JESUS, the more may our souls cry aloud for him, until JESUS heareth and answereth prayer, opens all the blinded senses of our spiritual faculties, and gives us grace to follow him in the regeneration; that we may glorify the LORD upon earth, and praise him to all eternity in heaven.

CHAP. XIX.

CONTENTS.

Of Zaccheus the Publican. The Parable of the Talents. JESUS entereth Jerusalem, and goeth immediately to the Temple.

AND *Jesus* entered and passed through *Jericho*:

I pause over this verse, short as it is, to remark how much in point of doctrine is contained in it. JESUS entered into *Jericho*, and passed through it. We read of nothing done in it by the LORD in a way of grace. Were there none of the LORD's family here? Time was when a precious jewel of CHRIST's crown was found in it. But there is nothing said now! Is not this loudly preaching distinguishing grace? I beg the Reader to turn to those scriptures, *Joshua* ii. and vi. chapters. *1 Kings* xvi. 34. *Heb.* xi. 31.

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jesus, who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

The key to open this gracious history is in the close of it. Salvation coming to the house of *Zaccheus* is explained, when the Lord saith, *Forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham*. Gal. iii. 29. Numberless are the beauties in this short memoir of *Zaccheus*. But in a *Poor Man's Commentary*, I must all along study shortness. We are told that his name was *Zacchai*; but whether a Jew, or Gentile, is not said. It was a name well known among the Jews, and as such, he might have been by nature of the seed of *Abraham*. But whether this, or not, certain it is by the event of CHRIST's calling him to salvation, that he was according to grace a *child of promise*. Gal. iv. 28. But we are told that he was a publican, and chief of the order. And how odious this office of a tax-gatherer was, may easily be inferred from what our LORD himself said concerning such. For when JESUS had occasion to remark the character of a man more

than ordinarily wicked, he said, *let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.* Matt. xviii. 17. Such was the man as is here represented, whom CHRIST distinguished among a great multitude, and called by sovereign grace *from darkness to light; and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God!*

I must not stay to go over every particular, in the relation of this wonderful display of grace. A few only of the more striking circumstances I would beg the Reader to attend to. *Zaccheus*, we are told, sought to see Jesus, who he was. And those who read the history slightly, may suppose that this was mere curiosity. Perhaps, indeed, *Zaccheus* himself thought no other. But *Zaccheus* was not first in the intention of this business. It was Jesus sought to see *Zaccheus*, before that *Zaccheus* thought of seeing him; yea, directed his steps through *Jericho*, purposely to meet *Zaccheus*. And, as this was the day appointed from all eternity for this interview between CHRIST and this man, all the steps leading to the accomplishment of it were marked, over-ruled, and made to minister to this one great end. Oh! the preciousness of preventing grace! What an huge volume may be read by an enlightened eye, in every man's life, when once the day-light of regeneration hath opened the spiritual sight, to see the instances exemplified in his own history. To behold, yea, and to trace them unfolded and explained by God the HOLY GHOST, when as *Jude* expresses it, we see ourselves *sanctified by God the FATHER, preserved in Jesus CHRIST, and called*, Jude 1. Reader! do you know any thing of these unspeakable mercies in your own history? Can you look back and see how *preserving grace in Jesus CHRIST* kept you until *called to Jesus CHRIST*; and all this from the *sanctification of God the FATHER* in his eternal purpose concerning you! Ephes. i. 4.

I beg the Reader to observe with me, some at least of the predisposing causes leading to this meeting of the SAVIOR with the sinner. The poor man is prompted to go to the place where Jesus was to pass. Little of stature, and a great throng around CHRIST, he is led to climb a tree, that he might have a full view of him. The Son of God comes there, beholds *Zaccheus*, who no doubt, though he went to see CHRIST, never once conceived that CHRIST would see him. The LORD calls to him, calls him by name, bids him come down, invites himself to his house, tells him that he must to-day abide with him; and *Zaccheus* finds his heart instantly disposed to come down from the tree, and to receive CHRIST joyfully.

Now, while the Reader makes every due observation on this wonderful transaction, as it relates personally to *Zaccheus*, I would have him, methinks, (and every poor sinner like him and myself,) consider also, what a blessed subject is folded up in it, for the spiritual improvement of all the LORD's family; and for whose comfort, encouragement, and instruction, we may fairly conclude God the HOLY GHOST caused it to be recorded.

When poor sinners, like this publican, feel a desire to see CHRIST, in his word, in his ordinances, and in the various means the LORD hath appointed, as Jesus passeth by, though such are unconscious that very often it is the LORD working upon their minds to awaken desire, and bring about an interview; yet how blessed is it in the after stages, from certain discoveries, which at the time did not strike the mind, to perceive, that it was the LORD's predisposing grace, which led to

all. And though such are little in knowledge, little in the apprehension of their sins, and a want of CHRIST, as this man was little in stature; yet neither the pressure of the world, the pressure of time, or the pressure of a multitude, shall keep back from CHRIST, when the hour is come for bringing souls to the presence of CHRIST, however before unknown by them, or unregarded. It is truly blessed to be brought into acquaintance with those things, after we are brought into acquaintance with the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

But what I would yet more particularly entreat the Reader to regard, in this striking history of the conversion of the publican, is, the grace of JESUS manifested to him. Do not lose sight of this. JESUS, from everlasting, had his eye upon this man. The Church in every individual was chosen in CHRIST. Ephes. i. 4. Their names written in the Book of Life. Rev. xiii. 8. Luke x. 20. All CHRIST's sheep were given to him by the FATHER. John x. 27—29. And every one of them must again pass under the hand of him that telleth them. Jerem. xxxiii. 13. Now then the hour was come for the recovery of this poor Publican from the *Adam*-nature transgression in which he was born, and in which he was involved. And JESUS, who came upon earth to seek and save that which was lost, disposeth every plan leading to the accomplishment of his purpose, as might best minister to his own glory and *Zaccheus's* welfare. CHRIST prompts the heart of *Zaccheus*, perhaps he knew not why, (or if a sense of sin had been previously awakened by grace in his heart, this leads him) to an earnest desire of seeing JESUS. The poor man hastens to the place where JESUS was that day to pass. And the LORD that sent him there, goes there to meet him. But this transaction must not be private. Many shall know it, and behold the whole. The thing shall be recorded, that future generations of the Church may be told it, and rejoice in it also. *Zaccheus* therefore climbs a tree. Probably, he concluded that he should be not seen by any one. But this afforded the very means of making the whole more public. When JESUS arrived to the spot, he looked up, saw *Zaccheus*, knew him as his FATHER's gift, called him by name, told him to come down, and that hastily; invited himself to his house, from the necessity of the case, and inclined the heart of this publican sinner to an instant acceptance of his Almighty Guest, who came down and received him joyfully.

And, Reader! such is the case in every instance of CHRIST's redeemed! JESUS, from everlasting, hath arranged every step for the accomplishment of this great end, when the hour is come for calling home his own to the knowledge and enjoyment of his grace. The time *when*, the place *where*, the manner *how*, all these and every other are so ordered and disposed, that not one thing can fail. Oh! what a refreshing consideration it ought to be to the Church of God. During the whole days and years of their unregeneracy, the eye of JESUS is unceasingly watching over them. And when the love-calls of his HOLY SPIRIT go forth, like *Zaccheus*, if lifted up with Pharisaical pride, self-righteousness, ambition, worldly pursuits, and the numberless other obstructions, which before kept them from CHRIST; down they come, and lay low at JESUS's feet; and then take the SAVIOR home to their house, and to their heart, and receive him joyfully. Reader! are you personally acquainted with this soul-work? Do you know any thing of the love-calls of JESUS? It is impossible

not to know them, if you have ever heard them. The soul that hears the voice of JESUS, though he never heard it before, will know it among ten thousand; yea, the sweet sound will never be forgotten by him. When JESUS first speaks to a sinner, which was before dead in trespasses and sins, it is a *loud* voice. John v. 25. a *powerful* voice, Psalm xxix. 3—11. a *still small* voice, 1 Kings xix. 9—14. a *sweet, loving, winning* voice, Song v. 2. and it is a *personal* voice, Prov. xxii. 19. It will be well for the Reader, if his heart find a correspondence to these scriptures.

The joyful reception *Zaccheus* gave to the SAVIOR; the murmurs of the Scribes and Pharisees; the open confession of the Publican, with his wish to make a fourfold restitution to any he had injured; and the declaration of JESUS in respect to the object for which he came into the world; these are all so many beautiful additions in the history, if the limits I must observe would allow me to enlarge. But I forbear. The LORD bless the whole by his grace, and cause the example shewn in *Zaccheus*, to have the suited effect upon all his people.

11 ¶ And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy, till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto them, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here* is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin :

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow :

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury ?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given ; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

In this parable we have an illustration in part of CHRIST'S method of government in his kingdom. I take it for granted, that without a comment the Reader will immediately understand CHRIST himself is the nobleman here represented. Having finished redemption-work, he is returned to glory ; and in the appointed season will come to judgment. Acts iii. 21. John v. 25—29. Acts x. 42.

But it is not so clear who is meant by the *Ten Servants*, which are here appointed to occupy till CHRIST shall come. Not the Apostles I should think ; for they were *twelve* in number. And, even if it be supposed that *Judas* is the *one* who is represented as the slothful and unprofitable servant, in this case the remainder would be *eleven*, and not twelve. Neither do I conceive, as some have thought, that the servants here spoken of, mean the Ministers of the Word and Ord-

nances; for although, as in the instance of *Judas*, the call to the office doth not imply a call by grace; yet the occupying and improving the trust must carry with it the blessing of God qualifying; and the reward given, in the different degrees to the faithful servants, doth not bear correspondence to the scripture account of the last day. Neither doth it seem that by the *ten servants* is meant the world at large. For though, no doubt, the whole creation may be said in this sense to minister to the LORD's service; yet here appears to be some special and personal acts of servitude implied in their labors.

If I venture to give my views of our LORD's meaning, I pray that it may be considered I rather propose them by way of enquiry, than in a way of decision. But I am inclined to think, by the *ten servants* (in which I conclude our LORD hath only put a certain number for an indefinite,) are intended by the LORD JESUS to distinguish his redeemed from the *Adam*-nature out of which he hath brought them; and those of the *Adam*-nature who stand upon their own bottom. And I am inclined to this opinion, because though *ten* servants are mentioned, we hear only of *two* classes, though *three* persons are called when the LORD cometh to reckon with them. And those two classes plainly mean the different states of *nature* and *grace*.

To each servant was given a pound; by which is meant the equality of the outward ministry of the word. All brought under the sound of the Gospel may be said, in the language of the parable, to have the same charge, *Occupy till I come*. By the improvement, the different situations are marked between those, who through grace, from an union with CHRIST, increased their riches; and the man who void of grace, stood upon his own creature bottom, and consequently made no advance. The faithful servants represent those, who in the use of the blessed means afforded them, rejoice in the prospect of their LORD's coming, and, through grace, are found waiting in hope of eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our LORD. The unprofitable servant hath his pound no less, in hearing the Gospel of salvation; but is averse to the method of God's free grace in CHRIST, and rejects the counsel of God against his own soul. Both these characters differ from the world at large, in that they are called by the Gospel to occupation; and as such are brought into a state of service. The rejection of the *one*, becomes the cause of just condemnation; while the acceptance of the *other* tends to magnify the riches of free grace; and *both* illustrate the equity of the divine will. Had the posterity of *Adam* continued in the state of uncorrupt nature in which *Adam* was formed; a state of happiness suited to that state would have followed, as *Adam* before his fall enjoyed. But, when by that fall transgression entered into the world, it was a merciful dispensation to have the trust of that occupation, as the parable calls it, of the means of grace; and the rejection of it, which the man who kept the pound laid up in a napkin represents, justly induceth the whole condemnation which followeth. Reader! what a mercy is it to discover our grace-union with CHRIST, which brings up after it an interest and communion in all that belongs to CHRIST! The close of the parable in CHRIST's own words is full to this point. *To every one that hath*, that is, that hath union with CHRIST, shall be given. JESUS hath engaged for all his redeemed. Every thing which is in CHRIST, as the head of his body the Church, is for them. In Him all is secured. But the *seeming* possessor, he

who hath all the advantages of the outward means of grace, and yet, from no union with CHRIST, hath in reality no grace; all those outward privileges will shortly cease and be taken away! And CHRIST's destruction of all such will follow.

I shall only detain the Reader with just remarking, that in the margin of our old Bibles, (and our *old* Bibles, like old gold, are precious things,) the word *pound* is said to be *twelve ounces and half*, which at five shillings an ounce of our money, would be *three pounds twelve shillings and six-pence*. I believe that this is tolerably correct. The word *Mina*, (or more properly *MaNeH*) being of that value. But if it was a gold coin, (and there is nothing said that it was not,) the pound in that case would be an hundred drachms, which was worth near *eighty pounds*, and in silver near *eight pounds*. But our dear LORD in worldly circumstances was poor, and in his days and his company, as one of them said, and all might have said the same, *silver and gold have I none*, Acts iii. 6. it is more than probable Jesus alluded to the common *Maneh*, which was neither gold nor silver, but ordinary coin, and as the margin of our Bible renders it, *three pounds twelve and six-pence*!

28 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage, and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount of Olives*, he sent two of his disciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you*: in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him *hither*.

31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36 And as they went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at

the ascent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

The entrance of the LORD JESUS into Jerusalem, is recorded by all the Evangelists, as if in confirmation of the prophecies. Isaiah lxii. 11. Zech. ix. 9. Some short observations were made on it in Matthew xxi. and Mark xi. but, from the importance of the thing itself, it will be proper in addition to what hath been there brought before the Reader, yet further to remark some of the more prominent features attending it. And, *first*, I do not think it unlikely that God the HOLY GHOST had an eye both to CHRIST's triumphs, and CHRIST's humiliations, at those memorable spots, *Bethphage*, and the Mount of *Olives*; when *David*, who was an illustrious type of the LORD JESUS, went there bare-footed, 2 Sam. xv. 30. The humiliations of the LORD JESUS were the highest of his glories. And I would in the *next* place, beg the Reader to remark with me, how the LORD JESUS, in preparing for his triumphal entrance into the holy city, gave evidences of his divine nature, in telling the disciples where they should find the colt, and overruling the mind of the owners to lend the beast to CHRIST. And what I would yet more particularly desire the Reader to remark with me, are the circumstances which attended our LORD's entry into *Jerusalem*. What but God working upon the human mind, could in one and the same moment overrule so great a multitude, to make the air ring with their *Hosannas*; and literally to call Him what their scriptures of the Prophets had foretold of the *Messiah*, in the very hour the Scribes and Pharisees were ripening their schemes to destroy him? And, what but the same Almighty grace, acting to the same purpose, could have caused the mouths of unconscious children, in spite of their Jewish parents, to proclaim a truth their tender years could not understand. According to my view of this subject, yea, to every man's view of the subject, who will look at it as it really is, it forms one of the most palpable and decided testimonies, as far as outward evidence can go, to the glories of CHRIST's person; and is such, as our LORD himself most blessedly observed upon it, so full in point, as if resisted, became enough to make the stones exclaim.

41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

42 Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

This view of the LORD JESUS is most lovely and endearing. We behold him here touched with the feelings of our nature, dropping tears over the beloved city, in contemplating her approaching ruin. And to be sure nothing can endear CHRIST so tenderly to the heart, as when we behold him manifesting *the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. It is blessed to know him, blessed to go to him, blessed to pour out our hearts before him, when the soul is taught by GOD the HOLY GHOST, how much JESUS enters into the concerns of his people, and, from his fellow-feeling, makes their concerns his own. This is to know him as GOD, to know him as Man, and to draw nigh to him in the union of both.

But who should have thought that this very character of JESUS, of GOD, and Man, in one person, which renders him so dear to his faithful, could have prompted his enemies therefrom to call his GOD-HEAD in question? Who would have believed it possible, had not matter of fact proved it, that the tears which JESUS shed over Jerusalem, when he contemplated her sure ruin as *a city*, should have been mis-construed, as though CHRIST lamented over any of *his people* there, as if they had outlived the day of grace, to whom in numberless instances, (as witness the Jerusalem sinners converted at the day of *Pentecost*;) the day of grace was not then arrived?

And yet such is the blindness and perversity of men, untaught of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that by putting a wrong construction on the words and actions of CHRIST, they make that lamentation of JESUS over a beautiful and beloved city, given up to destruction, in a *temporal* way, as if JESUS wept over the people concerning a *spiritual* ruin; and render the words of CHRIST as if referring to the *everlasting* welfare of the people, which only could be meant to the *present* desolation of the city. *If thou hadst known*, (saith the LORD,) *even thou*, (the bloody city of Jerusalem, which hath been the slaughter-house of all the Prophets,) (see chapter xiii. 31, 32, 33. and also Matt. xxiii. 34 to the end,) *the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round,*

and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Now, let any man read these words of the LORD JESUS, and say, whether these things do not wholly relate to *Jerusalem* as a city, as a nation given up to ruin. And wherefore? But because she knew not, *nationally* considered, the time of her visitation. The Prophets with one voice had foretold of CHRIST: CHRIST himself had come in conformity to the whole tenor of prophecy: the nation, nationally considered, had rejected the LORD of Life and Glory; killed the Prophets, and JESUS knew would shortly embrue their hands in his blood. The time of visitation as a city therefore is now over; the rulers as such are given up to an incurable blindness. Had the nation received CHRIST, as CHRIST, though only in an *outward* profession, for no more was, or could have been expected from them; then, as a nation, they would still have remained. JESUS saw this rejection, deplored the awful consequence, and wept over the city, in beholding the whole, in consequence thereof, as given up to destruction. This is the plain and evident meaning of the passage.

But what hath this to do with individuals, in relation to their *everlasting salvation*? Who would from hence draw a conclusion, that an individual of the persons given to CHRIST by the Father, may outlive the day of grace, and the things which might at one season have ministered to his peace, at another be for ever hid from his eyes? What hath the peace of a nation, as a nation, to do with the peace of God? Is it not notorious, that *five thousand* of those Jerusalem-sinners, who joined the rabble and the multitude of the people in crucifying CHRIST, were pricked to the heart on the day of Pentecost, were baptised and sanctified by the HOLY GHOST? And yet these were among the persons then in Jerusalem, when our LORD wept over it, and expressed himself in those memorable words. A positive proof that they were not meant in the general destruction. So very plain and palpable is the fact, that CHRIST's apostrophe referred wholly to the *city*, and not to the *people*. JESUS had many of His there, at the moment when he thus expressed himself; and who, though they were then insensible of the LORD, yet when the HOLY GHOST, according to CHRIST's most sure promise, at the day of Pentecost came upon them, were converted and saved.

Reader! I have been the more particular in my view of this passage, because it hath been, and still is, and will be, in the apprehension of unenlightened free-will men, a favorite portion to bring forward, in justification as they think, to shew that men may outlive the day of grace; but with which those blessed words of our LORD hath nothing to do. And it would be well with such men, whether preachers or hearers, to attend to what our LORD saith in another place on the same subject; and which, if rightly considered, would shew them that such a gracious blessed provision is made for all the LORD's redeemed ones, that the day of grace can never end with them, until grace hath brought them home, and is consummated in glory. *All that the FATHER giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* John vi. 37.

45 ¶ And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 And he taught daily in the temple, but the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

I refer the Reader for my observations on those verses to the similar passage, Matt. xxi. 12—14.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED LORD JESUS! do I behold thee, mine honored LORD, entering and passing through *Jericho*, the cursed city? Yes! I do. And is it, my soul, to be wondered at, when I know that that HOLY LORD, who knew no sin, was yet content to be made both sin and a curse, that his redeemed might be made the righteousness of God in Him? And was there a poor *Zaccheus* near *Jericho*, one of CHRIST's, a son of *Abraham*, that JESUS went purposely to seek? And will not JESUS still seek his own, wherever they are scattered, in the present cloudy and dark day? Oh! yes! JESUS will call them down from every lofty imagination, or raise them up from every fallen state; for *the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost*.

Almighty King! thou art indeed a nobleman gone to receive to thyself a kingdom, and to return LORD! give me grace to occupy till thou shalt come. The truest occupation, my honored LORD, is to live on thee, and to be everlastingly receiving of thy fulness, and grace for grace. And when my LORD shall come, shall I not, as those babes of Israel, hail thee with Hosannas; yea, with shouts and acclamations of praise? *Blessed, for ever blessed be He that cometh in the name of the LORD.*

And, oh! thou tender compassionate LORD! May my soul often call to remembrance thy tears over Jerusalem. JESUS wept! Oh! the largeness of mercies in the heart of the God-Man CHRIST JESUS. What shall ever keep my soul from going to Him, who knoweth my frame by his own; and whose mercies are the mercies of both God and man in one. Oh! the privilege of a throne of grace! Oh! the blessedness of such an High Priest!

CHAP. XX.

CONTENTS.

The Chief Priests and the Scribes demand of CHRIST his Authority for his Ministry. The LORD puts them to silence. He adds a Parable. In answer to a Sadducee, JESUS discourseth on the Resurrection.

AND it came to pass, *that*, on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon *him*, with the elders,

2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

As we are now drawing nigh the solemn scenes of CHRIST's sufferings and death, the Evangelist relates to the Church the increasing opposition made by the sworn foes to CHRIST, against his person and doctrine. This chapter opens with telling us, that now the chief priests and scribes, with the elders, came upon him, in a collected body, to attack him. Hitherto they had smothered their base designs under cover, as if they would question him for information; but now their plan for his destruction is nearly ripened, they throw off all courtesy, and imperatively demand his authority, both for his miracles and doctrines. Reader! do not overlook the folly as well as the wickedness of the question. Miracles spake for themselves. None but God could do the work which Jesus did. So *Nicodemus* wisely judged. John iii. 2. And every man of common sense must judge the same.

3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

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

6 But, and if we say, Of men: all the people will stone us; for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, That they could not tell whence *it was*.

8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

I should not detain the Reader over these verses, for they are too plain to need a comment, were it not that I wish to remark to him, how very suited the LORD's answer was to the menacing question of those designing men. How graciously the LORD teacheth his people by his lovely example, to avoid the captious conduct of the ungodly. Men of the same principles as those Scribes and their companions, are in every generation. And as they are all alike enemies to the pure truths of the Gospel, the faithful cannot be too earnest in seeking grace, to avoid all unnecessary conversation, which *minister questions rather than godly edifying.* 1 Tim. 1. 4.

9 ¶ Then began he to speak to the people this parable; a certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at the season, he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty.

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast *him* out.

13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence *him* when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be our's.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it*, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 ¶ And the chief priests, and the scribes, the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

This parable of the LORD JESUS, though addressed to the people, the Chief Priests and Scribes perfectly well understood was meant for them. They were the husbandmen our LORD had in view, among whom the Church of God, as a beautiful vineyard had been long planted, even from the days when the Church was brought out of Egypt; but in vain, from them as a nation had fruit been sought for. Reader! do not from hence, however, suppose that the real Church of the LORD was unproductive to GOD's glory, during all this period. For even in the worst of times, when the prophet *Elijah* thought himself alone, as the servant of the LORD; there were *seven thousand in Israel*, which grace had reserved from the general corruption: 1 Kings xix. 14—18. And in all ages as *Isaiah* remarked in his days, and *Paul* in his, *there is a remnant according to the election of grace*. *Isaiah* x. 22. *Rom.* xi. 5. But JESUS is here describing under the similitude of a Parable, the *professing Church* of Israel, nationally considered, of which those Priests and Scribes were the supposed Husbandmen, under GOD the rightful owner. And in this sense what a pointed parable it was! And how justly true, in the destruction of the many faithful servants of the LORD, which in the several ages had been sent to them. And though the great and concluding instance of the whole, in the killing the SON was not in the moment CHRIST was then speaking, actually accomplished; yet intentionally it was done, and that by some of the very persons, in whose hearing JESUS delivered the parable. CHRIST had the whole process in view, which he knew would soon be accomplished; and therefore prophetically describes the thing as really fulfilled. I beg the Reader to remark, what an effect for the moment, the relation had upon their guilty minds. For when JESUS said, the Lord of the vineyard will come and destroy those husbandmen, and give his vineyard to others; they cried out under the impression of indignation against themselves, *God forbid!* Yes! Reader, there are moments in the lives of the ungodly, in which conscience will do her office, and compel the sinner to give sentence against himself. And I beg the Reader yet further to remark, how very sweetly JESUS is described as beholding them, and calling their attention to a well known scripture in confirmation of what he had said. *Psm.* cxviii. 22. By which the LORD led them again to their studies, for their further conviction of the truth. Oh! what aggravated condemnation to men, that with the word of GOD in their hands, are enemies to GOD's CHRIST in their hearts! Our LORD's observation respecting himself as a stone, in men's falling upon it and being broken, or the stone falling upon them and grinding them to powder, is very striking. To fall upon CHRIST, is when

JESUS becomes *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*, 1 Pet. ii. 8. When the carnal heart takes offence at CHRIST and his salvation, in setting up their own righteousness in whole or in part, this is to fall *on* CHRIST, and not to build upon CHRIST. And very awful is the condition of both, in rejecting the LORD of Life and Glory. Precious LORD JESUS! I would say, be it my portion, that blessedness, thou hast pronounced to him, *who is not offended in thee!* Matt. xi. 6.

20 And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men; that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest, and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of *any*, but teachest the way of God truly :

22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cesar, or no?

23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

24 Shew me a penny, Whose image and superscription hath it? they answered and said, Cesar's.

25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cesar the things which be Cesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

I beg the Reader to observe the eagerness with which those awful characters followed up their pursuit, in hunting after the life of JESUS. The Evangelist saith, that it was *the same hour*. Like the malice of the men, which in after days sought to destroy *Paul*, who vowed neither *to eat or drink, till they had killed him*. Acts xxiii. 12. But let not the Reader overlook in every minute circumstance which attended the death of the LORD JESUS, the hand of JEHOVAH in all. This is a grand part in the whole transaction. Isaiah liii. 10. John xix. 10, 11. Acts ii. 23. iv. 27, 28. The attempt of those men in the instance here mentioned, was with a view to bring an accusation against him, to the Roman government. The nation of the Jews at that time, was under bondage to this power. And the whole body of the people were looking forward to the coming of the *Messiah*, to deliver them from it. Nothing therefore could exceed the art of those men. They therefore now send spies, which should address JESUS

very courteously; *Rabbi!* (say they,) *we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God in truth.* Thus in flattering words, they covered over their evil design. Either way, by CHRIST's answer, they made sure to entangle him. For if he confessed the authority of the *Roman* government, they concluded he would lose his popularity among those who considered him as the *Messiah*. And if he denied the *Roman* power of tribute, they would have hurried him away to *Pontius Pilate* the governor. Precious JESUS! how truly wert thou all along manifested to be *the hind of the morning*, when, according to thine own language, *many bulls compassed thee, and strong bulls of Bashan beset thee round!* Psm. xxii. title, and 12th verse.

27 ¶ Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

28 Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died without children,

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died.

32 Last of all the woman died also.

33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

34 And Jesus answering, said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the

God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto him.

39 Then certain of the scribes answering, said, Master, thou hast well said.

40 And after that, they durst not ask him any question at all.

The error of the *Sadducees* being founded in the first principles of doctrine, that, with the termination of the present state, man falleth into his original nothing, could not but bring after it, like so many links in the chain, error in all the after consequences. Their views being wholly carnal, they considered that CHRIST would be greatly puzzled on the supposition of a resurrection; how a woman, which in this life had been the wife of seven men, could be disposed of in another. This childish notion, however, hath not been confined to the age of the *Sadducees*, for some calling themselves *Rational* Christians, have in their light philosophical moments ventured to call in question doctrines of an higher nature; respecting the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead, and his return to heaven the same identical body as he lived on earth. But what is there the human mind, untaught of God, is not capable of setting up in opposition to the revealed truths of the Gospel? But leaving men of such principles, as well as the *Sadducees* of old; I beg the Reader to observe with me, how sweetly the LORD JESUS took occasion from their ignorance, to raise a subject of the highest improvement to all his people. For what can be more blessed than CHRIST's own declaration, that *the children of God*, namely, the redeemed in the covenant, are *the children of the resurrection*. For by virtue of their union with CHRIST, they are included in all that is communicable from CHRIST: He the head, and they the members, of his body. Hence their resurrection is not the simple effect of sovereign and Almighty power, for thus all the dead shall arise; but the children of the resurrection being children of God in covenant, will arise from their oneness and union with CHRIST. To this purport speaks God the HOLY GHOST, by the Apostle. Rom. viii. II. *If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up CHRIST from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* CHRIST is the efficient cause. His blessed Spirit secures the resurrection of their bodies. He saith himself by the spirit of prophecy, when the LORD is promising the Mediator this covenant blessing: *Thy dead men, saith God, shall live. Together (saith He) with my dead body shall they arise.* Isaiah xxvi. 19. So that it is from the union with the LORD, as the members with the head; the resurrection of his people is effected. *Thy dew (saith he) is as the dew of herbs*, which after a winter-like death, gives a warmth like the dew of the morning, and *the earth will give up CHRIST's dead ones.* And as it was the Spirit of CHRIST which first quickened the souls of his redeemed from the death of sin, so is it the same Spirit, from

their union with him, which reanimates their bodies at the resurrection. Oh! the preciousness of a oneness with CHRIST! Reader! what a miserable hope is the doctrine of the *Sadducees*, and the philosophical creed of the *rational* christian, as he affects to call himself, compared to this!

41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?

42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

45 Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts:

47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

Our LORD, having now for ever driven from the field of disputation, the whole body of Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, takes occasion to lead to a subject highly interesting, that he might not only instruct his Church in that great doctrine of his double nature, God and Man, in One Person; but at the same time, pass his farewell sentence of condemnation upon the Scribes of that day, and the Pharisees, and self-righteous of every day, in all future generations; JESUS therefore puts forth a question respecting the relationship between *David* king of Israel and the Messiah, which was foretold as *David's* SON after the flesh. He takes for granted, that none among them had any question, as to the coming of CHRIST; but he questions, if they knew in what sense it was that he was *David's* SON. They were struck dumb at the question; and from not being taught of God, were unable to answer it. But, Reader! how truly blessed is our privilege, when taught of God. You and I perfectly know, and are assured, from that infallible teacher, that CHRIST is both the *root* and the *offspring* of *David*. For as GOD, *One with the FATHER over all GOD blessed for ever*; he is, and must be GOD: *David's root*, and the *maker* of all things. And as man he is the *offspring*, which as a *branch*, was promised to grow out of his roots: Isaiah xi. 1. Precious JESUS! hadst thou not been *both*, what would have become of me? LORD I hail thee, as the LORD my righteousness! Reader! do not hastily turn away from the solemn sentence CHRIST pronounceth on the

Scribes of old. Awful as the case of all sinners must be, who live and die in their sins; yet of all the tremendous judgments pronounced on the Christless, you see, by CHRIST's own words, the greater damnation will be on those who from self-righteousness, lessen in their esteem the infinitely precious value of CHRIST's blood and salvation; as if the necessity of CHRIST's sufferings were not so highly needed to recommend them to God! Isaiah lxxv. 5.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! observe in the opening of this Chapter, with what determined hatred the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and Elders, came upon CHRIST! What had JESUS done? He had preached the Gospel to the poor; and had gone about, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And was this the cause of all their hatred and malignity? Yes! truly; and cause enough, to Satan and his seed. Look into the world now. Is the offence of the cross ceased? Oh no! Let any of CHRIST's servants in the present hour preach the Gospel the master preached; and hold forth salvation alone in his name, throwing to the ground all goodness and righteousness of men, and declaring, that CHRIST's blood and merits are the sole cause of acceptance before God; and the same effects will follow. The whole body of modern Pharisees will rise up, and like the hornet's nest will buzz about to sting if they can.

What an awful, but just parable, hath JESUS here delivered of the vineyard and the husbandmen. The very enemies of CHRIST were compelled to acknowledge the application of it. How truly awful it is, to behold a professing Church wholly destitute of godliness. Husbandmen like foxes of the desert, destroying, but not cultivating, the LORD's vineyard!

Reader! The HOLY GHOST hath not recorded the events in this Chapter for nothing. Let you and I learn, both from *Pharisee*, and *Sadducee*, to discover the melancholy state of a mind unenlightened by grace; and if so be, the LORD is our teacher, to bless God that we are the children of the resurrection. Blessed LORD! do thou reveal thyself in a covenant way, as the God of *Abraham*, and the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, to my soul; and then shall I live unto thee, and live in thee, and derive all life from thee, for ever and ever.

CHAP. XXI.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS foretells the Destruction of the Temple. He answers the anxious Questions of his Disciples, in fortifying their Minds with suitable Advice for the approaching Trials.

AND he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.

4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

By JESUS looking up is not meant to say that the treasury was on an elevated spot, for *Mark* tells us that *he sat over against it*. It was near to the temple, and placed there most probably for conveniency, that those who were going to or from the temple might bring their alms. Our LORD furnisheth a lovely example of a poor widow, in her rich and costly offering. How little is understood of the nature of true charity. A man may give thousands, and yet have no real charity towards God. And another may give but little, yea, nothing, and yet in the LORD's sight be very bountiful. And the reason is plain. Where the love of God in CHRIST is in the heart, this, like a fountain, will diffuse streams from the same source all around. But, where that first and pre-disposing cause of all that is good is wanting, the motive cannot be right, and therefore nothing of good can follow. Hence thousands may be bestowed, and no true charity accompanying. And a precious child of God, like *Peter*, may have nothing to give, and yet in God's sight be a most liberal soul. Acts iii. 6.

5 ¶ And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts, he said,

6 *As for* these things which ye behold, the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to pass?

This prophecy of the LORD JESUS, and the accomplishment of it, is most wonderful. The greatness of the building, and the huge stones of which it was composed rendered it the most improbable thing upon earth. And yet, from the Jews' own historian, we learn that it was literally fulfilled.

8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near, go ye not therefore after them.

9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom :

11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.

12 But before all these they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

14 Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer :

15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake.

18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the

sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Both *Matthew* and *Mark* have related the same prophecy of CHRIST; and our LORD's predictions in both Evangelists were nearly the same. I refer therefore to them, to avoid the swelling our pages beyond the limits I must observe. See Matt. xxiv. throughout, and Mark xiii. in like manner.

25 ¶ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold, the fig-tree, and all the trees:

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

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

34 And take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

I include the whole of those verses into one view, and in addition to what hath been already observed upon the subject, in the former Evangelists, I have only to guard the Reader against making unscriptural and improper application, as if those things referred to the last day of CHRIST's final coming to judgment. To correct this, the LORD declared, that, the generation then present should not be all dead, until the events he foretold were come to pass: Similar to our LORD's expression, Matt. xvi. 28. And this was literally the case; for *John*, the beloved Apostle, outlived it; and numbers besides there must have been of those who were little children at the time our LORD so prophesied.

37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple for to hear him.

What a beautiful view, in a short compass, is here given of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Never fatigued, nor weary in his labor of love, though in body sometimes, as we find, (John iv. 6.) obliged to sit to rest himself. And, in the period we are now arrived at in his history, JESUS knew what exercises, both of soul and body, were opening before him. Blessed LORD! the temple bare witness to thy fatigue by day, and the Mount of Olives of thy exercises and communion by night. Oh! how truly lovely and engaging, thus to behold CHRIST, while acting as the Surety and Representative of his people!

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! in beholding this poor widow, whose charity of soul the LORD himself hath recorded, and made her history memorable in his Church for ever; learn how very costly and precious in thy JESUS's sight, is the love of man, when flowing from the love of God. Oh! who would not wish, among the children of the LORD, to give a cup of cold water, when we have nothing warmer to offer, in the name of a disciple, than to build alms-houses, and give thousands, without an eye to CHRIST.

Blessed LORD! how truly awful was thy prediction concerning the once beloved city; and how truly verified was the whole! Most fully was God the FATHER's sentence accomplished on *Jerusalem*, when he said, in relation to his dear Son, *For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish*. And, in the instance of Jerusalem! how awfully fulfilled. LORD, grant that all thy redeemed ones, preserved by sanctifying grace, and gathered out of the city of destruc-

tion, may be enabled by thy renewing mercy and free salvation, to watch and pray; and be accounted worthy in the alone blood and righteousness of JESUS, to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man!

CHAP. XXII.

CONTENTS.

An Account of the Passover. Judas engageth to betray CHRIST. The LORD's Supper instituted. CHRIST apprehended, and led away to the High Priest's House. Peter denieth CHRIST. The LORD JESUS brought before the Council.

NOW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him: for they feared the people.

We are now entering upon the most sublime, the most solemn and interesting subject which the mind of a truly regenerated child of God can possibly contemplate. It is indeed endeared to every heart. I have been always led to consider the wonderful events recorded in this chapter as of the tenderest nature, since the LORD brought me in any measure acquainted with himself. And at every renewed opportunity of going over the sacred contents, I would look up for renewed teachings of God the HOLY GHOST, that I may discover somewhat increasingly precious to my view, in the person and offices of JESUS, that may render the subject increasingly interesting. LORD! I would say, shed those sweet influences in the present moment!

Of the *Passover* I have already had occasion to notice, Matt. xxvi. and shall again have somewhat further to offer as we enter upon it. But for the present I pass it by, in order to attend to what is related of *Judas* in the following verses.

3.¶ Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

I beg the Reader to be particular in remarking what is here said of the traitor, in relation to the *time*, in which *Satan* is said to have

entered into him. If the Reader compares what is here said with the other Evangelists' account, he will discover that it was *two days* before the Passover. *Matthew* saith, that CHRIST was then in *Bethany*, in the house of *Simon the leper*. *Matt.* xxvi. 2—6. And *John* saith, that CHRIST and his disciples were at supper. *John* xiii 2. Now this Supper could not have been the LORD's Supper, for JESUS instituted the LORD's Supper in the room of the Jewish Passover: and this he did not do before that he had, according to his earnest desire, celebrated it once more with his disciples. Neither could this Supper have been the Passover, for it was two days after this, when the LORD sent *Peter* and *John* to prepare for the Passover. And, moreover, this Supper was at *Bethany*, two miles from *Jerusalem*. And the Passover could no where be observed but in *Jerusalem*. See *Deut.* xvi. 2, 5, 6, 16. So that all these circumstances are in full proof, that the Supper *John* speaks of was not the Passover, neither the Supper of the LORD.

Now *John* is express to declare, that it was at this Supper in *Bethany*, JESUS gave the sop to *Judas* Iscariot, after which Satan entered into him. And *Luke* in this place saith, that this was before the Passover; and *Matthew* dates the time; it was *two days before the Passover*. *Matt.* xxvi. 2, 6, 16, 17. If the Reader be careful to put all these things together, he cannot hesitate to conclude, that *Satan's* entrance into the traitor was *two days* before the Passover.

And this point being very fully ascertained and confirmed, we shall next as completely discover, notwithstanding weak and injudicious Christians would wish to have it otherwise, that *Judas*, after this, partook both in the Passover and the LORD's Supper. And here again I request the Reader's close attention, in order to have a clear apprehension of the fact.

When the disciples, which had been sent from *Bethany* to prepare the Passover, had made all things ready, we are told, that, in the evening, JESUS came with the twelve. *Mark.* xiv. 17. And both *Matthew* and *Luke* are express in saying, that, when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him. Verse 14. *Matt.* xxvi. 20. And the relation, as given by the Evangelists, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, of the services, both of the Passover, and the LORD's institution of his Supper, very fully prove the presence and participation of *Judas*, in common with the rest of the Apostles. The ordinance of the Passover is related in this chapter, from the 15th to the end of the 18th verse. Then commenceth the service of the LORD's Supper. At the close of which, and not before, JESUS declares that the hand of the traitor was then with him on the table. How long after *Judas* remained is not said; but this statement by those three Evangelists, most decidedly prove, that the traitor took his place at the table, perhaps the better to cover his design, and was a partaker in both ordinances.

And, indeed, I cannot discover the shadow of a reason, wherefore any of the LORD's faithful ones should take offence at it, or wish it otherwise. Nay, I humbly conceive, that the LORD JESUS had a special design in it, for his own glory, and his Church's happiness. I will explain myself—

It is certain, that when the LORD chose *Judas* to the office of an Apostle, he knew him to be a devil, for so the LORD said, *Have not*

I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil! He spake (said the Evangelist) *of Judas Iscariot, the Son of Simon, for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.* John vi. 70, 71. If therefore the LORD chose him into the Apostleship, under such circumstances, shall it appear surprizing, that he admitted him to the Passover and Supper? Having granted the greater, can we wonder at the less.

Moreover, we find, that during the whole time of our LORD's ministry, *Judas* exercised the commission of an Apostle, in common with the rest. We read, (Luke ix. 1—6.) that the LORD sent out the *twelve* to cast out devils, heal the sick, and preach the kingdom of God; consequently *Judas* must have been included. Had this man been restrained from the exercise of the same power as the *eleven*, surely it must have been perceived by the rest, and they would have known it. And yet we find, that *Judas*, though all the while, as our LORD termed him, a devil, had carried himself so deceitfully, (2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15.) that when at the table, and at the close of CHRIST's ministry, JESUS declared that one of the twelve would betray him, they were so unconscious of his real character, that they anxiously enquired which of them it should be?

Now then, if the LORD JESUS, (who, as John saith, *knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.* John ii. 25.) was thus pleased, for wise and great purposes, though unknown to us, yet well known to him, to choose a devil to mix up with his Apostles, yea, for aught we know to the contrary, to exercise the same functions as they did; what greater causes could there be to keep him from ordinances than from the Apostleship? Did he not enjoy higher privileges as an Apostle, than in partaking of the Passover, or Supper of the LORD? And is it not highly probable that our adorable JESUS had some gracious design in the appointment, which, instead of militating to evil should be overruled to good. I humbly conceive this to be the case; and I beg the Reader's patience while I state my further views upon this part of the subject also.

And here, first, I would remark, that this traitor, this devil, as the LORD called him, though chosen to be a Minister, and an Apostle, was never called to be a partaker of grace, neither he himself ever regenerated by the HOLY GHOST. Let this be well considered. And, that the Church of God might not err in forming just views of his real character, God the HOLY GHOST, by the mouth of *Peter*, was pleased to shew to what the Apostleship of *Judas* extended. *He was numbered with us,* (said *Peter*,) *and had obtained PART of this ministry.* Acts i. 17. Part of this ministry! Yes! such a part, and such only, as a devil might obtain. And what is that? An *outside* part; the form of office; the mere exercise of the function. Nothing of grace. No one gift of the Spirit. Such as men, unordained by the HOLY GHOST, unregenerated in heart may, and the LORD only knows how often *do* exercise; but which have no tendency to their own sanctification. Such was *Judas*! A devil he was, and a devil he remained, notwithstanding his associating with the Apostles while on earth, until the measure of his iniquity was filled; and then, as we are told, he went to *his own place*! Acts i. 25. And, however awful the view to the Church of JESUS, yet, the Great Head of it hath prepared his redeemed to expect similar instances, and by our

LORD's manner of speaking, not a few beside that of *Judas*, which shall be unfolded at the last day. *Many* (saith JESUS) *will say to me in that day, LORD! LORD! have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Matt. vii. 22, 23.

But it were not doing justice to the subject to stop here. May we not also suppose, that the LORD JESUS had a further design of mercy to his Church and people in the appointment of a *Judas* among his Apostles? He well knew that his Church would never be free, while in a militant state, from false Apostles, and false Prophets. JESUS not only foretold his redeemed this, but prepared them how to form conclusions concerning them. Tares, he said, should grow together with the good seed, until the harvest. Goats should be found with the sheep. But, in the midst, the *precious* and the *vile* are still perfectly distinct; and never, no never can coalesce. Tares never can become good seed, neither can sheep become goats. The seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent cannot join. Hence therefore, if JESUS, in that little handful of his people, the eleven Apostles, purposely chose a *Judas* to mingle, well may the Church be satisfied in the midst of the heathen, when they consider that the LORD *endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest they should be weary, and faint in mind.*

Reader! learn from hence, that the Church of CHRIST is not polluted from the mingling of the ungodly in her sweetest and most sacred ordinances. The *Passover*, and the *Supper* of the LORD, lost no savor to the Apostles, from the presence of *Judas*! They had JESUS with them, and that was all they needed. And if you or I, in his house, or at his table, meet JESUS in the ordinance, our joys will suffer no lessening from any unhallowed objects around. If GOD the HOLY GHOST will lead my way *forth by the footsteps of the flock, where the Great Shepherd feeds his sheep*; Song i. 8. though *Judas* himself dared to be present, there my soul should be found. Job i. 6. And however I would seek out that ministry, and that people, where CHRIST alone is exalted, yet sure I am, however barren the means, yet led by the LORD, I shall go in and out, and find pasture. JESUS will prepare *a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, he will anoint my head with oil, and make my cup run over.* Psm. xxiii. 5.

7 ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go, and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in,

11 And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished : there make ready.

13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them : and they made ready the passover.

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer :

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves :

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table.

22 And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined : but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed !

23 And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

24 And there was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

29 And I appoint unto you, a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison, and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? and they said, Nothing.

36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take *it*, and likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

37 For I say unto you, That this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was

reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

39 And he came out and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

I have not interrupted the precious narrative, both of the celebration of the *Passover*, the institution of the LORD's *Supper*, and the Redeemer's divine discourse, both before, and with those services, and after. The account, as here given by *Luke*, carries on the subject to the moment when the LORD JESUS arose from the table, and went for the last time to the Mount of *Olives*. But, the Reader must be aware, that numberless incidents beside those which *Luke* hath here recorded, took place at this memorable season. Here it was, at this table, JESUS delivered in part that sweet discourse which *John* hath recorded in the xivth, xvth, and xvith chapters of his Gospel. According to my apprehension of those solemn transactions, I conceive that JESUS, viewing the deep sorrow of heart expressed in the countenances of the eleven Apostles, after the traitor was gone out, begun that most blessed Sermon, as related by *John*, xivth chapter. *Let not your heart be troubled, &c.* And when the LORD had concluded that chapter, he arose, as *Luke* here describes, and went forth towards the Mount of *Olives*. And I am inclined to suppose, that, as JESUS was passing along, beholding the rich luxuriant vines which spread their branches on the ground, he continued his discourse, and took occasion to describe himself under this similitude with his people, and then begun at the words *John* hath recorded in the opening of the xvth Chapter, and thus prosecuting his blessed Sermon through the whole to the end of the xvith Chapter. And then offered up the prayer Chapter xvii. Whether this be rightly placed, according to order, I venture not to determine. But, certain it is, that somewhere about this time the LORD JESUS preached this farewell Sermon to his dear disciples; and as a dying Father, encircled by his family, the LORD thus took leave of them as a body together. I remember, in the writings of *Luther*, that highly honored servant of the LORD, concerning this loving Sermon of JESUS, he saith, "Never since the world began was there such a precious, costly, sweet, and heavenly banquet feast conversation and discourse, as this of JESUS' Supper with his disciples."

The Reader will observe, that I have not ventured to say more on the services of the *Passover*, and the Institution of the Supper, than barely to point out, according to *Luke's* account of it, at what verse the service of the *Passover* ended, and that of the Holy Supper began. But I leave him to his own meditations on both, under the hope that GOD the HOLY GHOST will unfold and explain to him the whole in order. CHRIST was here doing away for ever the *one*, and establishing the *other*. It was the *last* Passover ever to be observed in the Church of GOD; for CHRIST the true Passover was now come;

and the shadow of the ordinance wholly ceased. And it was the *first* Supper in commemoration of CHRIST's death, and which was instituted for a perpetual remembrance of the same, until time should be no more. Under the impressions of all these high ideas, and infinitely more than our faculties are competent to conceive, the LORD JESUS abolished the *one*, and established the *other*; and enjoined the sweet service of the Supper in those endearing words, *This do in remembrance of me!*

In remembrance of thee! O Lamb of God! I would say in words similar to the Church, as she spake of her beloved Jerusalem; *If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not the meditation of JESUS and Gethsemane above my chief joy!* Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6.

For observations from verse 23, to verse 30, inclusive, see Matt. xix, 27 to the end.

On the subject of *Peter's* temptation, fall, and recovery, I purpose to gather the whole into one view, in the latter part of this chapter, where we have the circumstances more fully recorded; and offer a few observations. But I would in this place just remark, what a most interesting view is given the Church in this short but striking account of *Peter's* danger, and CHRIST's all-sufficiency. Think how the LORD's eye is everlastingly watching over his redeemed. This was an hour of deep sorrow; but JESUS forgets his own sorrows, to attend to the exercises of his tried ones. *Satan* desired to have Peter, that he might sift him as wheat. Yes! that deadly foe desires to cast the whole Apostles, yea, the whole Church of CHRIST into hell. Rev. ii. 10. And observe *Peter's*, and the whole Church's safety, *I have prayed for thee!* Reader! above all things keep this in everlasting view. It is not our prayers, our tears, our strivings, our strength! The devil laughs at the whole, for they are no more than a feather to the wind, in the hour of temptation! Precious LORD! it is thy Advocacy, thy Blood, thy Covenant righteousness, which becomes the security of thy people! And what a sweet thought to every child of God in a trying hour; there is more in JESUS, in point of deservings for his redeemed, than there is of undeservings in all their persons. JESUS hath more to plead in himself and his merit for poor sinners, whom the FATHER hath given to him, than all their unworthiness hath to say against them! Reader! never lose sight of this!

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was at it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow;

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

I enter upon those verses with an holy awe and reverence! Who is competent to apprehend, much less to explain, the soul-agony of CHRIST, in this tremendous season. JESUS himself called it the hour of the enemy's triumph, and *the power of darkness*. His disciples were withdrawn from him; Satan desperately bent against him: and JESUS bearing the whole sins of his redeemed in his own person. And, as if that was not enough, the justice of God beholding him, as the sinner's Surety, voluntarily coming forward, the Representative and Head of his Church, to be made both a sin and a curse for his people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him. These outlines of the subject, (for our present capacities are incapable of apprehending any thing more, than the merest outlines of a subject whose dimensions are infinite,) may, in some measure, serve to shew what an unequalled season of agony and soul-conflict this was to the Great Redeemer. We are told, that, on CHRIST's entrance upon his public ministry, after his baptism, when led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, when the devil had ended those temptations, he departed from him *for a season*. Luke iv. 13. And now, at the close of his ministry, the devil came again with tenfold fury.

But, had the temptations of hell been all which the LORD JESUS sustained in those tremendous hours, these might easily have been borne, compared to what the SON of God in our nature, and as the Surety of his Church and people, had to encounter. The dreadful part the LORD fell under, and which brought him to the ground in agonies and prayer, was, the frowns of Heaven; in the curse he bore, and the FATHER's judgment due to sin in consequence of it. The HOLY GHOST hath in one short verse described it, and none but God the HOLY GHOST could describe it: when under the Spirit of prophecy, JESUS said, *Thy rebuke hath broken my heart!* Psalm lxxix. 20. It is impossible in our researches on this subject to go very far. We know that the curse pronounced on the fall was, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*. Gen. iii. 19. But, in sustaining this curse, who would have concluded, that a bloody sweat should follow? All men, more or less, taste of the fruit of *Adam's* sin, and not only the laboring part eat bread in the sweat of the brow; but the rich and the mighty, some way or other, know the bitterness of it. But while the earth brings forth thorns to all, JESUS only was *crowned* with them. While men sweat in sorrow, JESUS only sweats a bloody sweat. Precious LORD! in all things thou must have the pre-eminence! Coloss. i. 18.

I have, in the best manner I am able, noticed the different terms the Evangelists make use of concerning CHRIST's agony in the garden of *Gethsemane*. See Matt. xxvi. 38. He calls it the soul of CHRIST being *exceeding sorrowful even unto death*. *Mark* expresses it, being *sore amazed, and very heavy*. Mark xiv. 34. And *Luke* renders it *agony*, as one that was at strife, for such is the original. And yet CHRIST was alone. What strife then could this be? Nay, who shall answer the question. An angel appeared from heaven to strengthen him. An angel! Did He who was the image of the invisible God, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with God, need aid from his creatures? So the word of truth states it; but who is competent to explain a fact so mysterious. Reader! ponder well the subject. *Angels desire to look into it*. 1 Peter i. 12. surely never, never was there a period in all the annals of mankind, since time began to be numbered, (the cross of CHRIST excepted, and this was but the close to it) of equal moment with this soul conflict of CHRIST in the garden of *Gethsemane*!

Reader! would you see sin in its true light! This is the mirror. The drowning of the whole world at the flood; the destruction of Sodom by fire; the ten thousand hospitals of mankind; yea, the whole earth considered as one great mass of misery; and even hell itself, with its everlasting burnings, all form no equal manifestations of the malignity of sin, compared to CHRIST bearing the curse and punishment of sin, when in the garden he bore agonies, and on the cross he died, *the just for the unjust, to bring his people to God*. And, therefore, let my soul, let your soul, yea, let every reflecting soul, think what ultimately must be the everlasting state and condition of every sinner who dies out of CHRIST, with his sins unpardoned, his soul uncleansed, his spirit unregenerated, and the whole weight and pressure of his iniquity bearing upon his own soul! If CHRIST was thus brought into such an agony, while bearing only the transgressions of others; what must be the terrors of those who bear their own? If, to use our LORD's own words, *such things were done in the green tree*, where there was nothing to give fuel to fire, *what shall be done in the dry?* where, like combustible matter, it wants but the spark to set the whole in a blaze, to burn for ever! Luke xxiii. 31.

I feel constrained to detain the Reader one moment longer over this most solemn passage, just to observe the state of the disciples at this awful crisis. When JESUS, in the midst of his agony, came to them who had been withdrawn from him by some supernatural power, it is said, that he found them *sleeping for sorrow*! And both *Matthew* and *Mark* have recorded, that, at this time this was repeatedly the case, at CHRIST's going from them, and returning to them again. Matt. xxvi. 40, 43, 45. Mark xiv. 37, 40, 41. Reader! observe the expression, *sleeping for sorrow*! We know full well, that sorrow, deep sorrow, will prevent sleep; but it must be unusual sorrow indeed to induce sleep. But it should seem very plain, that the Apostle's sleep was a sleep into which they were cast by the powers of hell. JESUS himself said, that this was the hour of the enemies' triumph, and the powers of darkness; and it seems more than probable, that *Satan* had drenched those few faithful servants of the LORD in a stupi-

dity and heaviness to sleep on purpose, that all human comfort should be withdrawn at this awful time from CHRIST; and CHRIST left alone to combat in this unparalleled struggle!

47 And while he yet spake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus, to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

54 Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

We now are called upon to another view of the Redeemer. I beg the Reader's close attention. Every word is big with importance. And, *first*, Judas, with the hand coming to apprehend CHRIST. But what a band of such armed men to lay hold of one poor unarmed man? Had they conceived that Jesus was nothing more than man, is it likely that they would have taken so great a body? And wherefore did *Judas* give such a signal for the apprehension of CHRIST? And *Matthew* adds to this account, that *Judas*, who made this the signal for the seizing of CHRIST, said to the soldiers, that when he had kissed CHRIST, they should *hold him fast*. Matt. xxvi. 48. Wherefore were all these precautions, but from a conviction, that CHRIST was more than man. Surely, in the very moment they seized the LORD of life and glory, the minds of the greater part of the party were struck with condemnation. *Judas* could not forget the miracles of CHRIST. He had known his Master escape from the hands of his enemies, when they sought to throw him over the hill of the city.

Luke iv. 29, 30, 31. Hence he charged them to bind him, and lead him away safely. Mark xiv. 44. Reader! pause here to remark, how the LORD was overruling their malice to his own glory. CHRIST was now accomplishing the whole predictions of the prophets. Though the voluntary offering of the LORD JESUS formed a most momentous part in the great efficacy of his sacrifice, yet the sacrifice, according to the law, must be bound. Psalm cxviii. 27. Hence *Isaac*, a type of CHRIST, was bound and laid upon the altar. So that to answer both purposes, CHRIST's willingness, and their holding him fast, we have JESUS' voluntary surrender of himself, and their binding him.

And, *secondly*, I beg the Reader not to overlook what is said of the whole band, both of Jews and Gentiles, as engaged in this apprehension of CHRIST. By the spirit of prophecy, ages before these events came to be fulfilled, it was said, that, *the kings of the earth, and the rulers, should take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed.* Psalm ii. 1, 2, 3. Here we behold the accomplishment. And GOD, the HOLY GHOST, by the mouth of *Peter*, sweetly explains the whole, and applies it. Acts iv. 19—28. Compare with Psalm xxii. the title of it, and the 12th and 16th verses explain each other.

And, *thirdly*, I pray the Reader to observe, that though all along, as the mock trial which follows proves, their intention was to deliver CHRIST over to the *Roman* power; yet to the High Priest he shall be first led. And wherefore? Aye! there's the point. They saw not the LORD's hand in all this; but the sacrifice of CHRIST must be bound, must be led away, as all sacrifices under the law were, to the High Priest, and both Jew and Gentile must be engaged in the great work. So that the hurrying the LORD JESUS, from the High Priest to the Governor, and from the hall of *Pilate*, to the Mount of *Calvary*, shall be in confirmation of that glorious scripture, *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* Isaiah liii. 7.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while, another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean.

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

The subject of *Peter's* fall, and recovery by grace, which the sacred historian hath so particularly noticed in those verses, both merit our most earnest attention. There can be no doubt, but that the HOLY GHOST meant it should be held forth to the Church, for the special improvement of the Lord's people in all ages; and it would be an unpardonable neglect under such an impression, if we were to pass it by.

The best service, I apprehend, which I can do the Reader, will be by a short commentary to mark under both parts in his fall, and in his recovery by sovereign grace, the striking features contained in the history; looking to the LORD the HOLY GHOST to make the review of it profitable to both Writer and Reader.

And here, in respect to the subject of *Peter's* fall, I would observe the greatness of that fall. Every thing tended to aggravate it. The person of *Peter*, so dear to JESUS; the time and place in which this foul denial was committed; the little provocations to it at the instance of a poor servant maid, and such like characters: add to these, the peculiar privileges *Peter* had enjoyed above all the other Apostles, excepting *James* and *John*. He had seen CHRIST's glory in the Mount. He had been an eye witness to his agonies in the garden. One or two miracles of a private nature, which JESUS wrought, he had been present at; and once, at the command of CHRIST, his faith had been so strong in the first warmth of his love, that he had attempted to walk to JESUS on the water. And yet, amidst all these distinguishing mercies, and forewarned as he was by CHRIST, he not only denied CHRIST, but persisted in the denial, though the first crow of the cock told him of his perfidy; yet on he went, and at length proceeded by oaths to such a desperate state of confirmation to the lie, as took off all pretence that it might have been the effect of surprize or inadvertency. Reader! behold in this instance what man is in his highest attainments! Surely, in the view of so great an Apostle, (for a great Apostle he was,) we cannot but learn, that the best of men are but men, and the greatest of men may fall. The corruptions of nature are the same in all. And the only difference between one man and another, is what grace makes, and not man's merit. LORD JESUS! impress this great truth on my heart, that I may have a full sense of that sweet scripture, and which *Peter*, in the after stages of life more fully learnt under the HOLY GHOST, they that are kept, are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation. 1 Peter i. 5.

Let us attend now, in a few words, to the improvements to be drawn from *Peter's* recovery. From whence we no less learn, that

as the best of men cannot keep themselves from falling, so neither, when fallen, can they raise themselves, but their recovery is the sole effect of sovereign grace. In proof of this, in the instance of *Peter*, we are told, that he heard the *first* crowing of the cock without manifesting any emotion. But, when at the *second* crowing of the cock, *the Lord turned and looked upon Peter*, that look entered his soul. *He went out and wept bitterly.* That his repentance was true and sincere, all the after events in the Apostle's life proved. But these were the *effects*, and not the *cause*. One of the Fathers, (I think it was *Chrysostom*,) hath made a beautiful observation upon the blessings which accompanied the LORD's word with the LORD's power. For, as *Peter* heard the cock crow, and seemingly unconcerned, so sinners hear the word of God, and remain regardless. But when the LORD's grace enters the heart, as the eye of *JESUS* darted upon *Peter*, then all the blessed effects follow. Reader! do not overlook the gracious, tender, loving, (what shall I call it,) forgiving look of *JESUS* to *Peter*. Surrounded as *CHRIST* then was, with the hell-hounds waiting for his blood, still he forgot not poor *Peter*! Oh! the compassions of *JESUS*! LORD! manifest them to my soul!

63 And the men that held *Jesus* mocked him, and smote *him*.

64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

67 Art thou the Christ, tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

68 And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? and he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

I will only for the present in this place beg the Reader to notice the cruelties exercised on *CHRIST*'s person, and the blasphemy they

were guilty of to his divine offices. In their mockery, they insulted his *Kingly* office. In their blindfolding him, his *Priestly*: for there were to be no blemishes in those who ministered in holy things. And in demanding who smote him, they did despite to his *Prophetical*. But, amidst all these reproaches, we hear no murmur. Yea, no answer, until demanded whether he was the SON of GOD. And, oh! how blessed the good confession; *Ye say that: I am*. For so it should be stopped. Precious LORD! in what a blessed view is this testimony of the LORD in all the hearts of his redeemed!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us ponder well the precious contents of this most precious Chapter. Behold! how JESUS delighted in his *last* Passover, and *first* Supper! *With desire* (said that dear LORD,) *I have desired to eat it with you before I suffer*. And doth he not still desire sweet communion with his people *now*, as he did *then*? Doth not JESUS say the same concerning his Word, his Ordinances, his Table, his Supper? And doth not the LORD, from the first moment of beholding his Church, long for the season of the conversion of each, and the comfort of all, until the whole redeemed are brought home to glory? Oh! then how sweet to follow up the LORD's desires with our own; and while JESUS is coming forth to bless, You and I may, through his grace, be going forth to meet him.

Reader! pause over the awful character of *Judas*! Behold the different features of *Peter*! Contemplate from everlasting the cause in the sovereignty of grace, and if so be we can find in our own souls, tokens of rich, free, unmerited love, causing us to differ from the traitor, in being children of promise; oh! for grace to ascribe all the glory to Him, to whom alone all is due. LORD! how is it, we may well say, *that thou hast manifested thyself unto us, and not unto the world!*

Praised be thy dear name, in that JESUS the SON of GOD took upon him to answer for his people, by which the HOLY ONE of Israel was reckoned among the transgressors. And shall not thy redeemed be accounted righteous in thee, before GOD? My soul! all the ransomed in Zion are authorized to this conclusion. Bless thy GOD and SAVIOR for this unspeakable mercy. It is JEHOVAH that hath so concluded, and therefore make it thy conclusion also; for so the charter of grace runs to the Church's joy. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

CHAP. XXIII.

CONTENTS.

The LORD JESUS is hurried away before Pilate, and accused. He sends CHRIST to Herod; where he is mocked, and sent back to Pilate. The unjust Governor condemns him to Death; and CHRIST is led away to Execution. The LORD's Death and Burial.

AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate:

2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a King.

3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? and he answered him and said, Thou sayest *it*.

4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests, and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean?

7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood, and vehemently accused him.

11 And Herod, with his men of war, set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves.

It forms a very interesting part, in my view of those solemn scenes, to observe how the Lamb of God is worried before his death, in those many wearisome journies he is compelled to make, in walking from one place to another to gratify the malice of his enemies. And I beg the Reader to observe with me, that, as in all those places CHRIST received the same contempt and mockery, at the house of the *High Priest*, and at the palaces of *Pilate* and *Herod*, whether the

whole was not intended for the greater humiliation of the Son of God, because, in that humiliation, the vast merit of his redemption-work consisted. It was the SON of GOD, as GOD, vacating, or emptying himself of his own personal glory, as GOD-MAN-Mediator, which constituted the infinite preciousness of his undertaking, as our Surety, and which gave such an infinite, and never to be fully recompensed value, both to his active and passive righteousness, both to his doing and dying. I would entreat the Reader, methinks, to pass over, in this sublime subject, every other consideration, to attend wholly to this one. The part which those wretched characters, *Pilate* and *Herod*, with the whole Jewish crew, wreaking their malice upon the person of CHRIST, is a matter of no moment to regard, compared to this one. This forms the blessedness of the whole subject. This renders the whole so inexpressibly great and glorious. For the more the child of GOD is enabled by the HOLY GHOST to enter into a suitable apprehension of this distinguishing feature of character in our LORD, as Redeemer, the infinitely higher will the merit of his sacrifice rise in his esteem.

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.

17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas:

19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of

death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go.

23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them, and of the chief priests, prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave sentence, that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

If I pause over those verses, it shall be only to detain the Reader with remarking what an awful character this time-serving judge *Pilate* must have been. He declared *JESUS* guiltless, and yet proposed by way of a milder punishment, to scourge him. He pronounced sentence of death upon *CHRIST* in the same breath that he declared him innocent! With what horrors must the soul of *Pilate* behold *JESUS* at the last day, when his body shall arise at the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, to receive from the Lord his sentence of everlasting misery? Rev. i. 7.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

27 ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

I refer to the observations proposed in *Matthew* and *Mark's* Gospel, on the cruelties exercised on *CHRIST's* person, after sentence of death

was passed upon him. See Matt. xxvii. 27. Mark xv. 16. Let the Reader in this place remark the tenderness of the LORD JESUS, in forgetting his own sorrows to regard the sorrows of his people. *Luke* is the only Evangelist which hath recorded this affectionate address of JESUS to the daughters of Jerusalem. Is it not (for I do not speak decidedly on the subject) as a prophecy of the LORD, in relation to the sorrows hastening upon *Zion's* sons in the approaching destruction of Jerusalem? Zech. xii. 10. But their weeping at the view of the LORD JESUS, was as might be expected. For who could dry-eyed behold the Lamb of God surrounded thus with hell-hounds, waiting to suck his blood? Nature alone, untaught of grace, hath some remains of feeling to shew that it is not totally void of humanity. It is said of *Austin*, that before his conversion, he delighted to hear *Ambrose* speak of the sufferings of CHRIST, and always wept at hearing the relation. But this may be, and yet not grace. *Ezekiel* had such hearers. Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

32 And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors; one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

In reading the former of those verses, I beg the Reader to observe, that a stop should be put after the word *other*: for then the sense of the passage will be clear. *And there were also two other*: (which were) *malefactors*. For the LORD JESUS himself was no malefactor. *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* 1 Peter ii. 22. He stood forth indeed in the eye of the law, being the Surety of his people, and their Representative, as the greatest of all malefactors. Yea, JEHOVAH considered him as such. But, though laden with the sins of all his people, yet there was no shadow of sin in him. Sin was put upon him, not in him. The LORD *laid on him*, it is said, *the iniquity of us all*, that is, the Church. Isaiah liiii. 6. Reader! do you discover the blessedness of the distinction? If so, think how compleat must be his sacrifice! For this purpose, God would have him loaded with all sin, and with all the possible shame of sin, as sin had made his Church marked to our shame, so CHRIST, the Surety, shall bear both. And hence the conclusion the HOLY GHOST makes from hence, for the everlasting joy of the Church, *He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin*, that *we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

For the cries of JESUS on the cross, see the whole collected into one view. John xix. 30.

35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

I pray the Reader, again and again to mark the insults offered to the person of the Redeemer in his *offices*. As the Church by sin had put an affront on all the characters of her LORD, Jesus, in redeeming her, shall sustain in his own person those insults. Hence the rabble mocked at his office as the Great *Prophet* of his people, when they smote him, and said unto him, *prophecy, thou CHRIST, who is he that smote thee*. So again, in his *Priestly* office; the derision of the rulers in all those instances of pardon, Jesus had shewn (Mark ii. 5—12.) was blasphemously used, when, as in the passage before us, they said, *He saved others, himself he cannot save*. Think, Reader! what an awful instance was here! And his *Kingly* office, the Roman soldiers insulted, when they said, as they offered CHRIST the predicted vinegar, (see Psalm lxix. 21.) *If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself*. Reader! do not fail to behold the hand of JEHOVAH in these solemn transactions. Both *Jew* and *Gentile* shall bear part in those insults offered to CHRIST's person and offices. For the LORD Jesus was at that moment redeeming his whole Church, both *Jew* and *Gentile*. *The heathen was his for an inheritance*, now CHRIST was set as king on *his holy hill of Zion*. Psalm ii. throughout. Never did the glory of the LORD JESUS shine out more fully! Never did CHRIST more fully prove his suretyship-character as now, when his glorious offices were thus set at nought and despised.

38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Of the titles on the cross, I refer to John xix. 19. But, as *Luke* is the only Evangelist which hath recorded the abundant mercy shewn to the dying thief, I shall beg to make a short observation upon it here. *Matthew* and *Mark* are both express to shew, that those men which were crucified with Jesus, joined the rabble to insult CHRIST. And *Luke* saith, that one of them reproved his hardened companion; owned CHRIST for a Savior; found mercy from CHRIST; and received the assurance of being that day with him in Paradise. And, no doubt, the whole relation of the Evangelists is correct. Both thieves at the first, when nailed to the cross, joined the cry against our LORD; until *one* of them, struck by divine conviction, had his heart suddenly changed, and cried out for mercy. JESUS snatched him as from the very brink of hell, and as a trophy of his rich, free, and sovereign grace, took him with him to heaven. I beg the Reader not to pass away from the view of such wonderful love, until that he hath feasted his soul with the contemplation. Here was no merit, no pre-disposition, no service, no ordinance, no means, neither baptism nor the LORD's supper; but, on the contrary, every thing of demerit, a life of infamy, and within a short period all over, and dying under the hand of justice. And yet such an one the SON of GOD took with him at once to everlasting joy! What will any man call this? Was CHRIST, or was He not, in this instance, the whole of salvation? And is He not so in every other?

44 And it was about the sixth hour. And there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

47 Now, when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

I have no power to conceive, and much less to describe, the awful prodigies which attended the cross of CHRIST. The cries of JESUS; the darkness which at mid-day covered the land; the rending of the vail of the temple in twain from the top to the bottom; the yawning of the graves; the dead bodies of saints which had mouldered to dust arising, going into the holy city, and appearing unto many; the *Centurion* himself compelled to acknowledge CHRIST for the SON of GOD; and the rabble which came to the sight of CHRIST crucified, smitten at what they saw and heard, returning under horrors; these are events soon recorded, but never to be fully contemplated. For my own part, I would pray for continual grace to take my stand by faith at the foot of the cross, and with the Evangelists in my hand, go over again and again the marvellous subject, according to the plain, simple, and unvarnished manner in which those holy and inspired men have related it. And I would above all contemplate Him, who by that death procured my life; until, like *Paul*, I found grace to say as *Paul* said, and to feel as *Paul* felt; to know nothing among men save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified; and from the same heartfelt conviction as his, knowing it is the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to every one that believeth. 1 Cor. ii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 24.

But, Reader! with all these high objects before us, let us take one view more of the LORD JESUS on the cross, and look over the heads of men and devils to behold what is the highest and most momentous object to contemplate in the whole, I mean the hand of GOD the FATHER in this wonderful transaction. The Scriptures of GOD teach us, that it pleased JEHOVAH to bruise him: it was He that put him to grief. Isaiah liii. 10. Here then was the grand part which put a finishing wound to the soul agonies and bodily pains of CHRIST. It was the hand of GOD which pierced most deeply in the Redeemer's heart. This clenched the work. This drove the nail of bitterness home to the head. The iron entered into his soul. Psm. cv. 18.

Angels are incompetent to explain the mysterious subject; and surely it never can be the province of man. But, it appears from the whole tenor of revelation on those deep things of GOD, that the whole burden of sin, and the curse due to sin, meeting together, and with the whole wrath of JEHOVAH against sin, like a mighty cataract in the sluices of divine displeasure, were poured forth on the person of CHRIST. The darkness at mid-day intimated somewhat of it. For this darkness, which was altogether supernatural, could not be, as hath been said by some, as if to shew the FATHER's anger against those who crucified CHRIST; for CHRIST himself, by his cry on the cross, most fully proved the contrary. *My God! My God!* (said the Holy Sufferer), *why hast thou forsaken me!* But this part is abundantly plain, that CHRIST was now expiating sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as such, the whole weight of sin, and the punishment due to sin, fell upon him. And as the damned in hell have eternal darkness, unvisited by the light of GOD's countenance, the SON of GOD in our nature while sustaining the judgment due to his Church for sin, shall be in darkness and unvisited by that light whose absence he had never known before. He is now sustaining what is his Church's due. He shall therefore feel the effect. But wherefore not go into hell then to endure this? No, there was no necessity. It is not

the *place*, but the *extremity*, which constitutes the fulness of misery. When therefore CHRIST was lifted up upon the cross, he was suspended between heaven and earth, as one unworthy of either. Indeed CHRIST might be said to be then in the territories of *Satan*, for he is called *the prince of the power of the air*, when *hanging on the tree*, and *according to the law cursed*. Ephes. ii. 2. Gal. iii. 13. And it is worthy remark, that CHRIST called his sufferings by this name. *The sorrows of death* (said JESUS) *compassed me; the pains of hell gat hold upon me*. Psm. cxvi. 3. And elsewhere by the same spirit of prophecy the LORD said, *All thy waves and billows have gone over me*. Psm. xlii. 7.

50 ¶ And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; *and he was* a good man, and a just:

51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them.) *He was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

52 This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on,

55 And the women also which came with him from Galilee followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments: and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

Concerning this *Joseph*, the HOLY GHOST hath made mention of him to his advantage, in calling him *an honorable counsellor*; and though of the *Sanhedrim*, he had not joined them in the horrible transactions concerning the death of JESUS. So far from it, that he determined to give CHRIST, though crucified at *Golgotha*, a decent interment. See, Reader! how, by seemingly unlooked for causes, the LORD overrules things to his own glory. The HOLY GHOST, ages before had said, that the *Messiah should make his grave with the rich in his death*. Isaiah liii. 9. A thing the most improbable, seeing that CHRIST was to die under the hands of both Jews and Gentiles, and as a common felon, and at *Golgotha*, a place where the bodies of the criminals executed there, lay, for the most part, unburied, and their skulls kicked about with contempt. Yet so it was. JESUS shall have an

honorable burial, partly that his death, which is the life of the Church, may thereby be fully proved; and partly, that the identity of his person, being put into a tomb wherein before never man lay, may be the more perfectly known. Reader! let you and I follow in solemn meditation, the funeral of the LORD JESUS; and behold those holy sacred remains, which the grave cannot detain, lodged there for a few hours, until the time appointed for his resurrection! Never did the grave, though but for a short season, hold such a prisoner! But let us not overlook the needs be for CHRIST's interment. It proved his death. It proved the truth of the prophecies. He must, as a part of his Suretyship, be *brought into the dust of death*. Psalm xxii. 15. The type of CHRIST implied this, and JESUS himself taught it. For, saith CHRIST, *as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*. Matt. xii. 40. And above all, as CHRIST must be brought down to the dust of death, to fulfil the whole of his abasement, so from the grave it became necessary to prove the triumphs of his exaltation. In the grave CHRIST destroyed the power of the grave, and by his own death, the power of Sin, Satan, and Death. Read Hosea xiii. xiv. explained by 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. Heb. ii. 14. Here then it was, from this memorable sepulchre, the faithful in CHRIST JESUS were taught to look up, and behold the compleat victory over death. And here the everlasting mansions of glory first clearly opened by CHRIST to his people. Precious JESUS! it is thou, by thy death, hast overcome death; and by thy resurrection hast secured the final resurrection of thy members.

REFLECTIONS.

SEE, my soul! thy LORD taken from prison and from judgment. And *who shall declare his generation?* Behold Pilate, Herod, the Chief Priests, and Scribes, yea, the whole multitude, all engaged in the foul act of CHRIST's crucifixion. And was there none beside? Think, my soul! how much thy sins, both in the original and actual transgression of thine Adam-nature, added to the vast account. Oh! for grace, that in a conscious sense of my own sins, upon this solemn occasion, I may look unto him *whom I have pierced, and mourn, as one that mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for his first born!*

Precious JESUS! enable me to connect with the solemn view of thine unequalled sufferings, that thou hast made my peace by the blood of thy cross, and by thy stripes I am healed. And from the cross enable me to behold thee proclaiming peace to all thy people, and doing away the whole of sin by the sacrifice of thyself. Yes! thou Almighty LORD! truly, in the instance of the dying thief, thou hast shewn the sovereign efficacy of thy finished salvation. Here may poor, despairing, self-condemned, and self-condemning sinners, find the sweetest encouragement. And, if JESUS in the days of his flesh offered up strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared, will he not have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, since he himself was thus compassed with infirmity?

LORD ! I would take my stand at the door of the sepulchre. Like Mary, I would wait in humble sorrow until my risen and triumphant SAVIOR shall speak to me, as the LORD did to that poor woman. Oh ! for grace, to have the first views of JESUS, the first love tokens as she had of JESUS, that I might hasten with the same tender commission, and tell the brethren of JESUS of the glorious tidings of the resurrection. Lord ! give me the assured earnest, in a resurrection of grace, for that great day of my God, when all his redeemed will partake in a resurrection to glory !

C H A P. XXIV.

CONTENTS.

In folding up his Gospel, Luke relates in this Chapter, the necessary Witnesses to the Resurrection of JESUS. The LORD makes a Manifestation of himself upon a great Variety of Occasions; and having given his final Commission to his Disciples, he ascends in their Presence, visibly to Heaven.

NOW upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments :

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead ?

6 He is not here, but is risen ; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were with them*, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

I detain the Reader, immediately at his entrance into this Chapter, to remind him, that the blessed doctrine contained in it, is the most momentous and interesting which can possibly engage his attention. For, as GOD the HOLY GHOST taught the Church, by Paul: *If CHRIST be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and the faith of God's people is also vain: Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God!* 1 Cor. xv. 14. See, Reader! the infinite importance of the thing itself, and let that importance arrest your closest attention, to regard, with suitable thankfulness and affection, the vast chain of evidences the LORD the SPIRIT hath granted the Church of this most glorious event, in the certainty of which the sure resurrection of all the mystical body of CHRIST is included.

In those verses we have the account as related by *Luke*. There is a beautiful variety, and yet a uniform sameness, to the relation of the fact itself of our LORD's resurrection; as delivered by the several Evangelists: but this was evidently intended by the HOLY GHOST, for the more full and satisfying testimony to the glorious truth, springing forth from so many quarters. And *Paul*, years after, was brought into a personal acquaintance with the LORD JESUS, when CHRIST called to him from heaven; and which became an additional proof in confirming this precious doctrine. *Last of all*, (saith Paul) after CHRIST had been seen of *above five hundred brethren at once*, *he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.* 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7, 8.

I do not think it necessary to notice to the Reader the consternation of those godly women; neither of the eleven Apostles, at the first account of CHRIST's resurrection. It is enough to observe from it, how little disposed their minds were to the faith of it, notwithstanding all the discourses of JESUS, which one might have supposed would have prepared them for the event. Reader! I pray you learn from it, that nothing short of GOD the HOLY GHOST's influence in teaching, can bring home a feeling sense of his truths, to his people. The LORD must take away the stone out of the heart, as well as roll it from the mouth of the sepulchre, or we shall not enter into a joyful apprehension of the resurrection of JESUS.

13 ¶ And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about threescore furlongs*.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that while they communed *together*, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?

18 And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19 And he said unto them, What things! and they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests, and our rulers, delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre.

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went : and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us ; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him ; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

The relation of this interview between CHRIST and the two disciples, is given in so beautiful and interesting a manner, that I have always thought it receives an injury, rather than good, from all attempts by comment. Indeed it needs no illustration, for it explains itself. The demand of JESUS, when he said, *Ought not CHRIST to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?* is a question which at once answers the demand ; and doth in fact yet more strongly confirm the truth. I beg the Reader not to overlook in those words of our LORD, how blessedly he shews, what the Spirit of CHRIST, which was in the Prophets all along testified, on those two great branches of the LORD's Person and Ministry, namely, *Of the sufferings of CHRIST ; and of the glory that should follow.* 1 Pet. i. 11. For these comprehended the whole. I have sometimes been led to wish, that this heart-warning discourse of JESUS, had been recorded. But I have

as often found grace, to check the wish, as improper. Nay, I have learnt the blessedness intended from the concealment. For it prompts the soul under divine teaching, to search after CHRIST, in all those Scriptures from whence the LORD preached, to those two disciples. We read, that the LORD began at *Moses*, and all the *Prophets*; and not confining himself to these, he expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures*, the things concerning himself. Hence we are taught, as plain as words can make it, that the whole body of Scripture is concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And shall not I look for the LORD JESUS in all? (I have said to myself, as often as I have thought upon this passage,) Is my LORD as one pearl of great price in this field of his divine word; and shall not I as a spiritual merchant-man seek diligently for him through all, till I find him? And am I not encouraged to hope, that as JESUS drew near to those disciples while in the way, and discoursing about their LORD; so will he draw near to me? And if JESUS made *their* hearts burn with holy fervor, will he not make mine? If Old Testament saints, and New Testament believers, were made partakers of such mercies then; why not the humble followers of JESUS now? Jerem. xx. 9. Malachi iii. 16.

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43 And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

How truly blessed is it to behold, the gracious attention of the LORD JESUS, in thus affording such repeated testimonies of the reality of his resurrection to his disciples, both when separate, and when collected together. And I think the Reader will, with me admire, the palpable evidence the LORD gave of his bodily presence, not only in submitting the pierced hands and feet, through which the nails had passed, when fastening his body to the cross; but also, in the proof the LORD gave of his human nature being alive, in eating of *the*

broiled fish and the honeycomb. Reader! gather from this view of thy LORD's grace, some, at least, of the sweet instructions it brings. Remember that JESUS had now finished redemption-work: and yet there is no change of nature in him. Moreover, He is the same tender, the same all-loving, and lovely LORD JESUS as ever! And, observe the humble fare JESUS partook of, the part of *a broiled fish, and of the honeycomb.* Humble fare is, for the most part, the fare of the LORD's people; but JESUS partook of it then, and thus sweetly sanctified it for ever. But more particularly do I intreat the Reader not to forget, that the very wounds which JESUS shewed to his disciples, to convince them of his person, and of his triumph over death by his resurrection, are the same marks which he everlastingly presents to his Father for them, in pleading the merits of his soul-offering, and death, for their salvation. *Paul* was commissioned by the HOLY GHOST to tell the Church, that CHRIST's return to heaven, was, *to appear in the presence of God for us.* Heb. ix. 24. And that his blood *speakeeth* for them to God. Heb. xii. 24. And *John* was admitted into visions of heaven, purposely to behold CHRIST as *a lamb which had been slain.* Rev. v. 6. So that the Church of God now enjoy, in full testimony of faith, what the Old Testament Saints had in figure represented to them; namely, the High Priest going in before the mercy seat, with the names of Israel to appear before God. Exod. xxviii. 29, 30. And this was what the Church so passionately longed for in the coming of CHRIST. Song viii. 6. Think, Reader! and may the LORD give me also grace never to lose sight of it; what a blessed encouragement it is, under all deadness in myself, and heart-straitenings in prayer, there is One whose pierced hands and side plead for me, when I have no power to plead for myself. We have, saith John, *an advocate with the FATHER, and He is the propitiation for our sins.* 1 John ii. 1, 2.

44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day :

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Je-

rusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Though I venture not to enlarge on those very blessed words of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, for all comments must fail, in attempting to shew their full blessedness, yet I entreat the Reader to ponder deeply every sentence, and consider how the solemnity of the season, when CHRIST so addressed his disciples, rendered all he said peculiarly affecting. What a moment it must have been! What holy awe the disciples must have felt! How differently the words of JESUS must have operated upon their minds, to all his former discourses before his death; now they beheld him risen from the dead, and as coming from the other world to give them this endearing interview; and by opening their understanding, in giving them suitable apprehensions, both of the vast importance of his mission, and of his unceasing love towards them! And, as all the LORD JESUS then said had respect to his whole Church, as well as to them, the then representatives of his Church, I pray the Reader not to overlook the boundless grace and mercy of JESUS, when giving his parting commission to them, to go forth in his name, as soon as the FATHER's promise of the HOLY GHOST should descend upon them, and in particularly charging them to *begin at Jerusalem*! Observe, Reader! how the LORD manifested his watchful care over the still beloved city! JESUS had many whom the FATHER had given to him there. Those Jerusalem-sinners, whose hearts were to be called by sovereign grace on the then approaching day of *Pentecost*, were there; many of whom had joined the Scribes and Elders in his crucifixion, and were now triumphing in having shed his blood. Yet, to this *Jerusalem*, this slaughter-house of his Prophets, and himself also, JESUS will have the first proclamation of mercy in his death made! Oh! the riches of his grace! Oh! the boundless love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge!

The Reader will, I hope, observe how JESUS hath expressed himself concerning the coming of the HOLY GHOST. He calls him the promise of my FATHER. Sweet consideration! God the HOLY GHOST, in one and the same moment is the promise of the FATHER, CHRIST's promise, and the sovereign agent, God the HOLY GHOST, in his own Almighty power, from his everlasting love, engaged in covenant offices. These things will appear more fully from the consultation of those numberless scriptures which refer to the subject. I beg the Reader to turn to a few in point. Isaiah xliv. 3, 4. Joel ii. 28, &c. Isaiah lix. 21. John vii. 37, 38, 39. and John xiv. xv. and xvi. chapters. Acts xiii. 2, 3, 4, &c.

50 ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

The Evangelist hath made a long step, from this first day of CHRIST's resurrection, to the day of his ascension, which this paragraph relates. *Luke* himself, who was the writer of this Gospel, was the writer also of the Acts of the Apostles. And in the opening of the records there, he speaks of JESUS having shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, *being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.* Acts i. 3. But the Evangelist takes no notice in his Gospel of any further appearance of CHRIST during those forty days after his resurrection, beside those we have gone through, but at once proceeds to record the particulars of his ascension.

He led them as far as *Bethany*. If the town of *Bethany*, where *Lazarus* and his sisters dwelt, be meant, that place was very memorable to JESUS; and numberless instances of past events were upon JESUS's mind. And if, as some have thought, there was a little mount so called close to the Mount of *Olives*, the garden of *Gethsemane* was at the foot of it, and still more interesting scenes then opened to the LORD. See Mark xi. 1. I do not venture to decide, but I merely direct the Reader to that memorable prophecy of Zechariah, Chap. xiv. 4. whether this prediction referred to this great event? I think it might. But I also think, there may be a day yet to be seen, when it will be more fully realized. Job xix. 25.

I have only in the close of *Luke's* Gospel, and in this most interesting scene of our LORD's ascension, to beg the Reader to observe the several sweet and precious things here recorded. The farewell of JESUS! How affectionate and how tender! He was now going to his Church above. The *Abrahams*, and the *Isaacs*, and the *Jacobs*, waited and longed for his coming. But amidst all this, JESUS's heart was still with his redeemed below. He said himself, *I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.* John xiv. 18. Precious LORD! Sure I am from this proof, if there were no other, (and there are thousands,) thy Church on earth is as dear to thee as thy Church in heaven.

There is somewhat very gracious, that JESUS, while in the act of blessing his Church, should be parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Yes! this was not without significancy. The blessing of JESUS is continued. It is one great whole. There is no interruption. The Jewish High Priest typified CHRIST in the lifting up of his hands. *He*, however, *prayed* for it. JESUS *commanded* it. Our Great High Priest ascended therefore, while blessing, as if to say that his blessing is for ever. And, as in the instance of *Manoah*, CHRIST ascended in the fragrant of his own incense. Judges xiii. 20.

The joy of the Apostles forms a blessed conclusion to this most precious Gospel of *Luke*. They worshipped him as God. They had now sweet and precious views, since JESUS opened their understanding, to the apprehension of the Person, Work, Offices, Character, and Relation of the LORD JESUS; and were now only waiting the Ordination of GOD the HOLY GHOST, as promised, to send them forth in the ministry. They waited therefore daily in the temple for this bless-

ing, praising and adoring the LORD. And the Evangelist hath put an *Amen* to the whole, as one of the precious names of JESUS, in confirmation of the glorious record. Amen. Reader! can You and I, from a conscious interest in the saving truths, put to it our Amen, as our JESUS? Isa. lxxv. 16. Rev. iii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! ponder well the blessed contents of this chapter. Never, surely, was there upon earth any record given to any one matter of fact, as plainly, as fully, and as circumstantially, to bear down with a full stream of evidences all opposition, as the testimony to the Resurrection of JESUS. But while the vast chain of testimonies surround the glorious citadel of truth, as an impregnable fortress, to the full doctrine of the Person and Salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; what will the whole be found, where the heart is not renewed by grace? CHRIST is indeed risen from the dead? but are we risen with him? *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power!* Oh! for the earnest of the SPIRIT, by which the souls of the faithful are sealed unto the day of redemption!

Farewell *Luke!* Blessed be thy God, and my God, the Almighty SAVIOR of both, for the ministry of thy record of JESUS! Ere long, the whole Church will be called home, to enter upon the personal enjoyment of those glorious things which the LORD hath here commissioned thee to deliver to his people! And then will burst forth, from millions of the redeemed souls, the song of salvation to God and the Lamb. In the mean time, may my poor offering of praise be often awakened by grace, through this, and all the other blessed portions of the holy Scriptures of truth, to bless the united source of all covenant mercies, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all their love and purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, in JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. JOHN.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

THE Gospel according to *St. John*, comes home endeared to the Church of GOD in such a fulness of blessings, as cannot fail, under divine teaching, to call forth from every heart of the redeemed, unceasing praises to the Almighty Author of every good, and every perfect gift, for so precious a