

taught thee in vision, assuredly to be realized in their due season; thou hast sat down among the goodly fellowship of Prophets in heaven, waiting under the golden altar their final accomplishment! Farewell for a little space, *Ezekiel*, until the whole Church meet in this blessed city thou hast so divinely described, and every tribe have each their separate and distinct mansion in Jesus, and Jesus the one portion of each and of all. In that blessed hour, may it be the felicity, both of him that writes and him that reads, (if consistent with the Lord's will,) to join *Ezekiel* with all the ransomed which are there returned to Zion, *with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads*. There in one vast assembly, all to shout aloud, and all to enter into the full and everlasting enjoyment of their Lord. Each for himself, and altogether equally blessed, in the unspeakable and never ending happiness of His presence. JEHOVAH SHAMMAH! Then will it be indeed known and indeed felt; the LORD IS THERE. Amen, and Amen.

THE
BOOK OF DANIEL.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

Of the certainty of Daniel's prophecy being authentic, the testimonies are undoubted. The LORD seems to have over-ruled things in such a manner, as to put it out of all question. The Jews, indeed, in order to invalidate Daniel's prophecies concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, cause his writings not to be put among the other writings of the Prophets. And the reason is very obvious. For so pointed and express is this man's whole tendency in his prophecies, to the person and glory of Christ, that had they acknowledged his writings to have been prophetical, they must have ac-

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

The name of *Daniel* is not without much signification considered with an eye to his ministry. It is a compound in itself, and means, *the judgment of GOD*. And if we consider, that both his ministry in the court of Babylon, and the scope of his prophecy concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whose office is, to set *judgment in the earth when the isles should wait for his law*, Isaiah xlii. 4. There is a great beauty in the servant's name who ministered to such a Master. *Daniel* was of the tribe of *Judah*; and as we find carried away among the captives to *Babylon* when very young. His ministry was lengthened, it is more than probable, through the whole of the captivity. But what I would more particularly beg to remark concerning the ministry of *Daniel* is, that he not only prophesied of the events to be accomplished in the Church from the *Chaldean* to the *Roman* monarchy, but his prophecies looked much further. I do not presume to speak decidedly upon this, or any other subject, that is unexplained by GOD the HOLY GHOST; but with an eye to his divine teaching, I venture to enquire, whether the prophecies of *Daniel*, are not in some parts of them accomplishing in this very hour? For, as the Roman empire, to which, as by the fulfilment of *Daniel's* prophecies in part hath been already proved, this holy man of GOD plainly referred, we behold the reference of his prophecy: so as *Rome* was mystically the *Babylon* spoken of in the Revelations, it should seem, that the Prophet was directed by the HOLY GHOST, to look as far forward as the present, and perhaps a future day of the Church.

The Book of *Daniel* is partly historical and partly prophetical; and the subjects are frequently incorporated. The first six Chapters are chiefly the history of the times of *Daniel*; yet not without an eye to future events in the Church. The last six Chapters are chiefly prophetical. And very blessed they are, as hath been proved in such as

time hath explained by the accomplishment. And equally blessed are those, no doubt, which are to be fulfilled, and which perhaps are now fulfilling in the earth. For what can be more blessed, than what refers to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and to his Church in Him?

I beg the Reader, both at his entrance upon the threshold of this sacred Scripture, and through all the departments of it, to keep a stedfast eye to GOD the HOLY GHOST for his divine teaching; remembering our LORD's own words concerning it; *Let him that readeth understand*, Mark xiii. 14. Almighty Teacher! I would say both for myself and Reader! make these words, both at once, a precept and a blessing. And the grace of understanding which thou commandest to the Reader, do thou LORD thyself give him; and let both Writer and Reader be enabled to receive and accept those sayings as faithful and true. And may the LORD GOD of the Prophets explain them to the heart of both: and prove, here as in every other instance, that *the testimony of JESUS is the Spirit of prophecy*. Amen.

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS.

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

IN the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

2 And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

These verses are introductory to the main subject of the Prophet's writings. He relates the circumstance of the captivity. We find a confirmation of the same, Isaiah xxxix. Jerem. liii. I only detain the Reader at these verses to remark the awful event of the carrying away the sacred vessels of the temple, and putting them in the house of an idol. Alas! is it not so in every instance, when from the fall of man, what was designed for the LORD's glory is abused to the service of sin?

3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes ;

4 Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank : so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

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

6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah ;

7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names : for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar ; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach, and to Mishael, of Meshach ; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

The change of names could have no good design. No doubt it was to make them forget both the LORD, and their interest in Him as a covenant God. The custom in Israel, of giving names to their children, which, either by direct words, or indirect meaning, had reference to the God of their fathers, was very ancient, and, no doubt, arose from the LORD. For we find that the LORD himself gave names to his people, and sometimes changed their names upon any remarkable occasion. See Genesis xvii. 5—15. and xxxii. 28. And holy men of old were very fond of calling their children by somewhat remarkable, in order to keep in remembrance the LORD's grace or his providence. Thus in the instance before us, *Daniel's* name signified, *a God of judgment*, or God is my judge. *Hananiah* had two of the letters which belong to the incommunicable name of JEHOVAH in it : and signified *the LORD of grace*, or *the LORD is gracious to me*. *Mishael*, conveyed in the sense of it, *the strength*

of GOD; and *Azariah*, a compound of *Azar* and *JAH*, implied the LORD is my help. So that the very names always carried with them a blessed allusion to the LORD GOD of their fathers. But, *Belteshazzar*, *Shadrach*, *Meshech*, and *Abednego*, were all in allusion to the dunghill idols of Babylon. Thus *Belteshazzar* referred to their idol *Bel*; and *Rach* and *Shach* are supposed to have been idols also; and *Abed* or *Obed*, a servant of *Nego*, another contemptible idol of the Babylonians. For it appears that they had many which they worshipped. And indeed, when by sin man revolted from the LORD, in the unity of the divine nature, existing in a threefold character of person, as the Patriarchs adored the GOD of Israel; and turned from one only and true GOD, the transition was easily then made to many. How blessedly the Apostle speaks to this subject, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. I cannot forbear remarking, that the names given to the planets by philosophers, as they are called, of modern times, is but too near a kin to the conduct of Eastern manners among idolaters. And it is in my view, a sad reproach to a nation like ours, professing godliness.

8 ¶ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hana-niah, Mishael and Azariah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days: and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

Mark the grace and watchful eye of the LORD in this instance over his people, or we shall lose the chief beauty of the history. Surely, nothing but grace could have prompted young men, like Daniel and his companions, to use such an abstinence in the King's court, with all their passions about them. And nothing but the overruling power of the LORD, could for a moment have prompted the mind of the Prince that had the charge of the captives to listen to the voice of Daniel, at the evident hazard of incurring the displeasure of the King, who, in these countries were despotic. And nothing but the grace and blessing of the LORD upon the poor fare, could have led to the hope of such effects. For certain it is, it is contrary to the common operations of nature; a poverty of living, always must induce from mere natural causes, a poverty of countenance. But under God's blessing, what may not be expected? Let us not overlook the sweet spiritual instruction which this feeding holds forth to the Churches of Jesus. Let the *Melzars* of the present day suspend or take away the carnal portions of our meat and wine; JESUS will give the bread in secret; and his people, like their LORD, will have meat the world knoweth not of. This is the King's meat indeed, and sent from the King's table. And oh! what a fairness of countenance will it induce at the end of the days, making the soul glad with the light of the LORD's countenance.

17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them: and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king enquired of them, he

found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

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

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

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

And when we have duly pondered the history of *Daniel* in order to mark the progress of grace in his instance, let us see if we can discover nothing similar to the same in our own. If, peradventure, the eye which reads those lines hath been opened by sovereign grace, to discover the LORD's dealings in his own experience; he will find enough to melt his very soul into tears, in the recollection, how the LORD hath been, and always is, leading on his people, making their way to differ from others; yea, to differ from themselves, in a thousand instances before their unthinking minds were brought into the least apprehension of divine mercy towards them. What a subject of this kind doth every child of God in his history, open to view when once grace opens the book, and turns back the leaves of what is past. Every one finds cause to join in what the Prophet was commissioned to deliver? *Wilt thou not from this time* (saith the LORD) *cry unto me; My father, thou art the guide of my youth.* Jerem. xiii. 4.

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

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

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

AND in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams: so they came and stood before the king.

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

3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew thee the interpretation.

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but* one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore *there is no* king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

11 And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon.

13 And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

No doubt, but that the Lord in his over-ruling providence, while impressing the mind of the King with the importance of the dream itself; yet made him so totally to forget the particulars of it by way of introducing Daniel. What a beautiful subject doth the conviction of this open to the Lord's people in all the circumstances of their lives? How sure, how very sure is it, that the very hairs of their head are all numbered, when not a single event in their history can take place, but by the Lord's appointment. Reader! if a gracious reader, do not forget to make this personal!

14 ¶ Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon.

15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, *Why is the decree so hasty from the*

king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

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

17 And Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret: that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon.

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

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision: then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his:

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things : he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee : for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter.

Behold, Reader ! the prevalency of prayer. Oh ! what hath not prayer with faith in CHRIST wrought ? When God the HOLY GHOST gives a spirit of prayer, and leads the soul in JESUS into the very retirings of the LORD, so that we wrestle, as Jacob did ; and act faith, as Elijah did ; what mercies may not be expected to follow. See also those Scriptures, Gen. xxxii. 24—30. 1 Kings xviii. 24, 36, 37, 38. John xiv. 13. John xvi. 23, 24. I must not dismiss these verses before that I have called upon the Reader to remark with me the behaviour of Daniel upon this occasion. As soon as the LORD revealed unto him the secret, he first poured out his whole soul in praise to the great Author of the mercy. He did not hasten to the King of Babylon before that he had first blessed the King of kings for his grace. There were numberless mercies Daniel found grace to be thankful for ; and no doubt under the sense he had of the LORD's favour, his heart was melted before the LORD. See another beautiful instance of the like kind, 2 Sam. vii. throughout. Reader ! is there nothing in all these instances, and which we read in the history of God's people, which is suited to you and to me, as they refer to our state and circumstances ? Surely, Daniel's success in prayer, and the LORD's blessing in hearing, and answering prayer, will leave us without excuse, if we neglect to visit the throne, upon any and every occasion ; especially with so many increased arguments, as we have in Jesus, our Great High Priest and Intercessor. Oh ! thou Almighty Lord, that art in the midst of the throne ! do thou cause this bright example of Daniel, to stir up thy redeemed to this most blessed and sure rewarding service, that we may be delighted in bringing all our concerns before thee, and by *prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make all our requests known unto God.* Philip. iv. 6, 7.

24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon ; he went and said thus unto him : Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon : bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have

found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days: thy dream and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these ;

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

29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

31 ¶ Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image: this great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible.

32 This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors: and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

36 ¶ This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

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

37 Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all : thou *art* this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron : forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things* : and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces, and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided ; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men : but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch, as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold ; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter : and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure,

Think, Reader! what astonishment must have overwhelmed the mind of Babylon's monarch, when beholding a poor captive youth of Israel's race, not only bringing to his recollection all the circumstances which had passed before him in the visions of the night, and which no human being could have had any knowledge of but himself; but, also, undauntedly, and without fear, explaining the dream, though it foreboded the certain destruction of this monarch's own kingdom. Oh! blessed, blessed Lord, what invincible boldness doth grace induce towards man, while humbleness towards God is in the hearts of thy people! Now, Reader, attend to Daniel's interpretation of this dream, and then ponder over the important subject, as we know it hath literally and truly come to pass. The *four* kingdoms would not have merited notice, but as they ministered to the Lord's Church. These were to succeed each other, and exactly did so, as Daniel prophesied. The *head of gold*, in this image, represented the *Chaldean* monarchy. The *silver breast and arms*, pointed to the *Persian* kingdom, which sprung out of the Chaldean, when the former was destroyed by *Cyrus*. See Chap. v. To this succeeded the *Grecian* monarchy, marked in the King's dream by *the belly and thighs of brass*. And the *fourth*, which was denoted by *the legs and feet of iron*, represented the *Roman*, and which remained until that *stone cut out without hands*, meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, the humblest, and lowliest of the sons of men, came to establish his glorious kingdom, and fill the earth. Thus, Reader, behold both the prediction and the event; and in the spiritual kingdom of our Lord, observe how the God of heaven hath set up an empire never to be destroyed. Oh! precious, precious Lord Jesus, *thy kingdom is indeed an everlasting kingdom; and thy dominion that which must remain for ever*.

46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is* that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon.

49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

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

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

But chiefly, Reader! let our improvement of this Chapter be to contemplate Him, whom under the similitude of a *little stone* cut out without hands, was both to destroy all the images of idolatry, and to become a mountain, and fill the earth! Oh, precious, precious Lord

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

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

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

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

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

2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up : and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

5 *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up :

6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down, *and* worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

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

8 ¶ Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

9 They spake, and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.

10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image :

11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

It is very evident, that the whole design of this new dunghill God set up, was, with a view to criminate the faithful Jews. And as upon the late occasion, at the instance of Daniel; those three men were advanced to high honors in Babylon, against those the deadly bow was levelled. I pray the Reader to remark with me *two* things, which, though the Holy Ghost hath not explained, the Lord the Spirit certainly intended the faithful should not overlook. The *one* is, that Daniel, though by the Chaldeans called *Belteshazzar*, in relation to their idol god *Bel*; yet, carefully avoids it in the history, as if despising it, and keeps close to his own real name, in honour of the God of Israel. And the *other* is, that in this accusation of Daniel's companions, Daniel himself is not mentioned. There is no way of accounting for this, but by supposing what is likely to be the case: that Daniel at this time might be absent from the Babylonish court.

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: then they brought these men before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said unto them, *Is it* true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? do ye not serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, *well*: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace: and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchad-

nezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be *so*, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

There needs no comment on these verses, only to observe, that the dreadful fury of the enemies of God and of his CHRIST, have been always the same, as in the instance of this man. Reader! have you never seen, (I have, and remarked it also,) the bitterness of the most hellish malice belching out of the mouths of the haters of the saints in their accusations against them. And have you not seen, on the other hand, that spirit of meekness, such as those saints of God manifested under the crimination of their foes? Oh! what cannot grace accomplish? How tranquil were their minds, opposed to the rage of the King, and what an answer did they give: *If it be so*, that is, if our God doth not interpose to save us from thy wrath, it is not because he *cannot*, but because it is for His greater glory, and our advantage, that he *should not*. Oh! how perfect that peace the soul is kept in, when in such trying seasons, the soul leans wholly on God's sure mercy in Christ! Isaiah xxvi. 3.

19 ¶ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: *therefore* he spake and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bounds in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Ah! wretched *Nebuchadnezzar*! how wilt thou endure the heated furnace of everlasting wrath! What! even if it had killed the faithful servants of the Lord, what would have been *their* sufferings for a few moments, which, in consuming, would soon have put them out of 'all pain, compared to *thy* torments in that lake *whose smoke ascends for ever and ever*? *A worm that never dies, and a fire that cannot be quenched*! Here are torments that do not destroy. *A second death* which is endless, and of never dying misery! Oh! wretched, wretched man! Reader! awfully ponder over those scriptures: Rev. xx, 10. to the end. Mark ix. 43, 44. Isaiah xxxiii. 14.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? they answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Probably the impious wretch was struck with astonishment at the distinguishing providence of God, that while God's servants received no hurt, the very heat of the furnace struck dead those who had laid their hands upon them. But what, did the fire loosen the cords, with which *Shadrach* and his companions were bound, and yet not touch their persons? Yes! so distinguishing was the mercy, that not a hair of their heads was singed. Oh! what tokens are these of Jesus looking on, guiding all, and controuling all! But all is explained to us in what follows. Jesus was with them. Yea, the monster of iniquity shall see Him, like another Balaam, *but not nigh*. Numb. xxiv. 17. Rev. i. 7. Reader! pause, and ponder well the wonderful subject, for the same is every day going on in the Church, though not in such open manifestations. Men may shackle and bind the bodies of the saints: but Jesus loosens the cords of the heart, and gives them an enlargedness of soul in him. Prisons have often shut the saints in; but no prison can ever shut Christ out. Read, I beseech you, some of those many promises to this amount, with which the word of God abounds. Isaiah xliii. 1, 2. Rev. ii 10. John xvi. 33. And then turn to the account the Holy Ghost gives of those illustrious servants of the Lamb, who *through faith quenched the violence of fire*, Heb. xi. from beginning to the end.

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake

and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*: then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came forth of the midst of the fire.

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28 *Then* Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any God except their own God.

29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation and language which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego in the province of Babylon.

Reader! pray observe what is here said. Nebuchadnezzar is astonished, and so are his courtiers. But is this all? Yes! for had there been more than astonishment and any grace wrought in the heart, the accusers of these holy men would have been punished; the King himself would have confessed his guilt, and the Lord God of his faithful servants been acknowledged and adored. And, Reader! is it not so now in what is going on through life? Do the most awful judgments, visitations, deliverances, blessings, or chastisements, produce a change in the minds of men by their operations! Ah! no. If the unhappy apostate spirits now in hell were unchained and freed, devils they would still remain. Nothing but the arm of sovereign grace can subdue the stubborn heart of sinners, whether men or devils. Oh! that this was but thoroughly considered, that so the glory of Jehovah might be known and confessed in the Church of God, that his arm alone bringeth salvation. Reader! do you know this most certain truth of God? Are you a living testimony of his grace, in being the happy object on which that grace hath been shewn? Ephes. ii. 1.

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

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

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

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

NEBUCHADNEZZAR the kingun to all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

3 How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation.

The proud and insolent monarch is here brought to account for his daring impiety towards God, and his cruelty to the Lord's servants. And he is not only compelled to bow down before the Lord's sovereignty, but compelled to publish his disgrace to all the world, and

confess, that the Lord's hand in his just judgment had been upon him. Reader! behold in this man, how sure the scriptures are in truth, that there is, there must be, a day coming to every sinner, in which the LORD will judge the world in righteousness. Psm lviii. 11.

4 I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace :

5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers : and I told the dream before them ; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods : and before him I told the dream, *saying*,

9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

10 Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed, I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great.

11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth :

12 The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all : the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold, a watcher, and an holy one came down from heaven ;

14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit : let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.

15 Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass in the tender grass of the field ; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him : and let seven times pass over him.

17 This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones : to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen, now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the intion thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation : but thou *art* able ; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee.

Observe several striking particulars in this man's account. *First*, he tells us, that he was at rest in his house, and flourishing. Yes ! the word of God teacheth the people of God to be on the look out for the sudden downfall of sinners. When such say *peace and safety*, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as upon a woman in travail, so that they cannot escape. I venture on this occasion to observe, that God's people are not as attentive as they ought to be, and as the word of the Lord recommends them to be, to those sudden judgments of God upon the enemies of his Christ. For though the great day of their ruin is deferred to that day, when the Lord will arise to punish the ungodly, and to minister true judgment to the people ; yet, very frequently *now*, the Lord speaks in a loud voice, for his people, and to his people, in the striking chastisement shewn to the Christ-despising

generation of the present day. Reader! I pray you henceforth, look more to this in what is going on in the world, and depend upon it, you will find continual instances in proof, that, *for the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, the Lord doth arise.* Psalm xii. 5. *Secondly*, in this account of Nebuchadnezzar, he is compelled to see and to confess, that his misery was of the Lord. Here was a bitter aggravation of his ruin. It was *that* God whom he had defied, which now smote him, and which made every scourge a scorpion. *Thirdly*, the wretch trembled, he tells us, in the very recollection of his vision. His own mind, his own conscience, his own guilty fears, sounded the alarm, and left him no retreat. What an awful representation of this kind the man of God hath given of this state of hell upon earth, Deut. xxviii. 65, 66, 67. *Fourthly*, the magicians and wise men he consulted could afford him no help: no, not so much as to be able to explain to him what he wanted to know. Reader! think what a dreadful state that is, when a soul is out of Christ, and under the alarms of a guilty conscience, which no brother, no kind neighbour, no tender-hearted friend, can in the least minister unto. Precious Jesus! how sweet is it to have thee for a brother upon all occasions of sorrow! thou art indeed one *born for adversity.* Prov. xvii. 17. *Fifthly*, behold the necessity imposed upon him to send for Daniel, whose advice he had so set at nought, and whose God he had so boldly despised. Such is the case not unfrequently in ordinary life. Who so laughed at as God's faithful servants, by the sinner in the days of his jollity and mirth? Who so earnestly sought after in the day of sickness and death? When the Reader hath paused sufficiently over these solemn considerations, as they arise out of the view of the state of Nebuchadnezzar's mind; let him attend to the several features of the alarming vision of the night, with which the Lord visited the King, according to the interpretation of Daniel.

19 ¶ Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee: Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth:

21 Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

22 *It is* thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

24 *This is* the interpretation, O king, and *this is* the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

How beautiful the subject of Daniel's interpretation is introduced! Who, but must be struck to behold the youthful Prophet on the one hand, standing like one amazed, in hearing the King's dream; and on the other, to behold Nebuchadnezzar hardened and insensible. See how every part is applied, how every feature corresponds, and how the whole comes up to the conviction, that the punishment is of the Lord. What effect it had for the moment upon Nebuchadnezzar is not said, but we cannot enough admire the faithfulness of Daniel, in concealing nothing from him, nor the grace of God, in enabling him to be faithful. Reader! remember Jesus's promise to this effect to his disciples. Matt. x. 18, 19, 20.

27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing

mercy to the poor : if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

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

28 ¶ All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar,

29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30 The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ?

31 While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken ; the kingdom is departed from thee,

32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field : they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar : and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like birds claws.

Reader ! how truly affecting is this history ! What an awful testimony in confirmation, that the judgment of the enemies of God's Christ, *lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not*. Some curious characters among men, more intent on enquiring into the mode and manner of God's punishments, than anxious for a knowledge of

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

34 And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation :

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing : and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?

36 At the same time my reason returned unto me : and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me ; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me ; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment : and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

What a wonderful train of providences passed upon this man ! What language is here for such a man as Nebuchadnezzar to utter ! One might be almost led to hope, that grace was given to him, seeing he expressed himself in such words. But, as God the Holy Ghost is silent on this point, so must we. Here his history ends. And here therefore we must leave him. I only beg the Reader not to be carried away with appearances, in favour of any man, merely from what

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

REFLECTIONS.

I pray the Reader to ponder well, from the history here given, in the character of one of the greatest monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre of the world, the wretched state of man void of the grace of God. Respecting outward circumstances, there was nothing Nebuchadnezzar wanted to constitute happiness. But what were all outward circumstances, when thus left a prey to the desolate state of a guilty mind, under the hand of God! Reader! mark well the solemn lesson, and turn it every way, the instruction is the same. In the present fallen state of mankind, there is nothing that can bring comfort but Jesus. Every thing beside is tinged with vanity. As many as are under the laws of Moses are condemned; and they without the law, are, as the Apostle saith, *a law unto themselves*; their conscience accusing, or else excusing; and they are, and must be always miserable. Let their condition be what it may, there is nothing that can give peace. But, my brother, if Christ be your portion, He sweetens all; He sanctifies all. Beautifully to this purport, speaks the Lord by the Prophet. *In that day (saith the Lord) will I make a covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.* The sense is; All things, and all creatures, shall promote the peace of him that is at peace with God. *He that overcometh (saith another scripture) shall inherit all things. I will be his God and he shall be my son.* Lord Jesus! make such views blessed, both to Writer and Reader, that in thee, and in thee alone, we may seek for a portion to live upon, in time, and to all eternity!

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

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

BELSHAZZAR the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

2 Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out

of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink therein.

3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines drank in them.

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

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

5 ¶ In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: *and* the king spake and said to the wise *men* of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

8 Then came in all the king's wise *men*: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled,

and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

Behold, Reader! on what a slender thread the happiness of man hangs, when in a moment the appearance on a wall can snap it asunder! What was it so alarmed the revelling prince, and his drunken lords? Simply the view of a man's hand, writing on the wall! But what did he write! In truth, none of the company could tell, for none of them could read it. But what none of them could do, conscience did for them. Belshazzar felt the whole of the evil before it was explained; and more than anticipated all. I beg the Reader to remark with me, the beautiful correspondence between the prediction of this event, and the accomplishment. *Isaiah* had been commissioned to tell of this two hundred years at least before. *Cyrus* was named by the Lord as his servant, to the ruin of Babylon, to *open the two-leaved gates*, and that the Lord would loose, it was said, *the loins of kings*. And here we learn, that *Belshazzar*, (and no doubt his princes also,) literally had this prophecy accomplished in his own person. See *Isaiah* xlv. 1—4. Historians relate, that *Cyrus* found out a passage to enter Babylon through the river *Euphrates*, where there was two-leaved gates. What a wonderful coincidence of providences there must have been, to bring about such events! Reader! never forget that the Lord cannot need instruments for the accomplishment of his will, whenever that will is about to be manifested to his creatures!

10 *Now* the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: *and* the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

11 There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods was found in him: whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, *I say*, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans *and* soothsayers;

12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king, *and* the king spake and said unto Daniel, *Art thou*

that Daniel which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry ?

14 I have even heard of thee that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

15 And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof, but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing :

16 And I have heard of thee that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts : now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

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

17 ¶ Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another ; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known unto him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour :

19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him : whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him :

21 And he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses : they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and *that* he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this ;

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

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

24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him ; and this writing was written.

25 ¶ And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This *is* the interpretation of the thing : MENE ; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL ; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and *put* a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

There is some little difficulty to an ordinary Reader in observing, that the words of the hand writing on the wall, and the manner of Daniel's interpreting them are not the same. The word MENE is twice! which every one who knows any thing of the Hebrew language, knows, is a common way of expressing a thing as certain. TEKEL, *thou art weighed and found light*: these words are as the hand writing of the wall represented them. But the other word, UPHARSIN, differs from what Daniel made it, PERES. But when the Reader be told, that PERES is the singular number of UPHARSIN, this explains it, and removes the difficulty. PERES, *He divideth it*, that is, God hath done it. UPHARSIN, *They divided it*, that is, the *Medes and Persians*, as God's ministry. As the Chaldean and the Hebrew languages had no doubt upon many occasions been thrown together, there seems to have been here a compound of both: so that it is probable Daniel had both in view; the one to the dividing the kingdom, and the other of the nation to whom it was given, that is, both the Medes and Persians. *Cyrus* the Persian conquered it; and *Darius* the Mede, a confederate prince in colleague with *Cyrus*, by agreement was made king over it. It doth not appear that the poor Prophet ever made a public appearance in his scarlet and gold; and indeed, from the death of the king the same night, it should seem improbable that he ever did. But what were such things then, or what are they now, but as the toys of children to the Lord's servants!

30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being* about threescore and two years old.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

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

IT pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

2 And over these, three presidents; of whom Daniel *was* first; that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him: and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

Though there is no date as to the time when this event took place, yet from common calculation, Daniel must have become an old man; for the seventy years were nearly run out of Israel's captivity. And therefore if Daniel had been but a mere youth at the commencement of it, he could not now have been much less, if not more, than four-score at this time. Reader! recollect that sweet passage, Isaiah xlii. 3, 4. How often is it found in the Lord's people!

4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.

Was there ever a more lovely portrait drawn of any man than what is done here of Daniel; and that by his professed enemies. Reader! think what a blessed badge it is, to be charged of bad men for faithfulness to the Lord. Here we see very eminently, that blessedness spoken of by our Lord, Matth. v. 11, 12.

6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

I think it would be wrong to swell the Commentary by unnecessary observations here. The plan was evil; and the intention evil; though as we shall find by the sequel, the Lord overruled it for good. Think, Reader! what must his wisdom be that makes good to spring out of evil; and so arrangeth orders and events, as to make men the uncon-

scious ministers of bringing about the very reverse of what they intended. Such was the history of Joseph's brethren, when from the pit, and the prison, all the illustrious events which followed in the Patriarch's life, were produced. Gen. xlv. 5—8. Such was the case of Mordecai. Esther vii. 9, 10. And yet more blessed than all such in the cross of Christ. For the Jews thought by crucifying the Lord of life and glory, that they should put out his name for ever; whereas that very cross is the believer's triumph. Gal. vi. 14.

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

What a lovely and engaging representation is here again made of Daniel! That which would have daunted the confidence of any man, became the very means of giving Daniel boldness: and what would have kept back the boldest heart from a throne of grace, was made the occasion to drive Daniel thither. Reader! I pray you observe the conduct of this servant of the Lord. He did not go to the king, to beg of him to reverse the sentence, or to pray that he might be excused in the disobedience; but he carried his request to the court of heaven, and there he lodged all his petitions. Here is no concealment, no evasion, no smothering things, and hiding his religion, to comply with the times: but with his windows thrown open towards Jerusalem the holy city, with an eye to the temple, the well known type of Christ, as if looking for his coming; three times a-day, according to his usual custom, he presented his supplications before the throne. Reader! pause, and ask your own heart, whether there be any correspondence in your devotion to that of Daniel's? Can the closet witness for you that you are frequently there; and is your person well known, and familiar to the king, and the glorified inhabitants of Jerusalem? Precious Jesus! what would have become of me in a thousand instances past, and what should I do now, were I prohibited from calling on thee, and presenting all my wants before thee? Oh! for three times three; yea, seventy times seven, to enjoy the fellowship of God and the Lamb in holy communion!

11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying, and making supplication before his God.

12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a *petition* of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den

of lions? the king answered, and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

13 Then answered they, and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a-day.

The event is here stated, just as might have been expected. But oh! how little did those wretched characters consider the awful consequences they were laying the train for; and what a pit they were digging for their own destruction!

14 Then the king when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is*, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. *Now* the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

17 And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords: that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18 ¶ Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep went from him.

What a train of evils the king by his inconsiderateness had brought himself into? But is there not somewhat like the language of faith, and that in lively exercise, in what the king said to Daniel? Well

might Darius spend the night fasting, when for aught he knew, a faithful servant of his, and by his appointment also, was in the same night devoured by lions.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel; *and* the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me: and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den: so Daniel was taken up out of the den: and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, *them*, their children, and their wives: and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Behold, Reader! what a mighty change! Who so apparently forlorn and wretched as faithful Daniel, when cast into the lion's den: who so blessed when taken out? Reader! do not lose sight of these things; for they are the *michtams* of the Lord; and ought to be had in everlasting remembrance of all Christ's redeemed and exercised ones.

25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he *is* the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end.

27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

The subject ends as it might be expected to end. God's faithful servant is delivered: the enemy brought down; and the Lord Jesus himself adored in the salvation of his chosen. So, Lord, let all thy people praise thee, and in the less exercises of the saints of God, give them strength to their day, and send thy salvation out of Zion, to bless thy people in Jerusalem. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! remark here how unremitting the malice of hell hath been of old, and continued from age to age, against Christ and his Church! When nothing could be found to ruin *Daniel* in his trust with men, such is the venom of hatred, that the attempt is made to poison his reputation in his dealings with God. Such hath been, and ever must be, the bitterness of the *Esau's* against the children of promise. But how blessed is it to behold the grace of God in its actions, and on the hearts of God's people! Oh! for the same spirit as actuated the soul of Daniel! The prohibition of men is nothing, when the fear of God possesseth the heart. *Among the gods*, said one of old, *will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord!* And so will every faithful follower of the Lord, though lions be in the way, and hell and destruction oppose. It will be a blessed improvement of this Chapter, if the heart both of Writer and Reader be led therefrom, to seek to the Lord for a portion of the same spirit as actuated the mind of Daniel. Precious Jesus! in thy bright example we behold how blessed it is, when bulls of *Bashan* set themselves against thy people all around, to lay hold by faith of thy strength and grace, and to be more than conquerors through thy power helping us. Oh! Lord! be thou my confidence all the day, so shall I be saved from the lions' dens, and from the mountains of Leopards: and my God will be mine everlasting strength and my glory.

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here in this Chapter introduced into strong visions of God. He is blessed by one that stood by with an interpretation of what he saw.

IN the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream, and visions of his head upon his bed : then he wrote the dream, *and* told the sum of the matters.

In the early ages of the Church, and before the open display and manifestation of God in our nature, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ ; this method of revealing the mind and will of God by dream and vision, concerning the Church, was very common among holy men of old. And even now, it is not wholly done away, for the private comfort of God's people. The Lord doth not unfrequently give songs in the night. Job xxxv. 10. The former part of the Book of Daniel was chiefly historical. In this Chapter, and to the end of his prophecy, it is wholly prophetical.

2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

4 The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings : I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5 And behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it *had* three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it : and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

6 After this I beheld, and lo, another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl ; the beast had also four heads ; and dominion was given to it.

7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and

strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth : it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it : and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it : and it had ten horns.

8 I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots : and behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

There can be no doubt, but that what is here described under the figure and similitude of beasts, relates to kingdoms of the earth. And explaining these prophecies by the events which have followed, it should seem, that there can be no difficulty in supposing, that the *first* beast, like a lion, represented the *Chaldean* monarchy. The *second*, like a bear, set forth the *Persian*, which succeeded it. The *third*, like a leopard, the *Grecian* kingdom. And the *fourth*, the *Roman*. But, Reader ! what a solemn thought is it : where are now the whole or either of these monarchies ? Alas ! the flood of time hath gone over them, and swept them all away. But Jesus and his kingdom is and shall be for ever. Precious consideration to the believer !

9 ¶ I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Antient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool ; his throne *was like* the fiery flame, and his wheels *as* burning fire.

10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him : thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him : the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

11 I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake : I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away : yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, *one* like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14 And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him : his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

But whatever uncertainty we might be under respecting the precise meaning of the vision before related, there can be none in respect of what is said here. To whom can we make application concerning the *Antient of Days*, but to Jehovah, who from one eternity to another, while all the empires of the earth moulder to dust, remains the same in the unchangeable nature of his existence and perfections ; *God over all blessed for ever*. And to whom shall we look for an explanation of what is said, concerning *One like the Son of man*, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who in his mediatorial character, could only be found worthy to take the book out of the hand of him that sat on the throne, and unloose the seals thereof. I pray the Reader to compare this scripture with Rev. Chap. iv. and v. throughout.

15 ¶ I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this : so he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

17 These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings *which* shall arise out of the earth.

18 But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, whose teeth *were* of iron, and his nails *of* brass ; *which* devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet ;

20 And of the ten horns that *were* in his head,

and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows.

21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them:

22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High: and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

25 And he shall speak *great* words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy *it* unto the end.

27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High; whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey him.

28 Hitherto *is* the end of the matter: as for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

To the mind of Daniel, in a period so remote as he lived from the advent of Christ, and especially in a character like Daniel, evidently inspired and appointed to be a Prophet in the Church, in the awful times in which he lived; all that is here said of his grief, and the earnestness of his inquiry to be informed concerning the vision, was very highly proper and praise-worthy. But, I beg the Reader, rather to wait and watch the Lord's explanation of this and all other the prophetic parts of scripture, yet remaining to be fully made known, than presume to be wise above what is written. It is enough to make a truly awakened child of God to tremble, in beholding what unhalloved hands have written, and unregenerated hearts have suggested, concerning the Prophecies of God in the several ages of the Church. Reader! let you and I rest in what is here said concerning our Redeemer's kingdom, fully satisfied, for it is enough, and more we cannot need. Christ is here said to possess a kingdom, which shall be for ever and ever. This is one precious truth. And there is another like it, with which indeed it is connected, and the one included in the other: namely, the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, which shall be for ever. Here then is enough for every child of God to know, and to rest in. To presume to go further, and to point to persons and things in the present day, to the compliment of one, and to the reproach of another, is to limit, in my humble opinion, the Holy One of Israel, and to hazard the divine displeasure. The Lord grant that his faithful ones may be kept faithful among that little handful of the saints of the Most High, as they are here called, which are now in the earth. It is to be exceedingly feared by what we behold in the present day, that it is indeed but a *little handful*, and much less than too many suppose. Every one that loves our Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth, may well be alarmed for the present awful times, and seriously ponder that alarming question of Jesus: *when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Luke xviii. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, Reader! over this most sublime and blessed Chapter; and passing by every lesser consideration, contemplate this, as the highest and the best on what is said of Him, whom Daniel saw, *the Antient of Days*, in the glories of his person, and Almightyness of his character! Perhaps the whiteness of his garment might be meant to intimate the purity and holiness of his nature and essence. And it is possible, by the hairs of his head, like the pure wool, might be intended to represent the sovereignty of his glory and majesty. But, alas! what figures or similitudes can afford the least resemblance of Him, *who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see!* Almighty Jehovah! before thy footstool help both Writer and Reader to fall down with the lowest possible prostration of soul and body; everlastingly keeping in remembrance, that both now to a throne of grace, and hereafter to glory, there is no possibility of access, but in and through a gracious Mediator, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

And concerning thee, thou blessed Emmanuel, whom the Prophet Daniel saw also, in this solemn vision, under the similitude of One like the Son of man; help us to look up with all that love, and adoration, and holy fear, and faith, and delight, as becometh thy redeemed. For do we not know, dearest Jesus, by the teachings of thine Holy Spirit, that since thou didst finish redemption-work, and art returned unto glory, it is thou that hast opened a new and living way by thy blood, and ever livest to keep it open by thine intercession. Hail! precious Lamb of God! worthy art thou to take the kingdom, and power, and glory, *for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*

And no less, thou Eternal Spirit of all truth, who art one with the Father and the Son! be thou exalted and glorified Lord, in thine own personal power and Godhead! And may all the Church, both in heaven and on earth, daily be enabled to send forth their united praises to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the One glorious and incomprehensible Jehovah in endless adoration and love, through the boundless ages of eternity. Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here favoured with more visions of GOD. An angel interprets the vision to Daniel. Special allusions in the vision to the Church.

IN the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, *even unto me* Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.

2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass when I saw, that I *was* at Shushan in the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns: and the *two* horns *were* high, but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beast might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand, but he did according to his will, and became great.

The *third* year of the reign of Belshazzar must have been before what is related of his death in the fifth Chapter; only this vision of Daniel is not placed in that order. The Prophet had his mind so impressed with this vision, that he puts down the place in which he supposed himself to have been in vision, and twice repeats, that it was to him, even to him, the vision was shewn. Under the figure of a ram with two horns, might not unaptly represent the divided kingdom or government of *Media* and *Persia*; as the after explanation of Gabriel makes it to be. But what I am chiefly earnest the Reader should keep in view, is, the reference the whole hath to the Church of Christ. Were it not for this one grand object, the very name of Babylon, and of the Medes and Persians, would hardly have been remembered at the present hour.

5 And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes.

6 And he came to the ram that had *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

8 Therefore the he-goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant *land*.

10 And it waxed great *even* to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

11 Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince

of the host; and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

12 And an host was given *him* against the daily *sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

The principal feature of this history, in the battle of rams and he-goats, (meaning the kings of the earth,) is what is said of this creature magnifying himself against the Prince of the host, even Jesus and his people. And the host given unto him, against *the daily sacrifice*, can mean no other than the obstruction given by the king to the ordinances of God's house. The history of the Church confirms this. An Eastern monarch of the name of *Antiochus*, literally prohibited the Jews from this daily sacrifice, as we are informed in history.

13 ¶ Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain *saint* which spake, How long *shall be* the vision concerning the daily *sacrifice*, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

There is somewhat interesting in this short account; short as it is, of what the Prophet over-heard of this conversation. It shews how attentive ministering spirits are in their office, *who are sent forth to minister unto them who are heirs of salvation*. Depend upon it, Reader! we are never less alone than when alone! Various have been the calculations of curious persons, concerning this period of two thousand and three hundred days. But the subject is left just where men find it. No one hath been taught of God the Spirit the method of ascertaining it with exactness. And to me, I confess, it borders on presumption to attempt being wise above what is written. When the thing predicted is accomplished, the end is then seen. But how should unenlightened, unawakened men, who were never taught of God, be competent to discover *secret things which belong to the Lord*.

15 And it came to pass when I, *even I Daniel*, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between *the banks*

of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision.

17 So he came near where I stood : and when he came, I was afraid ; and fell upon my face : but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man : for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision.

18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground : but he touched me, and set me upright.

19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation : for at the time appointed the end *shall be*.

I feel more disposed to enquire who this man was whose voice Daniel heard, than to attend to what the laboured efforts of un-awakened, unregenerated men have written, in determining according to their presumptuous reasonings concerning the period of the two thousand three hundred days. The *former* is instructive, interesting, and profitable. The *latter* can be no more than conjecture after all, and too much obscured with mystery to speak of with any certainty. But I would humbly propose to the gracious mind, as a subject of meditation, whether this man, whose voice Daniel heard, was not the Glory-man CHRIST JESUS ! Who, indeed, but JESUS could it be to command Gabriel to instruct Daniel ? Reader ! it is very blessed to observe in the goings forth of him, who hath been as the head and husband of his Church from everlasting, how the LORD watched over the interests of his people in all ages : and how by the very frequent manifestation of himself to Old Testament saints, he intimated his earnestness for the time to arrive, when he should openly tabernacle among his people.

20 The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia.

21 And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia : and the great horn that *is* between his eyes, *is* the first king.

22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by

his own power : and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many : he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes : but he shall be broken without hand.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is* true : wherefore shut thou up the vision ; for it *shall be* for many days.

27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick *certain* days : afterward I rose up, and did the king's business : and I was astonished at the vision ; but none understood *it*.

Who this fierce king points at, or what awful indignation is to take place at the time, when the latter kingdom shall come, and the transgressions are come to the full ; I presume not to say. But one spiritual improvement ariseth out of it, which both Writer and Reader will do well to regard : namely, how awful are all the Lord's visitations, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. We behold Daniel's mind so affected in the very contemplation of it, that though he knew it would not happen in his days, yet, it induced sickness and fear. There is a sickness of soul as well as sickness of body, and both may be supposed to have their operations on the Lord's faithful ones in times of sorrow for Zion's welfare. But in the midst of these, while the soul lives on the Person, Work, and glory of the Lord JESUS CHRIST ; the purposes of an unchangeable God in Covenant, will bring comfort *within*, when matters are ever so unpromising *without*. Oh ! how truly blessed is it to have this Covenant God in CHRIST to fly to, and to trust in, when the world is convulsed with storms and tempests, and all things in disorder !

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! let us both beg of God for grace to gather suitable improvements from this Chapter, and such as God the Holy Ghost evidently intended the Church should derive from the perusal of it in all ages. The image of the ram with two horns, and the goat with a notable horn between his eyes, these similitudes are explained to us in the Chapter, and had their accomplishment in the kingdoms of *Media* and *Persia*, and of *Grecia* that succeeded both, and have long since been done away. But the vision of the *evening*, and the *morning*, and the *daily sacrifice* ; these are subjects of everlasting meditation, and lead to unceasing improvement under divine teaching, as long as the Church shall continue on the earth. And who doth not

see, blessed and eternal Spirit, when taught by thee, the sweet allusions in those things in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, and daily sacrifice, to the person, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is not Jesus *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*? And if the exhibition by type of this sacrifice was needful, so the Lord thought fit that it should be set forth both morning and evening, to manifest, that from the morning of life to the evening of it in death, a propitiation is needful for sin, and becomes continually necessary! And Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of the subject, as often as the Holy Ghost graciously brings it before thee, that this contemplation of the Lamb of God taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is of all subjects the most momentous and interesting. Think, Reader! how infinitely meritorious in itself. Think how blessed must it have been in the sight of God the Father, when for four thousand years together, before the thing to be accomplished was brought to pass, the Lord appointed a daily memorial of it, in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, to be sacrificed! Precious Jesus! let it be our daily delight, both in the morning and evening of every day, to contemplate thy body bruised, and thy soul made an offering for sin! Frequently, Lord, at thy table, and in thine house of prayer, be it our happiness to commemorate thy death in holy communion. And while we behold the Lamb of God taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself; give to us such rich views of God the Father's complacency, in the blessed act of Christ dying for us, that we may enter into the most lively conviction and certainty, that when he died on the cross, for the sin of his people, he *died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God*. Jesus was then made sin, and a curse for his redeemed, that *they might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Amen.

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

We have here as interesting a Chapter as in the whole book of prophecy, and which wholly treats of the Lord JESUS CHRIST. Daniel is taught of God, by books, to count the number of the years determined to the Babylonish captivity. He is deeply engaged in fasting and prayer, when he is favoured with a vision. The exact period to Jerusalem's bondage is marked out to him.

IN the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

2 In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

The Prophet is particular to set down the precise time of this wonderful and blessed vision. I call it *wonderful*, because of the grace manifested to the Church at such a season, when suffering captivity for their rebellion. And it is most blessed surely, for the Holy Ghost hath commissioned it with blessedness to thousands of the Lord's people in all ages. The first year of *Darius* corresponds to the first year of *Cyrus*; for *Cyrus* and *Darius*, jointly reigned after the death of *Belshazzar*. And it was that memorable year, in which *Cyrus* made proclamation for the Jews to return if they wished it, to their own country, about five hundred and thirty-six years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. See *Ezra* i. 1, &c. Daniel was at this time taught concerning the memorable prophecy of *Jeremiah*. See *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxv. 8—13. and xxix. 10. Daniel found, by comparing what the Prophet *Jeremiah* in those scriptures had said, with what was passed, and then come, that the seventy years were now expired.

3 ¶ And I set my face unto the Lord GOD to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes :

4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O LORD, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments ;

5 We have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments :

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 O LORD, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day : to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are near*, and *that are far off*, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

8 ¶ O LORD, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9 To the LORD our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy laws, even by departing that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us; yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth; for we obeyed not his voice.

15 And now, O LORD our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt, with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16 ¶ O LORD, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us.

17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer

of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the LORD's sake.

18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee, for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

19 O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, hearken, and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

The Lord had said by his servant *Ezekiel*, that for all his promised blessings, *he would be enquired of by the house of Israel*. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Here, therefore, *Daniel* set himself to pray, and that earnestly. And what a beautiful earnest supplication it is. The very soul of the Prophet seems to be going forth with every petition. I do not think it needful to point to the Reader the many blessed things contained in it. The prayer would lose its own lovely simplicity, and force, by any comment. I only beg the Reader to remark with me, the devout breathings which appear in it, of a soul truly in earnest, in wrestling with God. His solemn address, his free, and full acknowledgment, of his own and the people's guilt, and God's just punishment. His view of the accomplishment of scripture, in having disregarded God's threatenings; the obduracy and indifferency shewn by the people to the Lord's chastisements; the tender mercies of the Lord through all, that they had not been given up, as they justly deserved, to total ruin; these are all so many strong points, the Man of God dwells upon in prayer, most particularly and strikingly. But, what I beg the Reader yet more especially to remark, is, the argument the Prophet lays all his stress upon, when pleading for divine mercy: I mean, in the person, work, and glory of Christ, as Jehovah's covenant. *For thine own sake*, he saith, *defer not, O my God*. He had urged before very strong causes, why the Lord should be gracious. Jerusalem was the holy city; the Lord's name was there; and mercy was asked for it, not for the deservings of the people, but for the Lord's own righteousness. But Daniel makes this the finishing and unanswerable argument, *his own sake*, as God in covenant in Christ. Reader! do not fail to remember, that this, and this alone, is the one all-prevailing motive with Jehovah. This is the bow Jehovah hath set in the cloud, and to which he looks. And this the only foundation of hope to the Church in all ages. Gen. ix. 12—16. Isaiah liv. 9, Rev. iv. 3.

20 ¶ And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the

LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21 Yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

Who this Gabriel was, is not so very plain, as for us positively to decide. Daniel calls him *the man*. Hence some have thought it was Christ. It should seem to be the same as appeared in after ages to Zacharias. Luke i. 19. But whether Christ, or not, remains to be determined. One thing we certainly know, that our adorable Redeemer made frequent secret manifestations of himself, before his open display in substance of our flesh; as if to tell the Church, how much he longed for the time appointed, when he should come to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. I beg the Reader to make one observation more, upon what is said in those verses. It was about the time of the evening oblation, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon: the memorable hour in which Christ gave up the ghost. And it is well worthy the Reader's as well as the Writer's most diligent observation, that with an eye to this one great event, to which every type, and every sacrifice under the law had reference, and in which the whole had their fulfilment: all the evening sacrifices were at that very hour. Hence we read, that Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the *ninth* hour, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon, Acts iii. 1. Pause, Reader! and consider how important must this one glorious offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all, have been in the eye of God the Father; when in his appointments of the Jewish sacrifices, the evening oblation, from the beginning, had the very hour of Christ's death, as well as Christ's sacrifice, set forth. Reader! shall not this hour, henceforth be peculiarly sacred to our meditations? Methinks, I would, if possible, never let it pass without arresting its fleeting moments to thoughts of Jesus! This I would say, as the clock strikes *three*, this was the solemn hour, in which, after darkness had covered the face of the earth, from the *sixth* to the *ninth* hour, Jesus, my adorable Lord, cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. Luke xxiii. 44—46. See Exod. xxix. 41. 1 Kings xviii. 36.

22 And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew *thee*: for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Observe the gracious condescension of *the man Gabriel*. (I say *the man Gabriel*, because I wish to use the very same name as the

Scripture.) Supposing him to have been a *created angel*, his kindness in his message deserves our thanks. We know that angels are ministring spirits, and commissioned by our Lord God to our good. Heb. i. 14. Psm. xxxiv. 7. But supposing, (what I confess I am rather inclined to believe,) that this man Gabriel was the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! Reader! contemplate his love! Well might Paul desire, as the chiefest of all blessings, to be able to comprehend with all saints, *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge*. Ephes. iii. 18, 19. When Daniel is said to be greatly beloved, or as the Hebrew hath it, *greatly desired*, or a *man of desires*; how blessed is it to consider the loveliness of the Lord's people in Jesus. Ezek. xvi. 14. Song iv. 7. I must detain the Reader with one observation more on this passage. The man Gabriel tells Daniel, that it was at *the beginning of his supplication* he came forth, to shew him the matter of this vision. Consequently, it was not for any arguments Daniel had used in prayer: neither was it for the merit of his prayer that the message came. Sweet consideration this to encourage the Lord's people in prayer! For when the Lord sets his people to pray, he is coming forth in mercy to bless; and their prayers become not the motive for divine favour, but the preparation of the Lord's grace in their hearts to qualify them for the mercy. The Lord teacheth them to ask for what he hath already prepared for them, and is about to give, so that the promise is fulfilled; *before my people call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear*. Isaiah lxxv. 24.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, *shall be* seven weeks: and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood: and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with

many for one week : and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate.

We have within the compass of these few verses one of the most illustrious prophecies of scripture : and blessed be our God, he who gave the prophecy, hath given to his Church to see the fulfilment of it. The prophecy itself is introduced by the man Gabriel with great solemnity, and equal affection. Daniel had simply prayed for the restoration of his people from the Babylonish captivity. But the Lord not only answers this to the full, and tells him that that captivity is now over; but the Lord opens to the Prophet's mind a subject of infinitely higher moment, in the deliverance from a more grievous captivity : of sin, death, and hell, by the wonderful coming, and more wonderful labours, sufferings, and blood-shed of the Son of God. Seventy years had been determined, and was now past, of Israel's captivity in Babylon. Now Daniel is called upon to number seventy weeks more to be accomplished, and the Shiloh shall come, *to whom the gathering of the people should be*, Gen. xlix. 10. What a blessed promise was here ! What a glorious answer to prayer ! Various have been the opinions of men, concerning the commencement and termination of those *seventy weeks*. Volumes have been written on the subject : and the matter is left just where the whole body of writers found it. Reader ! let it be your wisdom and mine to rest satisfied in those grand points, concerning this blessed prophecy ; that it hath been fulfilled ; that Christ to whom it pointed is come ; that he was, and is, and ever will be, the anointed, and the most holy ; that he hath finished transgression : mark the expression, *finished it* ; not sin in this or that man, but sin itself, made an *end* of sin ; sealed up sin, as the margin of our old Bibles hath it ; so that when sin is sought for it is not found ; *made reconciliation also for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness* ; that he hath been cut off, but not for himself, hath confirmed the covenant with many, and caused the sacrifice to cease. These are truths, facts, and doctrines, perfectly plain, clear, and undeniable. And whether the *seventy weeks*, (which, no doubt, agreeable to scripture language, meant *weeks of years*) making four hundred and ninety years, were to commence the *first* year of the people's deliverance from Babylon, when Cyrus commanded them to return ; or as some think, at the command of *Artaxerxes*, another prince of Persia, about one hundred years after, see Ezra vi. 11, &c. in either case the events are the same. Certain it is, that near two thousand years are run out since Christ came, and *finished transgression, and made an end of sin by the sacrifice of himself*. So that the Jews who reject Christ, can now expect no other Christ from all their own prophecies. And while believers rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, in him that is come ; they are now, and for many centuries have been, as one of their Prophets

described them, abiding *without a king, without a prince, without sacrifice, without an image, and ephod, and teraphim*. The Lord grant the prophecy that follows may be hastening to be fulfilled. Hosea iii. 4, 5. Romans xi. 25 to the end.

REFLECTIONS.

GRACIOUS God! what praises hath the Church of the Lord Jesus to offer for the illustrious prophecy contained in this Chapter! Blessed be God, in that he left not himself without witness, when for the transgressions of Israel he gave them over into the hand of the enemy! Blessed be God, in sending his Prophets *Ezekiel and Daniel* with the Church, that *the law should not perish from the priests, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the Prophet*. Blessed be God, that enabled Daniel to read the word of the Lord, in a strange land, and gave him grace, and wisdom, to understand by this blessed Book of God, the number of years to be accomplished in the desolations of Jerusalem. And blessed be God, for handing down to the Church in succeeding generations, and so on to the present hour, the records both of the prophecy and the accomplishment; whereby we behold the exact correspondence; and can, and do, trace our mercies to their source, and discover the Lord presiding over and appointing all. And now, O Lord! as we have here seen thy grace and mercy magnified to thy servant the Prophet; so we beseech thee, that thou wouldest go on to display all the riches of thy grace to the Church at large, in the person, work, blood-shedding, and glory of thy dear Son. We behold, Lord, in this glorious scripture, the features of Jesus very plainly and clearly drawn. And we have seen in the Gospel, how truly the original answers to the portrait. Yea! blessed Jesus, thou wast indeed in the days of thy flesh, anointed as the most holy, to seal up the vision and prophecy, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness. Heavenly Redeemer! let this righteousness be unto all, and upon all thy people, for there is no difference. And, oh! Lord! grant to thy servants now, as to thy *Daniels* of old, such revelations of thine holy will as may suit the wants of thy Church now, as the ministration of thy Prophets were needed then. And may every enlightened eye, like that of Daniel, be always on the look out in the expectation of thy second coming; that when the weeks appointed for the desolations of thy people be run out, Jesus may come to take his people home to himself, that *where he is, there they may be also*. Amen.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

We are here introduced into the acquaintance of another vision of the Prophet's. Daniel is observing a long and solemn fast, when he is suddenly visited by One, who appeared in great glory. The Prophet being exceedingly troubled in the view of the vision, is comforted by an angel.

IN the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true; but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

It appears from the date of this vision, that it was about two years after the former. The Lord was about to do great things for his Church, and therefore, was thus preparing the minds both of Prophet and people for his mercies. We have an account of Daniel's long fasting. Oh! for grace to mortify the body by the Spirit, that we may live! Romans viii. 11.

4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I *was* by the side of the great river, which *is* Heddekel;

5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked: and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins *were* girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

6 His body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

I do not presume to say who this glorious person was. But I think, if the Reader will turn to the first Chapter of the Revelations, verses 10—16. he will be led to conclude, that it could be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Precious Jesus! how endeared do such visits

render thee to thy people. Here a priest also, as there : and all to shew, that thou hast an unchangeable and never-ceasing priesthood !

7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision : for the men that were with me saw not the vision : but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me : for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

9 Yet heard I the voice of his words : and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

Reader ! observe what solemn effects are both upon Prophet and Apostle, when Christ is seen in his glory ! what we might esteem comeliness before, is then, in the view of Jesus turned into corruption. Reader ! think what would it be for ever, even in heaven itself, if the redeemed were not made comely in Christ's righteousness, and from the comeliness Jesus puts upon his people. Ezek. xvi. 14. I beg the Reader not to overlook what is here said of the trembling of Daniel's companions, and that he alone saw this vision. So was it with Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 17. So also with Paul, Acts ix. 7. And what is all this, but so many proofs of distinguishing grace, by which we plainly see, the Lord doth according to his own promise manifest himself to his people, *otherwise than he doeth to the world*, *Isa* xiv. 22, 23. *J. Sch*

10 ¶ And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and *upon* the palms of my hands.

11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright : for unto thee am I now sent : and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel : for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard ; and I am come for thy words.

13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision *is* for *many* days.

I beg the Reader to be particularly attentive to what is said of the silence, fear, and vast humbleness of soul manifested by the Prophet. Think, Reader, what a solemn thing it must be, to have personal communion with the Lord, even when cloathed in the Lord's own righteousness! If Daniel, a man greatly beloved, felt all this, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? But, observe the gracious hand touching Daniel! Behold another Prophet so favoured, Isaiah vi. 1—7. And an Apostle, Rev. i. 17.

15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

16 And behold, *one* like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

18 Then there came again and touched me *one* like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

19 And said, O man, greatly beloved, fear not; peace *be* unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong, and when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak: for thou hast strengthened me.

20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight

with the prince of Persia : and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth ; and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

There is some little difficulty to apprehend the whole of this passage. Daniel had before described a very glorious person, at whose presence he put his face to the ground. And here it should seem, at the first reading, to be *another* person who touched his lips ; for he describes him as one like the similitude of the sons of men, and like the appearance of a man. But, is it not, (for I humbly ask the question, and presume not to decide upon it,) is it not probable to be one and the same person ? In the *former* manifestation, displaying somewhat greater brightness of his glory Mediator. And in the *latter*, of his human nature ? Jesus is always found to make the sweetest and most soul-strengthening manifestations of himself, when he comes down to us under the lovely and endearing character of our brother. We feel encouraged, and we delight to go to him. As to what is said of *Michael*, the prince of the people, this serves to confirm it more than lessen it. For the battle in heaven is said to have been by *Michael* against the old serpent the Devil. And though some may be found, who speak of archangels as well as angels ; yet, the scriptures uniformly speak only of *one archangel*, for there is but *one* ; and this one can be no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant. Malachi iii. 1. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Jude ix.

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! let our improvement of this blessed Chapter be, to admire the wonderful grace, love, and condescension of our adorable Lord Jesus ; in his manifestation to his servant the Prophet : and the solemn effect wrought upon the Prophet's mind, even in the mercy.

Precious Lord ! never can thy people sufficiently admire the astonishing love that must be in thine heart, when we behold such evidences of thine attention towards them. Was it not enough, blessed Jesus, when the fulness of time should come, that thou shouldst so readily and freely give *thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ?* And was it not to shew thy people in the several ages before the time arrived, how much thy soul was bent to redeem them, and that thine whole heart was towards them, and full of love ? And in confirmation of it, didst thou, dearest Emanuel, visit then one and then another of thy saints, and tell them, that they were greatly beloved ? Lord ! shed abroad a portion of that love in our cold hearts, and cause us to love thee, who hast so freely and so greatly loved us !

Reader ! do not close this Chapter, neither pass away from the contents of it, until that thou hast duly pondered what is here said of Daniel's comeliness, turned into corruption, in the view of the Holy

One. Think, my brother sinner, I beseech you, how solemn, how awful, how overwhelming, must be the open view of Christ in his glory! What must be the feelings of the soul, in the moment of death, when departing the body, at the first interview; yea, the first glimpse, of the Lord Jesus? I am speaking now of God's redeemed ones; of souls truly regenerated, and who are clothed in the robe of Jesus's own righteousness. Yet even with them, how solemn, how truly awful and affecting! But, if so, think again, my brother, and ask the heart, what it must be to the soul of him, who cometh up from the bed of death without a surety, without the Redeemer's righteousness, and without Christ as an advocate! What trembling, what paleness, what horror, must then be upon the soul? Lord Jesus! be thou my righteousness now; and then wilt thou be my everlasting confidence, through life, in death, at the day of judgment, and for evermore. Amen.

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

We have here a long and particular account of Kings in Persia, and of the realm of Greece. Daniel receives the relation from the same person as in the foregoing Chapter. In the close, a short, but striking account is given, of some formidable foe to the Church, which shall plant his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain.

ALSO I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Here is a plain and evident inference to the kings and kingdom of Persia, which arose out of the Chaldean; and from the connection which the Church was obliged to have with this kingdom, after Cyrus

had made proclamation for the Jews to return to their own land; it became to Daniel and to his fellows a very blessed scripture. But to the Church in the present hour it ceases to be prophetical, though thus far we may regard it as a precious monument, in proof of the Lord Jehovah's faithfulness. See Ezra, chap. i, &c.

5 ¶ And the king of the south shall be strong, and *one* of his princes: and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion *shall be* a great dominion.

6 And in the end of years they shall join themselves together: for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of the arm: neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in *these* times.

7 But out of a branch of her roots shall *one* stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

8 And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, *and* with their precious vessels of silver and of gold: and he shall continue *more* years than the king of the north.

9 So the king of the south shall come into *his* kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

10 But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and *one* shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up *even* to his fortress.

11 And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, *even* with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude: but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

12 *And* when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up, and he shall cast down *many* ten thousands; but he shall not be strengthened *by it*.

13 For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

14 And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of my people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

15 So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither *shall there be any* strength to withstand.

16 But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

17 He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do; and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her; but she shall not stand *on his side*, neither be for him.

18 After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease: without his own reproach he shall cause *it* to turn upon him.

19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble, and fall, and not be found.

20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes *in* the glory of the kingdom: but within

few days he shall be destroyed ; neither in anger nor in battle.

21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom : but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

22 And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken ; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

23 And after the league *made* with him he shall work deceitfully : for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

24 He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province : and he shall do *that* which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers : he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches, *yea*, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.

25 And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army : and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army ; but he shall not stand : for they shall forecast devices against him.

26 Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow ; and many shall fall down slain.

27 And both these kings' hearts *shall be* to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table : but it shall not prosper : for yet the end *shall be* at the time appointed.

28 Then shall he return into his land with great riches : and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant : and he shall do *exploits*, and return to his own land.

29 At the time appointed he shall return, and

come toward the south : but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

30 For the ships of Chittim shall come against him : therefore he shall be grieved and return : and have indignation against the holy covenant : so shall he do ; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

31 And arms shall stand on his parts, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries : but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*.

33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many ; yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil *many* days.

34 Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help : but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

35 And *some* of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end : because *it is* yet for a time appointed.

36 And the king shall do according to his will ; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished : for that that is determined shall be done.

37 Neither shall he regard the god of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any God : for he shall manify himself above all.

38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of

forces : and a god whom his fathers knew not, shall he honour with gold and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things.

39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory : and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him : and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships : and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown : but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries : and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt : and the Lybians and the Ethiopians *shall be* at his steps.

44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him : therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain : yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

If my Reader be more curious to make search into hidden things, than to turn over again and again those which the Lord hath revealed, I fear that he will not be pleased with the shortness I purpose to observe, in my Commentary on this Chapter, and in including almost the whole Chapter under one view. But my apology is this. Where the word of God is not very clear and plain, I humbly conceive, that the Lord's intention is, in this obscurity, his people should humbly

wait the explanation of prophecy, until that in the accomplishment, the thing predicted, by the event, be explained. If (as some think) what is here said, hath already been fulfilled in the kingdoms of Persia and Greece; and since those periods, in Pagan Rome, and Papal Rome; there will need no further comment. But if there are yet remaining in those scriptures, things to be unfolded, I humbly conceive, they will only be so unfolded, agreeably to all the other prophecies of God, as the events predicted come forward. One thing I beg the godly Reader to observe, how several circumstances respecting the Church of God, are incorporated and mixed up with the prophecies concerning other nations in this Chapter. Hence the Reader may notice what is said (verse 14) of *the robbers of God's people*. And in like manner (verse 16,) of *the glorious land being consumed*. So again, verse 22, of *the Prince of the covenant*; and of *the hatred of the enemies of God to the holy covenant*, (verses 28 and 30,) of the pollution of *the daily sacrifice and the sanctuary*, and of taking away *the daily sacrifice*, and placing *the abomination that maketh desolate*, verse 31. All these, and similar phrases, we may, without violence, safely apply to the destruction of the Jewish temple, after our Lord's ascension; and which Jesus himself foretold. Hence that memorable passage, Matt. xxiv. 15. compared with Luke xxi. 20. *When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place*. But when we have paid all due respect to this explanatory passage of our Lord Jesus, and which, as far as it goes, becomes altogether satisfactory and decisive; we shall do right by this Chapter, to observe the same conduct, as was ordered to Daniel, in closing up his book of prophecy altogether. *Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed, to the time of the end*. Chap. xii. 9. Lord! cause both Writer and Reader, thus far to become wise in prophecy, and which is the wisest and truest improvement of the whole, to see that *to Jesus give all the prophets witness, that through his Name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*. Acts x. 43.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter, and behold in it the evidences of the Lord's tender mercies over his people. Though they were in captivity, and justly suffering punishment for their sins, yet, still the Lord hath an eye over them for good, and will not *finally cast away his people whom he foreknew*. Hence they shall be told what is to happen to them, after their deliverance from Babylon. The Persian, and the Grecian, and the Roman government, are shewn to be in succession to each other, and all to make way for Christ. And no doubt, He that brought the Prophet acquainted with the events which were to come to pass, gave him also an assurance of the Church's redemption in Jesus, with all the blessings that were to follow, by reason of Christ's coming.

Reader! and shall not you and I find confidence in the whole of God's promises in Christ, to look still forward, with the most pleasing faith, for the accomplishment of all yet remaining to be fulfilled, in the person, work, and righteousness, of God our Saviour? Did Daniel

thus receive knowledge in the events to come concerning the Church ; and is the interests of the Church less dear to Christ now ? Have not we lived to see all things accomplished, which were here foretold ; and are not all these so many additional testimonies to the truth, *as it is in Jesus* ? Hail holy, blessed, Almighty Lord ! give to both Writer and Reader, grace, to wait in full assurance of faith, for all the events connected with thy second coming. And oh ! grant, that that faith, may be so lively, in all its actings upon thee, that *when thou shalt appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before thee, at thy coming.*

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

The prophecy of Daniel closeth in this Chapter, with some most gracious assurances of Israel's deliverance; from all her troubles. Daniel's mind is exercised with thoughts concerning the same. The Lord's gracious consolation to the Prophet.

AND at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince, which standeth for the children of thy people : and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time : and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Here is a most lovely account of Jesus, and of his office-character, as Mediator. I do not hesitate to believe, that the *Michael* here spoken of is Christ. In confirmation, turn to those scriptures. Rev. i. v. Chap. xii. 7—11. How Christ then stood up for all eternity : how in time, and how for ever ; all his offices typify. Prov. viii. 22, 23. Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. Heb. vii. 24, 25. 2 Thess. i. 10. In every point of view, it must be a time of trouble. When Christ comes to make up his jewels, he comes also to take vengeance of them *that know not God, nor obey the gospel of Jesus*. Mal. iv. 1. 2 Peter iii. 10, 11. But what a sweet close is this verse, of the safety of Jesus' own ! Isaiah iv. 3. Luke x. 20. Rev. xx. 12—15.

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame, *and* everlasting contempt.

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

Those who believe in the doctrine of the *Millennium*, take the first of these sweet verses for one, among the evidences of it. And others refer it wholly to the Lord's judgment at the last day. In either sense, or in both, the thought is pleasing to the faithful in Christ Jesus, and tremendous to unbelievers. See Isaiah xxvi. 19. The blessed account of those who are *wise to win souls*, is very graciously expressed. Jesus takes account now of all that is done upon earth in love to Him, and his gospel. And though not on the score of merit, yet on the score of love, all will be recompensed. Heb. vi. 10.

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Reader! do not overlook the sweetness of this verse. As Daniel would not live to see the accomplishment of these things, it was enough for him to be made the medium, the instrument in the Lord's hand, of giving this prophecy to the Church. But as the things here predicted have been fulfilled, and are fulfilling still in the earth, how gracious was it to us, in the present hour, that this greatly beloved Daniel thus was appointed to minister to our comfort. Oh! gracious Lord, how plain is it that thou hast presided over thy Church in all ages!

5 ¶ Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

6 And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders.

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished.

8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*?

9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

If the Reader diligently remarks what is said in these verses, he will discover *three* persons here described: *one* on each side of the river; and *one* standing upon the waters of the river! There seems a greater degree of glory and pre-eminency in this person, than in the other two. Probably it was Christ, attended by two angels. So it was probably in the visit to Abraham. Gen. xviii. 1, 2, &c. If this conjecture be right, it is remarkable that the angels knew nothing of the time of these events to be accomplished. They are represented as desiring to look into these things. 1 Peter i. 12. The redemption by Jesus is the wonder of angels, as well as the mystery of godliness among men. But, Reader! pause over what is here said, both of the person, the oath, and the manner of using it, which are all recorded. The person could be no other than Christ. See in confirmation, Rev. x. 5, 6. the oath; Jehovah is appealed to, and sworn by. Both hands lifted up. Those sacred hands with which he blessed his people on the Mount in the moment of departure. Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Various have been the opinions of men, in all ages, concerning the *time*, *times*, and *an half*. Calculating by years, some have put down the number, and refer it to the *three years and half* of our Lord's ministry on earth. But certain it is, that there is a purposed obscurity thrown over it by the Lord himself, as if it should not be known-until the thing predicted be fulfilled. And the Lord's command to Daniel, to go his way, and telling him, that the words are closed to the time of the end, seems, one might have thought, sufficiently satisfactory, to stop the hands of confident men from presuming to lift up the covering, and becoming bold enough to attempt explaining what they themselves do not know. Reader! let you and I leave it with the Lord. It will be explained in due time. In the mean season, let us attend to what is more plain, and which will be always profitable. The many that shall be purified; and the wicked that shall do wickedly; may serve to shew the vast, the mighty difference between them; and to lead us to acknowledge, that that difference is all of grace. Oh! Lord! grant testimonies to thy people. Rom. xi. 7.

11 And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

12 Blessed *is* he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

I shall not presume to offer a single observation of the times here marked. The *daily sacrifice* taken away, and the abomination that made desolate set up, the Lord hath shewn. For when the Lord Jesus

Christ died, all the sacrifices under the law ceased. And when the Romans put up an image in the temple, here was an abomination indeed. But to what period the one thousand two hundred and ninety days refer, or when the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days commence, I presume not to say. One thing however is certain, that period is declared to be a glorious period, and the man blessed that is permitted to see it. God be praised for this, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ!

13 But go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Daniel is here again commanded to rest satisfied in ignorance of those events, which when fulfilled only are known. And having as a faithful servant, finished his commission, like holy *Simeon*, is to *depart in peace, having by faith seen the salvation of God!* Luke ii. 25—30.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! you and I cannot better close our view of this blessed portion of prophecy, than in following the direction given to Daniel. Here is enough for us each to rest in! *Michael* our prince; Jesus the captain of our salvation, hath stood up, is standing up, and will for ever stand up for the children of his people, even his redeemed, his blood-bought royal seed! Trouble there will be; trouble there must be; for sin brings trouble. But where *sin abounded, grace doth much more abound*: and grace triumphs in Jesus Christ. And while our Almighty Jesus lifts his both hands to heaven, he lifts them to bless his redeemed, and he will bless them, when time shall be no more. Oh! Lord! do thou bless us, and we shall be blessed. Purify and make white thy people in thy blood, and bring thy Church, yea, all thy redeemed, to the greater knowledge and love of thee, let thy knowledge be increased, and in thee shall we find all blessing. And now Daniel, O thou man of God, greatly beloved! we take our leave of thee; blessing thy Lord, and our Lord, for thy ministry; and loving thee for thy services. Thou hast gone thy way indeed, and we are going ours, in the same faith. Even to old age the Lord thy God carried thee; and even to hoar hairs the Lord will carry all his people. By and by the Lord will come. One of those days the shout will be heard from heaven, and Michael our glorious Archangel will appear in the clouds. Oh! for full confidence in that hour, to lift up our heads, when our redemption draweth nigh, crying out with the Church, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*