
A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

BIBLE.

THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

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

The time of *Ezekiel's* ministry is easy to be gathered, from calculating the duration of the *seventy years* captivity. *Ezekiel* began to be favoured with visions from the LORD, about the *thirtieth year* (which was the *fifth year* of the captivity) of *Jehoiakim*: and his prophecy continued near *three and twenty years*; so that it is no difficult matter to fix the æra of *Ezekiel's* ministry. But we do not find it so easy to unravel and explain the great scope and tendency of his prophecies. There are in it many dark, mysterious, and deep things of GOD. Some indeed, have been so blessedly explained, when accomplished in their corresponding events, as have called forth the admiration, love, and

praise of the faithful to the LORD GOD of the Prophets, for giving to the Church such tokens of his favour, in watching over their interests in those periods. And these remaining to be fulfilled, will no doubt in due season lead to the same end. Every part of prophecy is discovered, when accomplished, to have been pointing to Him, *of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote*. And in the mean time, they serve by their obscurity, to call up the attention, and to exercise the faith of the Church, in waiting their accomplishment. And as very much of JESUS is in the writings of these holy men; yea, as the whole have no one object ultimately considered, but as holding forth Him: so it is to the unspeakable joy of the Church, when through the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, believers are led to discover, that *to Him give all the Prophets witness, that through his Name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins*.

I beg the Reader, before he enters upon this precious book of GOD, that he will bend the knee of the heart in prayer with me, that He, who directed the Prophet's pen, may influence the Reader's heart to a right apprehension of the great truths contained in it. And as the HOLY GHOST hath taught the Church to understand, that *no prophecy of the scripture was of any private interpretation*; he will be always on the look out for the divine leadings of the same Almighty Author of his Sacred Word, in the discovery of the LORD JESUS. And having such a sure word of prophecy, he may *take heed unto it, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star shall arise in his heart*. Amen.

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS.

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

NOW it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

3 The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of

the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

Let the Reader call to mind, through the whole of this prophecy, the state in which the Prophet as well as the Church was, at the time of those visions with which he was favoured. God's people are peculiarly blessed, when brought into peculiar situations. *Jeremiah* was in the dungeon, *Ezekiel* in captivity; and *John* in exile in the desolate island of *Patmos*, when the LORD manifested his special tokens of favour. Reader! it is very blessed to be withdrawn wholly from men, in order to enjoy communion with God. It appears by this account, that four whole years had run out, in which we hear of no vision. And it should seem, that all this while the Church lay without ordinances and means of grace, or Sabbaths; as a Wife deserted of her Husband! Reader! think of your privileges, and mark the LORD's mercy to Israel. Though a Wife of whoredoms; and though sent into captivity; yet the LORD hateth putting away. He will not leave himself without witness. *Ezekiel* shall be commissioned. Reader! look to those scriptures! *Isaiah* xlii. 22—25. *Jerem.* xxxi. 20. *Malachi* ii. 16.

4 ¶ And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness *was* about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

5 Also out of the midst thereof *came* the likeness of four living creatures: and this *was* their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.

I desire to speak with all possible diffidence, and with an holy awe upon my mind, when I say, that I conceive, the close of this fifth verse, throws a light upon the whole of this vision. Those four living creatures, are said to have the likeness of a man. Is not this evidently in allusion to the human nature of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? If the Reader will compare the account which the beloved Apostle gives, of the vision he saw, in an age so distant as *John* lived from *Ezekiel*, (*Rev.* iv. 6, 7, 8.), he will I think, be led to conclude, that the vision is one and the same. At least it must have proceeded from one and the same Almighty Teacher. And the situation of both *Ezekiel* and *John*, at the time of this vision was similar. *Ezekiel* in captivity, and *John* a banished exile. Sweet thought to God's people! A prison or banishment may shut his people up; but nothing can shut God out!

6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

7 And their feet *were* straight feet; the sole of their feet *was* like the sole of a calf's foot:

and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.

8 And *they had* the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides ; and they four had their faces and their wings.

9 Their wings *were* joined one to another : they turned not when they went ; they went every one straight forward.

10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side ; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side ; they four also had the face of an eagle.

11 Thus *were* their faces : and their wings *were* stretched upward ; two *wings* of every one *were* joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

12 And they went every one straight forward : whither the spirit was to go, they went ; *and* they turned not when they went.

13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, *and* like the appearance of lamps : it went up and down among the living creatures ; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

14 And the living creatures ran, and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

15 ¶ Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold, one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

16 The appearance of the wheels and their work *was* like unto the colour of a beryl : and they four had one likeness : and their appearance and their work *was* as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

17 When they went, they went upon their four sides ; *and* they turned not when they went.

18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful : and their rings *were* full of eyes round about them four.

19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them : and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither *was their* spirit to go ; and the wheels were lifted up over against them : for the spirit of the living creature *was* in the wheels.

21 When those went, *these* went ; and when those stood, *these* stood ; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them ; for the spirit of the living creature *was* in the wheels.

22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature *was* as the colour of the terrible crystal stretched forth over their heads above.

23 And under the firmament *were* their wings straight, the one toward the other : every one had two which covered on this side, and every one had two which covered on that side, their bodies.

24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host : when they stood they let down their wings.

25 And there was a voice from the firmament that *was* over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

26 ¶ And above the firmament that *was* over their heads, *was* the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone : and upon the likeness of the throne *was* the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire, round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

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

28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so *was* the appearance of the brightness round about. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD, and when I saw *it*, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Reader! observe the effect on the Prophet's mind! So was it with *Daniel*! So was it with *John*! So must it be with all the faithful! God is awful, in his very mercies. Dan. viii. 17, 18. Dan. x. 8, Rev. i. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

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

Observe also, how graciously the Lord raised up for his people, this faithful servant the Prophet, that while the people had no temple, no service, no sanctuary, to repair to; the LORD's ministry by his servant, might be the LORD's witness. Oh! how sweet is it, in the absence of ordinances, to have a faithful friend sent from the Lord, to remind us of his grace, and that his mercy endureth for ever!

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

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

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

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

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

We have here the divine ordination of the Prophet to his ministry. The LORD having prepared his mind by the solemn vision in the foregoing Chapter; and that vision having caused the Prophet to fall upon his face before the LORD! The Ordination now begins. Oh! how devoutly to be prayed for is it, that the ministers of God's sanctuary, were all thus prepared under impressions of grace, and humbled to the dust of the earth before the LORD, in 'a consciousness of their own nothingness, when expecting ordination, to go forth to tell others of their nothingness, and the LORD JESUS's all-sufficiency. I detain the Reader at this verse just to remark the peculiarity of expression

by which the Prophet is called, *Son of Man*! None of the Prophet's but *Ezekiel*, as far as I recollect, was ever called by this name; and he no less than *ninety times* in his prophecy. Was it as a type of JESUS? I ask the question, but determine it not. Certainly it is remarkable. For it is a phrase peculiarly made use of for the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And of Him it is used in the Gospels more than *threescore times*.

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

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

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me; they and their fathers have transgressed against *me* even unto this very day.

4 For *they are* impudent children and stiff hearted; I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they *are* a rebellious house, yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

Observe the characters to whom the Prophet is sent. *The house of Israel*. So the LORD JESUS declared. Matt. xv. 24. But then observe, Israel included the whole Church of CHRIST. Nor so the HOLY GHOST, in after ages, taught by *Paul*. *If ye be CHRIST's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*, Gal. iii. 29. And so GOD the FATHER before had declared: Isaiah xlix. 6. John xvii. 2. Observe farther, the character of Israel, *stiff-necked, rebellious, impudent children*. But still *children*. Never lose sight of this neither. Though as the Prophet saith, they were all this and more, and had a whore's forehead, Jerem. iii. 3. yet were never they otherwise than *children*. Rebellious children, but not *rebels*. The HOLY GHOST makes a nice distinction in the two terms all over the Bible. And I believe, that the LORD hath never once called his children *rebels*! yea, the LORD appears to have been angry with *Moses* for calling them so. Numb. xx. 10. But the LORD ex-

pressly called those *rebels* among them, which were not in the Covenant. *For all are not Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham,* (for such were the children of the bond-maid *Hagar* and of *Keturah*,) *are they all children,* that is, *children of promise.* Rom. ix. 6, 7. If the Reader wishes a clear apprehension of this subject, (and it is a blessed subject to the Church of the living God,) let him see if he can find in all the Bible a child of God called a *rebel*. But on the contrary, he will find the reprobate expressly called by this name. Hence in the instance of *Korah* and his company, so are they called. Numb. xvii. 10. Again in Ezekiel xx. 38. the LORD saith, he will *purge out from among his people the rebels.* But when at any time, as in this Chapter, the LORD speaks of his children, his chosen, he calls them still children, though *rebellious* children: and pronounceth a *woe* upon them, (that is, great sorrow of heart, when recovered by grace to a sense of sin), but not everlasting woe for their rebellion. See Isaiah xxx. 1, 8, 9. Isaiah lxxv. 2. Psm. lxxviii. 8. And that this woe is only meant temporary, the LORD speaks of those rebellious children, which he had before described, that he waited to be gracious to them. Isaiah xxx. 18. See Chapter xx. 29—37.

6 ¶ And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns *be* with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house.

7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they *are* most rebellious.

8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

Observe, how the Lord arms his faithful servants to a boldness in his cause: and what assurance he gives them of his support. So he did *Jeremiah*. Jerem. i. 7, 8, 17, 18. So did the three worthies. Dan. iii. 16, 17, 18. So CHRIST his disciples. Mark xvi. 18. Luke x. 3. Acts v. 19, 20.

9 ¶ And when I looked, behold, an hand *was* sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book *was* therein;

10 And he spread it before me: and it *was* written within and without: and *there was* written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

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

MOREOVER, he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee, then did I eat it: and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

5 For thou *art* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, *but* to the house of Israel;

6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand: surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel *are* impudent and hard-hearted.

8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

9 As an adamant, harder than flint, have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house.

10 Moreover, he said unto me, Son of man, all

my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears:

11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them; Thus saith the LORD GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear:

12 Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place.

13 *I heard* also the noise of the wings of the living creatures, that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.

14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.

I beg the Reader to pause again and again, while going through the very solemn service of *Ezekiel's* ordination. What an idea doth it awaken in the mind of its importance. Though the LORD JESUS himself is the Bishop who layeth on hands: yet no haste is observed. With what earnestness is the Prophet reminded of his charge! Eating and feeling the effects of the roll, plainly set forth, how God's word is to be received, as well by ministers as people. The preacher that doth not first preach his sermon to his own soul, will feel no interest that it should be felt by his hearers to their eternal salvation. But those words are warmly delivered, which come from the heart. Jerem. xv. 16. Luke ix. 44. Rev. x. 9. What is here said of the SPIRIT's taking him up and carrying him away, may serve to teach faithful ministers of JESUS, how graciously the LORD, the HOLY GHOST watches over them for good, and sends them forth to his service. Acts xiii. 2, 3, 4.

15 ¶ Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman

unto the house of Israel : therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked thou shalt surely die : and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life ; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling before him, he shall die : because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered ; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

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

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

22 ¶ And the hand of the LORD was there upon me ; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth unto the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

23 Then I arose, and went forth into the plain : and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar : and I fell on my face.

24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.

25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them: and thou shalt not go out among them:

26 And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they *are* a rebellious house.

27 But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they *are* a rebellious house.

The renewal of the vision by the river *Chebar*, seems to have been intended for the encouragement of the Prophet; and serves to shew, what a gracious regard and attention the Lord is always manifesting to his ministering servants. It speaks the same language, though not in the same way as, in after ages, the Redeemer expressed himself by, when he said, *Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*, Matth. xxviii. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

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

THOU also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, *even* Jerusalem :

2 And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it ; set the camp also against it, and set *battering* rams against it round about.

3 Moreover, take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it *for* a wall of iron between thee and the city : and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This *shall be* a sign to the house of Israel.

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

4 Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it : *according* to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity.

5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days : so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah, forty days : I have appointed thee each day for a year.

7 Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the

siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm *shall be* uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it.

8 And, behold, I will lay bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.

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

9 Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, *according* to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side; three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.

10 And thy meat which thou shalt eat *shall be* by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat it.

11 Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin; from time to time shalt thou drink.

12 And thou shalt eat it *as* barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man in their sight.

13 And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles whither I will drive them.

14 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD, behold my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till I now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.

15 Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith.

The Reader will have a better idea of the coarse and scanty fare of the Prophet, if he understands, that this mixed grain not only made the whole unpleasant, but the allowance was scarcely enough, (and to a poor man confined to lay on his side, still harder) to keep life. A *shekel* was only about half an ounce; and an *hin* only eight ounces, or half a pint. And what a filthy and loathsome method of dressing was enjoined the Lord's servant. And though the Lord, at his representation, permitted an exchange from man's dung to cow dung for the purpose; yet still the poor Prophet had poor fare. What would some high fed and dainty characters among our clergy think of this! And yet *Ezekiel* was an eminent servant of the Lord!

16 Moreover, he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment;

17 That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.

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

REFLECTIONS.

READER! amidst many very sweet and profitable subjects suggested to our contemplation by the several types in this Chapter, I feel my mind constrained to one or two more immediately striking; and may the Lord direct yours also to the contemplation of the same. Who can overlook the Lord Christ as the great burden-bearer of his Church and people, while reading of God's appointment of *Ezekiel* to represent the bearing of iniquity: or, who that knows the blessedness of abundance, both in temporals and spirituals, but must be instantly led to eye Christ, as the bread of life, and the sanctifying mercy in the bread that perisheth with using, when sitting down to the enjoyment of either. Surely the Prophet was but the faintest type of Jesus, under the character of a burden-bearer, when laying on his side. Painful as the posture must have been, yet, what was it to Jesus hanging on the cross, suffering not only agonies of body, but the deepest anguish of soul when dying, *the just for the unjust to bring us unto God!* Precious Lord! may my soul behold thee often under this blessed character! And may I daily know, what it is to live upon thy fulness, and that the Holy Ghost breaketh to me daily of thee the staff of life, *of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever*. Lord! evermore give me this bread!

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

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

AND thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head, and upon thy beard : then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

2 Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled : and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife : and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind ; and I will draw out a sword after them.

3 Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts.

4 Then take of them again, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire : *for* thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel.

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

5 ¶ Thus saith the Lord GOD ; This is Jerusalem ; I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries *that are* round about her.

6 And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that *are* round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye multiplied more than the nations that *are* round about you, *and* have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that *are* round about you;

8 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, *am* against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee, in the sight of the nations.

9 And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like; because of all thine abominations.

10 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

11 Wherefore, *as* I live, saith the Lord God; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary, with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish *thee*; neither shall mine eyes spare, neither will I have any pity.

12 ¶ A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

13 Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will

be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken *it* in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

14 Moreover, I will make thee waste, and a reproach among the nations that *are* round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by.

15 So it shall be a reproach and a taunt, an instruction and an astonishment unto the nations that *are* round about thee, when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury, and in furious rebukes, I the LORD have spoken *it*.

16 When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for *their* destruction, *and* which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread:

17 So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts; and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee: I the LORD have spoken *it*.

How often the Lord complains of his people in the Old Testament, that in their sins, they were more stupid and senseless than the idolatrous nations around them. Never was it known, that heathens changed their dung-hill gods for others: but the Lord's people changed their glory for that which could not profit them. Jerem. ii. 10, 11. I appeal to the Reader, if so be he hath been taught of the Lord, and knows any thing of the plague of his own heart, whether the same is not but too applicable to the people and Church of God in all ages. Unbelief in a child of God is more heinous, more offensive, than the infidelity of the unawakened. How pathetically the Lord seems to lament the degeneracy in his people, concerning himself. Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12, &c.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us in the perusal of this Chapter, observe the gracious mercy of a Covenant God, who in the midst of judgments, will have his people regard his love. Hence the Prophet shall be commissioned to preach to them, as well by type as sermon, to shew the people, that, though rebellious children, they are not forgotten by him. So that though the man of God is to cause the razor to pass upon his head, and the hair is partly to be burnt, and partly divided with the knife, and partly scattered to the wind: to intimate, the se-

paration for a time of the people from their glorious head; yet still in covenant-relations, the Lord will not finally cast away his people whom he foreknew, though he will reprove them for their wickedness.

Reader! we shall find a sweet subject of consolation from the contents of this Chapter, in hearing how Christ comforts his Church under a similar similitude. *Thine head upon thee, saith Jesus, is like Carmel; and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!* And when we behold Jesus, as the Head of his body the Church; and the hair intimating the innumerable members which grow upon him; Jesus is held by virtue of this union, in the galleries of covenant grace, and the purple vesture of his blood becomes the token of cleansing from all sin. Though by sin and departure from him, the children of God lose sight of their privileges; yet his grace and mercy remains the same: *though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* Precious Redeemer! how blessed is it to see our safety and security in thee. Truly Lord, all thy redeemed may say with one of old, and in reference to every individual of thy family, *though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

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

AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,

3 And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD: Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, *even I*, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high-places.

4 And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain *men* before your idols.

5 And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols: and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

6 In all your dwelling-places the cities shall be

laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate: that your altars may be laid waste, and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.

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

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

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

Reader! do not too hastily pass away from this blessed verse. Behold in it the grace and faithfulness of Jehovah! Recollect what one of the Prophets was commanded to say: and one of the Apostles as fully confirmed. *Though thy people Israel (said Isaiah) be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.* Isaiah x. 22. Romans ix. 27. And Reader! do not overlook another grand thing here promised, namely, this remnant is the Lord's leaving. Yes! no merit, no foresight, no labour of theirs, in the least contributing to this great salvation. It is very blessed to see our mercies: and doubly blessed when we can trace them to their source, and behold the same Almighty hands which laid the foundation, finishing it also in grace. Zech. iv. 9. And Reader! I pray you yet further to observe, the Lord's design in all this, namely, that the Church may have some that shall escape the general ruin. And what is the cause, but that Jesus may be glorified in his Church, in his redeemed. What would the Lord do for his great name, if the Lord's cause was to be totally lost in the ruin of his people? How would the great head of his Church be glorified, if any of the members of his body perished? Precious, Precious LORD JESUS! how blessed is it to find our safety in thee! Joshua vii. 8, 9. Exod. xxxii. 11—14. Numbers xiv. 11—21.

9 And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me;

and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols : and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.

10 And they shall know that I *am* the LORD, and that I have not said in vain, that I would do this evil unto them.

Perhaps there is not a more blessed account of gospel grace, and of that which ever was and ever must be gospel, than what is contained in these and the foregoing verses. In the *former* we have the whole cause of mercy ; namely, Jehovah's sovereign will and pleasure. In these *latter*, we have the gracious effects of it. Jehovah in his threefold person and character, is the sole cause of all : and his glory the first and ultimate end and design of all. And the consequence of it, as it concerns the happiness of his people, in grace here and glory hereafter, is linked in the same chain. And Reader ! do not fail to remark the sweet properties of his grace, in the hearts of that remnant whom the Lord leaves. They shall remember the Lord ; they shall loath themselves ; and they shall know Jehovah in his Covenant relation ; and they shall most freely and frankly confess, the Lord's justice in all the Lord's dispensations. Reader ! here learn the truest evidences of a regenerated heart. Self-loathing, self-abhorring ; God-glorifying, God-exalting, these were in *Ezekiel's* days, as truly as they are in ours, the surest tokens of the soul's real conversion towards God. The Lord give them both to him that writes, and to him that reads ! Amen.

11 ¶ Thus saith the Lord God ; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel ! for they shall fall by the sword ; by the famine, and by the pestilence.

12 He that is far off shall die by the pestilence ; and he that is near shall fall by the sword ; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine : thus will I accomplish my fury upon them.

13 Then shall ye know that I *am* the LORD, when their slain *men* shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols.

14 So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate, yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in all their habitations: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

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

MOREOVER, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land.

3 Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.

4 And mine eyes shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

There is somewhat very striking in the manner of the Prophet's opening this Chapter. It is like an alarm, rousing up and imperiously demanding attention: and not unsimilar to what our Lord represented in the parable. *At midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* Matt. xxv. 6. Reader! it is always midnight in that soul that is living in a careless state! But I would ask the question of the Reader, (I mean the awakened and truly regenerated Reader), doth it not strike him, as it doth me, that in the midst of these alarms, there is still discoverable somewhat of divine love? Methinks, it is the expostulations of grace, mingled with the just rebukes of a much injured Lord. Under the frowning countenance of the threatened dispensation, we can, I think, discern strong features of mercy. See similar passages, Chapter xx. throughout. Hosea xi. 8, 9.

5 Thus saith the Lord God; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come.

6 An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.

7 The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of

trouble *is* near, and not the sounding again of the mountains.

8 Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee : and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations.

9 And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity : I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations *that* are in the midst of thee ; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD that smiteth.

10 Behold the day, behold, it is come : the morning is gone forth ; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded.

11 Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness : none of them *shall remain*, nor of their multitude, nor of any of their's ; neither *shall there be* wailing for them.

12 The time is come, the day draweth near : let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn : for wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof ;

13 For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive : for the vision *is* touching the whole multitude thereof, *which* shall not return : neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life.

The same alarm is here given under another figure, to rouse Israel. The *evil come*, and the *morning arrived*, when sentence is to be carried into execution : these are strong intimations to work upon the heart. But no calls, no alarms, no threatenings avail, until grace enters the soul. How truly blessed it is, when with an eye to Jesus, the heart is led to see redemption from all evils, and from all alarms, only in him. When that effect the Prophet speaks of is wrought by grace, the Lord's mercies in all dispensations are seen. Zech. xii. 10.

14 They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready : but none goeth to the battle : for my wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof.

15 The sword *is* without, and the pestilence and

the famine within : he that *is* in the field shall die with the sword ; and he that *is* in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

16 ¶ But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.

17 All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak *as* water.

18 They shall also gird *themselves* with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them ; and shame *shall be* upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads.

19 They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed : their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD : they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels : because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity.

20 As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty : but they made the images of their abominations, *and* of their detestable things therein : therefore have I set it far from them.

21 And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil ; and they shall pollute it.

22 My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret *place* : for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

23 ¶ Make a chain ; for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.

24 Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses : I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease : and their holy places shall be defiled.

25 Destruction cometh : and they shall seek peace, and *there shall be* none.

26 Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet: but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.

27 The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

Reader! as we pause over the review, let us bless our gracious Covenant God in Christ, if so be our souls are both prepared for the troubles coming upon the earth. The day is coming, when, as this scripture solemnly assures us: *all hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water*. In the *outward* calamities of national judgments, the same flame that burns up the city, consumes both the righteous and the wicked in it. All swim in the same ship. All are saved or stranded together. But in respect to *inward* comforts, grace lifts the soul above all danger. Oh! the blessedness to be found in that day among the redeemed of the Lord, and sealed as the Lord's hidden ones, by the Holy Spirit unto eternal redemption. Grant,

heavenly Father! for the Lord Jesus's sake, if it be thy heavenly will, both to Writer and Reader, such rich assurances of faith, that when the great day of the Lord shall come, and Jesus himself shall appear, *we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming!*

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

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

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

We here enter upon a most interesting Chapter, full of solemn truths. The date of the vision, the Prophet hath marked. No doubt the impression wrought upon *Ezekiel's* mind made it memorable. *Jacob* never lost sight of *Beth-el*; neither *Moses* of the bush. The Reader will recollect, that *Ezekiel* was in *Babylon* at this time among those of the captivity; though in his visions the scene represented to his mind was *Jerusalem*. If the Reader be curious to calculate, and will compare this latter vision with *Ezekiel's* former (Chapter 1st), he will find, that a period of fourteen months had elapsed between. There is somewhat worth remarking in what *Ezekiel* hath said, of sitting in his house at the time, and the elders of *Judah* sitting before him. Probably they were assembled for worship or meditation. And if so, how gracious was the Lord to be in their midst. Reader! what an encouragement this is to public as well as social worship! The promise of the Lord is absolute. Matt. xviii. 20. And again, Matt. xxviii. 19. And I cannot help further remarking, that while *Jerusalem* herself was now barren, and deprived of ordinances; the Lord's poor captives in *Babylon* found their solemn meetings blessed with the hand of the Lord God upon them. And how often have God's dear children found Jesus in the wilderness, while multitudes miss him in the Church. How blessed was *Patmos* to *John*; and the prison to *Peter* and his companions. Rev. i. 9, 10, 11. Acts v. 17, 18, 19.

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

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

3 And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head: and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north: where *was* the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

4 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel *was* there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.

There is somewhat particularly striking in this act of the Lord. *The putting forth the hand*, implies the Spirit of the Lord being *upon* him, or rather *in* him: and the *lifting him up between the earth and the heaven*, to bring him in visions of God to Jerusalem, was meant most probably to shew, that the Prophet's mind was now wholly under divine teaching; so that in the visions of God which followed, there could be no doubt of their reality. That it was the same glory which he had before seen, became a further confirmation of the whole, and was intended to this end. Thus prepared, the Lord opened to his astonished mind the vision. He saw the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. It is not said what image this was; but, as the Lord declared himself a jealous God, jealous of his honor, and that honor particularly insulted by the setting up of graven images, it is more than probable, that this was some one of these several figures, which Israel under different reigns had made their idol. What an awful representation doth this give of the depravity of the human heart! Though the bulk of the people had been carried away into captivity for idolatry, and only a few left as vine-dressers, and to till the ground; yet even that few will continue to insult the Lord, though their brethren were in bondage for the

same. Reader! do not such views humble your very soul before God? Do you not tremble to think what a nature you belong to, which in all the sons of men, is, and would for ever be alike capable of perpetrating the same sins, did not grace restrain? Precious Jesus! I feel my soul humbled to the dust in the recollection: and were it not, that from the same nature it is by thy taking it upon thee I feel conscious of being related to thee, thou holy, blessed, glorious Lord, I should blush at the very name of man. Oh! thou divine and Almighty head of thy body thy Church! what unknown and unnumbered glories are folded up in this one view of thee, that *we are bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh!*

5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north; so I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold, northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.

6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? *even* the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations.

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

7 ¶ And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall.

8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold, a door.

9 And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.

10 So I went in, and saw, and behold, every

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

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

11 And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

12 Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; The LORD hath forsaken the earth.

Oh! what an awful account is here. The Prophet hath discovered now through the Lord's teaching him, by looking in through this hole in the wall, that it is not the common people, not the ignorant, not the unlearned only, that were given to idolatry; but the very elders, the antients of the house of Israel, from whom the people ought to have received knowledge. The prophet saw *seventy* in number, that is, the whole *Sanhedrim*; meaning *all* the elders. Perhaps the vision meant to say, that even those who sat before *Ezekiel* in Babylon were to be included. And one more daring than his fellows the Prophet saw, whose person he knew, and to his everlasting disgrace he is mentioned by name. And the whole party were active and alive, ministering as the priests of the true God were used to do, in the temple service, with their censers. Lord! what is man! The Lord's *second* appeal comes in after such a representation uncommonly striking! Reader! have you and I seen such things in our day, in which the divine goodness is provoked? Oh! what chambers of imagery are there now in the world, yea, in the professing world! The Lord himself hath said, *and who can unsay it: the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Jeremiah xvii. 9.

13 He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.

14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house, which *was* toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

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

15 Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

18 Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eyes shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

Here is a picture, which holds forth the most finished representation of all. Here are about *five and twenty men*, with an uncovered front, got absolutely between *the Porch and the Altar*; that sacred spot, where the priests, the ministers of the Lord, presented themselves

before the Lord, on the days of humiliation: (See Joel ii. 17.) and as if it were not enough to withhold worship from the Lord, they turn their backs toward the temple, and their faces toward the east, to bow down to the creature of the Lord, even the sun, while standing with an unbent knee before the Creator, *who is over all, God blessed for ever*. Amen. As these five and twenty men are said to be between the Porch and the Altar, there can be but little question but that they were the priests. So awful, so tremendously awful, was this abomination! And now the Lord makes an appeal to the Prophet, and shews the justice of his cause, in the vengeance that follows. And who but must acknowledge it, when he beholds all Israel, with the elders, and the women; the priests, and the people; all given to idolatry!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pause over the sad view of this Chapter, in the contents of it, for it is most solemn: and consider well, the dreadful representation here given, of the human heart! Could it have been conceived possible, that while a whole nation was reeking under the Lord's chastisements, in one of his sore judgments of captivity; that the few which were saved by divine mercy, could have braved divine justice, with such horrible impiety! But Reader! in Israel, we only read the history of all the world, and every heart. So very true, and so universally just, is that scripture, *all the world is become guilty before God*. Who shall count the many transgressions which arise in one heart, and in one day only, against the sovereignty of God? Who shall write down the multitude, which in the aggregate, are found in that day, in a single town or village? And who shall describe the patience, and long suffering of God, before whose view, and to whose all discerning eye, the great mass of human transgressions, from the whole earth, comes up every day, and all the day, in an accumulated cloud of daring offence? Oh! how blessed, how truly blessed that proclamation made by the Lord of himself, in the holy mount, when *he passed by and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness, and truth!* Precious Lord Jesus! how truly is it seen in thee, and in thy great salvation, the evidences of this divine truth! Here indeed thy Church behold the wondrous grace and mercy displayed to the full. In thee the Lord Jehovah hath shewn, that *he keepeth mercy for thousands, and forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin*. In thee, and by thy blood, and righteousness, the Lord hath clearly testified that *he doth by no means clear the guilty*, without an equivalent sacrifice. Lord! help both Writer and Reader, to fall down under the deepest sense of sin, and to look up, under the humblest hope of acceptance, in Jesus. Blessed for ever, blessed be the Lord, who *so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*.

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

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

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

The Reader will keep in remembrance the glorious person who was showing *Ezekiel* this vision, in the former chapter, (verse 2.) The same it is that here cried with a loud voice in the ears of the Prophet. The Lord speaks loud indeed, when he speaks in judgment. It should seem, that by those that have charge over the city, is meant Angels. Scripture represents them as sent, both for destruction and mercy. 2 Samuel xxiv. 16. Acts xii. 21—23. Heb. i. 13, 14.

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

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

convenience to their side) hath no unapt resemblance to the pierced side of Jesus on the cross, from whence issued *blood and water*. For as all the redeemed of the Lord are washed in his blood, so the mark by which they are known is the same. I do not presume to say, that this conjecture is right: but I confess to me it appears highly probable, and I love to discover Jesus every where, and in every thing of mercy: for sure I am there can be no mercy but in him, and where he is. Who should write the names of his people in the Lamb's book of life, but the Lamb? Rev. xx. 15. Who shall mark the flock, but the owner of the flock? John x. 14. And who shall finally count them over, and see that none is wanting, but He who first numbered them? and of whom it is said, that in *all the cities of the mountains, and of the vale, the flocks shall again pass under the hand of him that telleth them*. Jeremiah xxxiii. 13. Precious Jesus! bring my soul under thy divine markings, and the sprinkling of thy blood, that when the destroying angels go forth, to execute their awful commission, like the houses of Israel, in the midst of the Egypt of this world, I may be found secured in thee, the Lord my passover. Exod. xii. 29, 30. 1 Cor. v. 7. I only detain the Reader with a short observation more, on this wonderful verse, just to remark, that the destroying angels, taking their stand beside the brazen altar, might perhaps be intended to intimate, that when the Lord's judgments really begin, they begin at the house of God. And therefore, what the Holy Ghost by the Apostle hath said, may well impress our minds. *For the time is come (saith he) that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them, that obey not the gospel of God. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* Solemn scripture! 1 Peter iv. 17, 18.

3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub whereupon he was to the threshold of the house; and he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer's inkhorn by his side.

4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

There is somewhat most solemnly affecting in what is here said of *the glory of the God of Israel*, being gone up. Probably, the expression is in allusion to the withdrawing of the *Shechinah*, that is, the manifestation of the divine presence, from the mercy seat and, intimating perhaps, that when the Lord retires, judgment follows. Oh! how ought every truly awakened soul, to cry out with David; *Lord! take not thine Holy Spirit from me!* Psalm li. 11. Reader! observe what is here said of the call to the man clothed with linen, and the commission given to him. Yes! it is a grand point in

the gospel, and the great warrant to faith, that God *sent* the Son to be the *Saviour of the world*. 1 John iv. 14. And here again, as in the former verse, of the writer's ink-horn, the linen garment is a further testimony of the Saviour. The High Priest, who was a type of Christ, was so clothed. Levit. vi. 10. Rev. xix. 13, 14. It is well worthy our observation, how the Lord notifies his care over his people, and to show who they are. The sighs and sorrows for sin, are the true tokens of a broken and contrite heart. Therefore, doth any wish to know whether he is marked? The answer is direct! Do you sigh, and cry, for all the abominations that are done in the midst of the land? Are you humbled before God for sin, and seeking justification alone, by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ? Where these effects are found, there is the sure mark of Jesus. John xvi. 8—11. Acts v. 31.

5 ¶ And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eyes spare, neither have ye pity:

6 Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark: and begin at my sanctuary: then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house.

7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

I beseech the Reader to remark with me, the order which the Lord hath here observed, in his visitations. He first secures his people, before he executes judgment on the ungodly. He first marks, and gathers his sheep into his fold; and then the wicked, as goats, are driven from his presence, with everlasting destruction. So the Lord Jesus hath himself pointed out, the order of his judicial proceedings, at the last day. See Matt. xxv. 31—46. There is another observation to be made in these verses, and it is a very solemn one, namely, the universal destruction of the ungodly: neither age, sex, nor condition, admits of exception. None can be saved, but those on whom is the mark. Reader! think how important it must be, to be found in Jesus! Think how tremendously awful to be found not in him! And observe yet further, the destroying angels, are to execute their high commission, in all the severity of it, without feeling pity or compassion. Yes! most certain it is, that to their intelligent minds, there can be no object to excite regard, but such as love the Lord. Those who admire the souls which bear the mark and image of Jesus, will abhor those who bear the image of the beast. Rev. xix. 19, 20. And what an awful idea is it, that the beginning of this destruction of the wicked, is at the sanctuary: plainly shewing, that there will be many found among this number, at the last day, who minister in holy things with unregenerated hearts. So the Lord Jesus hath taught his disciples to expect. *Many will say to me* (saith

Jesus) *in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied* (that is, preached, or administered ordinances) *in thy name: and in thy name have cast out devils;* that is, probably have been made useful to the Lord's people, in helping them by the administration of his word, who never partook of it themselves. (For rather than the Lord's heritage shall go hungry, Jesus will feed them from their enemies' table.) Wonderful works, these are, no doubt. But yet in common life, the same is found. Bad men may be appointed, thus to act for the good of others, and like the directing post to the traveller, guide to the right way, who never move a step towards it themselves. Think Reader! however, how very awful is such a situation! Matt. vii. 22.

8 ¶ And it came to pass while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah, Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel, in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is exceeding great*, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and The LORD seeth not.

10 And as for me also, mine eyes shall not spare, neither will I have pity, *but I will recompense* their way upon their head.

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

11 And behold the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side reported the

matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

This is a blessed conclusion to the subject. Jesus as Mediator, the Christ of God, is said in the New Testament, to deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when *he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.* For having received from the Father, in his office-character the government, the kingdom of grace, when grace is consummated in glory, ceaseth, and the kingdom of glory in perfection begins. So that Jehovah, in his threefold character of Person, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, having commissioned, and set up, Christ the Glory-man Mediator, it becomes needful that the Mediator should be faithful to him that appointed him. And here, having marked and secured his people, and seen the destruction of his enemies, returns with the report, saying, *I have done as thou hast commanded me.* 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. Heb. iii. 1, 2. with Isaiah xlii. 1—4. John xvii. 4.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, and dwell with long, and solemn meditation, over this sacred scripture, which holds up to thy view a double aspect; like the pillar of cloud in the camp of Israel; brightness and defence to the Lord's friends; darkness and destruction to his enemies. Recollect, my soul, as thou ponderest over what is here written, that voice the Prophet heard, thou wilt shortly hear; and a loud voice, to awaken all that are in the graves it will be. And at that voice, the angels will assuredly come forth, to destruction, with Jesus at their head. *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, (the Scripture saith) with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of Christ.* Precious Lord Jesus! hast thou marked me as thine own? Do I sigh, and cry, for the abominations that are done in Jerusalem? Do I mourn in secret, for the languishing state of Zion, in the present hour? Is it indeed a grief to my soul, that so few are asking the way to Zion, and so few live up to their high christian calling? Yea, is it a grief to my very soul, that my own enjoyments of divine things are at so low an ebb, and that I live so far from Him *whom my soul loveth*? Are these among thy daily exercises; and dost thou sigh, and cry, both for Zion's low estate around thee, and the low estate in divine things, within thee. Yea! dost thou groan, being burdened, as holy Paul did, for that thou carriest about with thee, this body of sin, and death? Pause, my soul, over the solemn consideration; and amidst these sighs and sorrows, recollect that these are the features of the Lord's holy mourners. These are the spots of God's children. These are the evidences that the man, the glory-man, the man Christ Jesus, from his pierced side, hath marked thee, and sealed thee, unto the day of eternal redemption. Take comfort my soul! The Lord hath in thine instance, fulfilled that precious promise, and hath poured out upon thee, a *spirit of grace*; thou art looking unto Him, *whom thou hast pierced*; and thou art mourning for Him, *as one mourneth for his only son, and as one in bitterness*

for his first born. And look up, and hope with full assurance of faith; he that soweth in tears, shall reap in joy. Shortly the Lord will come, to be glorified in his saints, and to be adorned in all that believe. And while the ungodly, and unbelieving, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, the Lord will own thee for his own, and number thee among his jewels.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

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

THEN I looked, and behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims, there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

2 And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, *even* under the cherub, and fill thine hand with the coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter *them* over the city, and he went in in my sight.

3 Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and stood* over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory.

We are here brought to visions and revelations of God. The Holy Ghost hath not been pleased to give the Church any certain account what is implied in the solemn things here spoken of; therefore humble waitings upon the Lord are more suitable, and becoming, than mere conjectures. One point, indeed, seems abundantly evident; that the man cloathed with linen, is the same as is spoken of in the preceding chapter; and there should seem to be but little doubt, that this is the God-man, Christ Jesus. His going in between the wheels, and filling

his hand with coals, and scattering them over the city, may perhaps be intended to shew, that the whole government, both in nature, providence, grace, and glory, is his.

5 And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard *even* to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.

6 And it came to pass, *that* when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in and stood beside the wheels.

7 And *one* cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims, unto the fire that *was* between the cherubims, and took *thereof*, and put *it* into the hands of *him that was* clothed with linen: who took *it*, and went out.

8 ¶ And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings.

9 And when I looked, behold, the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub; and the appearance of the wheels *was* as the colour of a beryl-stone.

10 And *as for* their appearance, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.

11 When they went, they went upon their four sides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went.

12 And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, *were* full of eyes round about, *even* the wheels that they four had.

13 As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel.

14 And every one had four faces: the first face *was* the face of a cherub, and the second face *was*

the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

15 And the cherubims were lifted up. *This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar.*

This last verse seems to throw some little light upon the subject, to guide us in our apprehension of the meaning of this mysterious scripture. If we compare what is here said, with a similar account, given in the book of the Revelations, we shall be able perhaps, in some degree, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to form an humble judgment of the glorious truth veiled under these expressions. See Rev. iv. throughout. The Prophet tells the Church, that the vision was one and the same with that which he was favoured with by the river *Chebar*. See Chap. i. 10. And as in that vision, one of the cherubims had the face of a man, as well as in this, there should seem to be no difficulty in supposing, that this denoted the human nature of Christ. And perhaps the whole of the representation of the cherubim, had an allusion to the glorious persons of the godhead. And if so, while the distinction of person was thus preserved, the unity of the divine essence was no less implied, in what is said of one wheel, to whom a voice cried, and was heard by the Prophet, to this amount. But, as I before remarked, as God the Holy Ghost hath not been pleased to explain this wonderful scripture, it becomes us, with humble waitings, to be silent before him.

16 And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them; and when the cherubims lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them:

17 When they stood, *these* stood; and when they were lifted up, *these* lifted up themselves *also*; for the spirit of the living creature *was* in them.

18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.

19 And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also *were* beside them; and *every one* stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above.

20 This *is* the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they *were* the cherubims.

21 Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings.

22 And the likeness of their faces *was* the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar, their appearances, and themselves: they went every one straight forward.

The glory of the Lord going up, and departing, which is twice spoken of in this short chapter, evidently testifies the importance of the thing. But, except we interpret it with an eye to the withdrawals of the Lord, in seasons of ordinances, and the like, there is no certainty what is implied by it. Very awful it is, when at any time the Lord hides his face from his people; but his withdrawals are still more to be feared. Precious Lord! hear and answer the cry of every exercised soul under this affliction, and take not, oh! *take not thine holy spirit from us!*

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

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

MOREOVER the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east-gate of the LORD's house, which looketh eastward: and behold, at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

2 Then said he unto me, Son of man, these *are* the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city:

3 Which say, *It is* not near, let us build houses; this *city is* the caldron, and we *be* the flesh.

4 ¶ Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.

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

5 And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the LORD; thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, *every one of* them.

6 Ye have multiplied your slain in this city, and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain.

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Your slain, whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they *are* the flesh; and this *city is* the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it.

8 Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord God.

9 And I will bring you out of the midst thereof, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and will execute judgment among you.

10 Ye shall fall by the sword: I will judge you in the border of Israel; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

11 This *city* shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; *but* I will judge you in the border of Israel:

12 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD: for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that *are* round about you.

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

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

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

14 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

15 Son of man, thy brethren, *even* thy brethren, the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, *are* they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, Get you far from the LORD: unto us is this land given in possession.

16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the

heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God : I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give give you the land of Israel.

18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof, and all the abominations thereof from thence.

19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you : and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh :

20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

21 ¶ But *as for them* whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God.

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

22 Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them ; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above.

23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city.

24 Afterwards the spirit took me up, and

brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity: so the vision that I had seen went up from me.

25 Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

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

THE word of the LORD also came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not; for they *are* a rebellious house.

3 Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee

stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be, they will consider, though they *be* a rebellious house.

4 Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity.

5 Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby.

6 In their sight shalt thou bear *it* upon *thy* shoulders; *and* carry *it* forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground, for I have set thee *for* a sign unto the house of Israel.

7 And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for captivity, and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought *it* forth in the twilight, *and* I bare *it* upon *my* shoulder in their sight.

8 ¶ And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,

9 Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee, What doest thou?

10 Say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; This burden *concerneth* the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel that *are* among them.

11 Say, I *am* your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove *and* go into captivity.

12 And the prince that *is* among them shall bear upon *his* shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth; they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with *his* eyes.

13 My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it though he shall die there.

14 And I will scatter toward every wind all that *are* about him to help him, and all his bands; and I will draw out the sword after them.

15 And they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries.

16 But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

17 ¶ Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

18 Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness.

19 And say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord God of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *and* of the land of Israel, They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water

with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein.

20 And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

21 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

22 Son of man, what *is* that proverb *that* ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?

23 Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord God; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel: but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision.

24 For there shall be no more any vain vision, nor flattering divination within the house of Israel.

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

Here is a *third* sermon of the Prophet; and it is to the same purport as the former. It should seem, that it was become almost proverbial, if judgments did not immediately follow the commission of sin, the sinner took confidence, and said, *the days are prolonged, and every*

vision faileth. Solomon had remarked, much to the same purpose, long before. Eccles. viii. 11. But the Lord here reproves the presumptuous thought. One of the Apostles had it in commission to tell the sinner, in yet more awful terms, the sad mistake of such reasoning. See 2 Peter iii. 3—11.

26 ¶ Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

27 Son of man, behold, *they* of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth *is* for many days *to come*, and he prophesieth of the times *that are* far off.

28 Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; there shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the words which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

READER! if we spiritualize this chapter, in the several sermons contained in it, may not you and I read the Lord's word as addressed to ourselves? Child of man, saith Jehovah, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house; yea, we may answer, true, Lord, for we carry about with us, in ourselves, a rebellious heart. Every thing, indeed, both within and without; the remains of indwelling corruption, the whole world that lieth in wickedness, and the great enemy of souls, make open rebellion but too often in the soul. And ought we not, under such circumstances, to do as the Prophet was commanded, prepare for removing; and from one place to another, from strength to strength, in the sight of all the people, testify to every beholder, that *here we have no continuing city, but are seeking for one to come.* Surely the people of God should be for signs and wonders, as *Joshua* and his fellows were, *men wondered at!* yea! the bread of life and the water of life, even while the children of God receive it, and live upon it, in the review of our unworthiness, and distinguishing grace, which makes all the difference between the precious and the vile, may well be eaten with holy fear and with Godly astonishment. Believers, while they rejoice, *rejoice with trembling.* Precious Lord Jesus! how increasingly precious dost thou appear, when the undeservings of thy redeemed are kept in remembrance. Well may every child of God cry out with the Prophet, on beholding visions of His

glory, woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts. What a relief to a soul under these awakening views of sin and uncleanness is it to behold, and with an eye of faith, the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

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

AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, hear ye the word of the LORD;

3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

4 O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.

5 Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD.

6 They have seen vanity, and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith; and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made *others* to hope that they would confirm the word.

7 Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith *it*; albeit I have not spoken?

8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore behold I *am* against you, saith the Lord GOD.

9 And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of

Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

10 Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and *there* was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered *morter*:

11 Say unto them which daub *it* with untempered *morter*, that it shall fall; there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hail-stones, shall fall: and a stormy wind shall rend *it*.

12 Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, where *is* the daubing wherewith ye have daubed *it*?

13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even rend *it* with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hail-stones in *my* fury to consume *it*.

14 So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered *morter*, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

15 Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered *morter*, and will say unto you, The wall *is* no *more*, neither they that daubed it;

16 *To wit*, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and *there is* no peace, saith the Lord GOD.

There is somewhat very striking and awful in this scripture. One should hardly conceive it possible that any men, much less a multitude of men, should ever go forward unsent, and without authority from the Lord, to speak in his name, and more especially in times of public danger; yet we find the history of the Church furnisheth numberless instances of the kind. It hath been the custom in all

ages. Reader! it is much to be feared that it is so now. The ministry is with some a genteel profession; with others, a lucrative one; and when worldly motives prevail, and men assume the office for filthy lucre's sake, they run unsent, and speak lies in the name of the Lord. Oh! that every one about to enter the service of the Sanctuary would pause at the threshold, and recollect that the question put, *are you inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon you this office*, is answered to God, and not to man. What awful expressions the Lord makes use of to deter: *behold I am against you, saith the Lord*. Oh! for grace, to have a right understanding in this weighty matter!

17 ¶ Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people which prophesy out of their own heart, and prophesy thou against them,

18 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; woe to the *women* that sew pillows to all arm holes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive *that come unto you*?

19 And will ye pollute me among my people, for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear *your lies*?

20 Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against your pillows wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make *them* fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, *even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly*.

21 Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

22 Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:

23 Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor

divine divinations : for I will deliver my people out of your hand : and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

C H A P. XIV.

CONTENTS.

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

THEN came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

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

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols;

5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn *yourselves* from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of

his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself;

8 And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

9 And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

10 And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity; the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh *unto him*;

11 That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, saith the Lord God.

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

12 ¶ The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,

13 Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it :

14 Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they should deliver *but* their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.

15 If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts :

16 *Though* these three men *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters ; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.

17 Or *if* I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land, so that I cut off man and beast from it ;

18 Though these three men *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.

19 Or *if* I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast :

20 Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter ; they shall *but* deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

21 For thus saith the Lord GOD ; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast ?

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

22 ¶ Yet behold therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, *both* sons and daughters: behold they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, *even* concerning all that I have brought upon it.

23 And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God.

What a gracious close is made to this solemn chapter! I hope the reader will not overlook it or lose sight of it. Can any thing be more lovely, more interesting, or more recommending, in proof of the Divine mercy? Observe the several sweet particulars contained in those two verses: *Yet*, saith the Lord—it forms a blessed *yet*, as if the Lord had said, Yet, in spite of all Israel's sins and Israel's unworthiness, *there shall be a remnant that shall be brought forth*. Yes, Reader, there is, there must be, in the worst of times a remnant according to the election of grace. Rom. xi. 5. And observe further, this remnant *shall be brought forth* from the general wreck and ruin of the pestilence and sword. Gen. xix. 29. And observe yet more, this remnant shall be *both of sons and daughters*. Yes, *there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for they are all one in Christ Jesus*. Galat. iii. 28. Still more: the Lord saith, they shall come forth to His Church to His people. Yes! *all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it*. Isaiah xl. 5. Neither is this all. The Lord's people shall see their way, and shall be comforted concerning the evil brought upon Jerusalem. Yes! while the redeemed of the Lord sing their songs of salvation on the sea of glass, they no less shout in the view of the ruin of the enemies of God, and of His Christ. They then finally and fully know, that

the Lord hath not done without cause all that He hath done, in the overthrow of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous. Then will that song burst forth from ten thousand times ten thousand tongues: *Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints.* Rev. xv. 2, 3.

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

The Lord is still by His servant the Prophet preaching to Israel. He here useth similitudes. Under the figure of a vine-tree as unfit for timber, he sheweth the unsuitableness of Jerusalem, in her dry and withered state, to any good.

AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?

3 Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?

4 Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the

fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned : is it meet for *any* work ?

5 Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work : how much less shall it be meet yet for *any* work when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned ?

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

6 ¶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD ; As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel : so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

7 And I will set my face against them : they shall go out from *one* fire, and *another* fire shall devour them ; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I set my face against them.

8 And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

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

A GAIN the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity *is* of the land of Canaan: thy father *was* an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

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

4 And *as for* thy nativity, in the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple *thee*; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

5 None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

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

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

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

7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare.

8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon

thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love : and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness ; yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.

9 Then washed I thee with water ; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

10 I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head,

13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver ; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and brodered work ; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil : and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty : for it *was* perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.

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

her adorable Lord? And as in grace here, so in glory to all eternity, it is in Jesus and from Jesus her perfection is wholly owing. How beautiful the Church sings to this. Isaiah lxi. 10.

15 But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.

16 And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: *the like things* shall not come, neither shall it be *so*.

17 Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

18 And tookedst thy brodered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense upon them.

19 My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, *wherewith* I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and *thus* it was saith the Lord God.

20 Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. *Is this* of thy whoredoms a small matter,

21 That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through *the fire* for them?

22 And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood.

23 And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (Woe, woe unto thee, saith the Lord God!)

24 *That* thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street.

25 Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.

26 Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.

27 Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary *food*, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.

28 Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable: yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.

29 Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

30 How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord God, seeing thou doest all these *things*, the work of an imperious whorish woman;

31 In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire;

32 *But as* a wife that committeth adultery, *which* taketh strangers instead of her husband!

33 They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.

34 And the contrary is in thee from *other* women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

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

35 Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD.

36 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children which thou didst give unto them;

37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all *them* that thou hast loved, with all *them* that thou hast hated: I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.

38 And I will judge thee as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.

39 And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent places, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.

40 They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords.

41 And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women* and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.

42 So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and be no more angry.

43 Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, but hast fretted me in all these things, behold therefore, I also will recompense thy way upon *thine* head, saith the Lord God: and thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations.

44 Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use *this* proverb against thee, saying, As *is* the mother, *so is* her daughter.

45 Thou *art* thy mother's daughter, that loatheth her husband and her children; and thou *art* the sister of thy sisters, which loathed their husbands and their children; your mother *was* an Hittite, and your father an Amorite;

46 And thine elder sister *is* Samaria, she and her daughters, that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, *is* Sodom and her daughters.

47 Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but as *if that were* a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.

48 *As* I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou, and thy daughters.

49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister

Sodom, Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

51 Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins: but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.

52 Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.

53 When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then *will I bring again* the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them:

54 That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them.

55 When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.

56 For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth, in the day of thy pride,

57 Before thy wickedness was discovered, as at the time of *thy* reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all *that are* round about her, the daughters of the Philistines, which despise thee round about.

58 Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD.

59 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which has despised the oath in breaking the covenant.

What is here said comes in as the suitable conclusion of such daring rebellion as Israel had, in the preceding paragraph, been accused of. If Israel hath thus played the harlot, what shall arise, or who will interpose, that she should not have a writing of divorcement, and be put away? Such open and barefaced adultery exceeded, in the Lord's view, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Punishment shall follow punishment, as one wave of the sea follows another. The Lord is very jealous of His honour, and will not let Israel go unpunished. Reader! how greatly is that sweet intercourse and communion between Jesus and his people interrupted by a loose and ungarded conversation in life and manners? Sweet and blessed is that precept, *Grieve not the spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.* Ephesians iv. 30.

60 Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

61 Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sister, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters; but not by thy covenant.

62 And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD:

63 That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

Hath Jesus passed by and bid us live? Hath He, notwithstanding all our vileness, when loathsome to angels and to all the creation of God, beheld us and loved us in our low estate, married our nature, united us to Himself, washed us, cloathed us, fed us, sustained us, and, even in the midst of all our after back-slidings and departures from Him, still, from His covenant love, kept us by His almighty power through faith unto salvation? Oh! what shall recompence, or, since all recompence fails, what shall testify a sense of His grace and our undeservings? Precious, precious Jesus! do Thou, by Thy blessed Spirit, *work in us both to will and to do, of Thy good pleasure.* Oh! make us to know indeed and in truth, as Thou hast said, that Thou art the Lord; for surely none but the long-suffering and patience of Jehovah could hold out against the continual provocations and whorish heart of Thy people. Lord! I do pray Thee, that, as a sweet and precious testimony of our being still within the rich covenant mercies, both the heart of him that writes and him that reads may have those blessed properties of grace here recorded. *That we may, indeed, remember and be confounded, and never open our mouth any more in a way of self-justification or self-delight, because of our shame when thou art pacified towards us for all that we have done, O Lord God.* Amen.

CHAP. XVII.

CONTENTS.

The Lord, by His servant the Prophet, is still teaching by parable. Under the similitude of two eagles and a vine is shewed God's judgments upon Jerusalem. The Chapter, however, closeth with sweet promises.

AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, long winged,

full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar :

4 He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffic : he set it in a city of merchants.

5 He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field ; he placed *it* by great waters, *and* set *it as* a willow tree :

6 And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him : so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

7 There was also another great eagle, with great wings and many feathers : and behold this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation.

8 It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine.

9 Say thou, thus saith the Lord God ; Shall it prosper ? shall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither ? it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power or many people to pluck *it* up by the roots thereof.

10 Yea, behold, *being* planted, shall it prosper ? shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it ? it shall wither in the furrows where it grew.

Perhaps this great eagle represents *Nebuchadnezzar*, who carried *Jeconiah*, when quite a youth, and, like a tender twig, unable to resist any bird of prey, into *Babylon*. 2 Kings xxiv. 8—18. The land of traffic exactly answers to *Babylon*. The other great eagle perhaps might mean the King of *Egypt*. And by the vine, which is intended for *Israel*, whom the Lord originally planted a choice vine, Jerem. ii. 21. is shewn how Israel was looking to Egypt for

help when under tribute to Babylon. But the Lord's sentence upon Israel was not to be altered. Ruin as a nation had been determined from the Lord.

11 ¶ Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

12 Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these *things mean*? tell *them*, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon:

13 And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land:

14 That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping of his covenant it might stand.

15 But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people: shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such *things*? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered?

16 *As* I live, saith the Lord God, surely in the place *where* the king *dwelleth* that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, *even* with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die.

17 Neither shall Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company make for him in war by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons:

18 Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these *things*, he shall not escape.

19 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; *As* I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head.

20 And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me.

21 And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds : and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken *it*.

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

22 ¶ Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and I will set *it*: I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* upon an high mountain and eminent :

23 In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant *it*: and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.

24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish. I the LORD have spoken, and have done *it*.

Reader! how refreshing is it, after going through a long chapter full of the history of the perfidy and baseness of man, to come to a portion of it, however short, yet full of grace, to shew the goodness and loving-kindness of God. Not more grateful to the parched traveller over a long and dreary desert, is it, when he meets with a cooling stream. We have here the Lord's gracious provision for the

recovery of his people, when to all human appearance the whole seed of Israel was destroyed. The Lord calls upon the Church to attend to his promise concerning it. There shall be deliverance, for the highest branch of the cedar of Lebanon is still left, and which shall be planted. This shall become a goodly tree full of branches. Under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing. And though now the Church is in Babylon, this branch shall be planted in the mountain of the height of Israel. And to give certainty to the promise, the Lord saith, that *He* will plant it; yea, that all the trees of the field shall know it. Reader! see, behold, and admire, with thankfulness and praise, how, under this similitude, Jesus, that *plant of renown*, is promised. And do not fail to remark, under the figure, the many delightful features of the Lord's Christ, which point to His person, and offices, and character. And how fully is the whole made to answer in the Church of the Lord, when, in the use of ordinances and means of grace, the people of Jesus sit down under His shadow with great delight, and find His fruit *sweet to their taste*. Truly hath God the Holy Ghost recorded it of Him, that *His branches shall spread, and His beauty shall be as the olive tree, and His smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under His shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon.* Hosea xiv. 6. 7,

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

Blessed Lord! help us to praise Thee, that Thou didst not only promise, but hast performed, that great work of redemption, in planting that *branch* of renown in Thine holy mountain! Yea, Lord, in the person of Thy dear son Thou hast manifested Thy grace and Thy glory, and opened to Thy Church a blessed and everlasting tree of

life in the paradise of God. Oh! for grace to come under the healing branches of it here, and under the full enjoyment of it hereafter, when there shall be no more curse, but all the captivities of sin, sorrow, and death shall be done away.

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

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

THE word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

2 What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

3 *As* I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have *occasion* any more to use this proverb in Israel.

4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

It should seem by the scope of reasoning the Lord is pleased to adopt in this chapter, that the proverb here used was an indirect reflection upon God. It was probably the scoffer's comment upon the *second Commandment*. But so great was the general delinquency of the times, that both Father and Son were involved in it; and, therefore, as all had sinned and come short of God's glory, all were justly exposed to the displeasure of God. And in justifying divine proceedings, the Lord lays claim to His undoubted right, as sovereign creator of all men: *all souls are mine*. They are so by original creation, and by the mercies of redemption; therefore it must be right for God, as it is for man, to do what he will with his own. This point being settled, the Lord, in the following verses, advances to an illustration of the doctrine.

5 But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

6 *And* hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

7 And hath not oppressed any, *but* hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment:

8 He *that* hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, *that* hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

9 Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments to deal truly; he *is* just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

10 If he beget a son *that is* a robber, a shedder of blood, and, *that* doeth the like to *any* one of these *things*,

11 And that doeth not any of those *duties*, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,

12 Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

13 Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

14 Now lo, *if* he beget a son that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,

15 *That* hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife,

16 Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, *but* hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

17 *That* hath taken off his hand from the poor,

that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

18 *As for* his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did *that* which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

19 Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, *and* hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

20 The soul that sinneth it shall die, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

I include all these verses under one view in reading, the better to gather also into one view the just and unalterable reasoning of the Lord upon them. Here are *three* cases stated, in a father, and a son, and the son's son, to shew and illustrate the truth by. *One* is supposed to be a just man, who makes a conscience of his ways; and, *another* is supposed to be the reverse of all this, and abounding in iniquity; while the *third*, like the *first*, is enabled to take warning from the awful example of his father, and follows the steps of his grandfather. Now, from these very opposite characters, the Lord draws the just conclusion, that the soul keeping his statutes should live, and the sinner, breaking and despising them, should die. All which proves the equal dealings of the Lord. Here the Reader, in order to a clear apprehension of the doctrine, and especially on gospel principles, will consider, that the Lord is all along speaking on the presumption that men lived up to the observance of the *divine law*, and were judged by it. This kind of reasoning is frequently made use of by the sacred writers, in order the more fully to make way for, and to prove the absolute necessity of the Gospel. The Lord sends His people, as it were, to judge themselves by a covenant of works, in order to shew the blessedness of grace. *For* (saith the Apostle Paul) *if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* Gal. iii. 21, 22. Such is the reasoning on those cases, if considered with an eye to the divine

law in a covenant of works, in which the Lord's equity and just judgment is most plainly proved and illustrated. But if we consider the doctrine yet closer on *gospel* principles, (and which, I humbly conceive, is the way in which it should be for ever considered,) in this case the sum and substance of the whole passage will be found from every instance, both of father and children, to be among the highest confirmations of the necessity and absolute expediency of the Gospel of Christ. The *just* persons here spoken of, both in the case of father and son, are justified souls in Christ; and this appears from what is said, *the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him*. What righteousness but that of Christ? This indeed is truly *upon* the justified soul; for Christ was made *sin for his people*, though he knew no sin, that they might be made *the righteousness of God in him*. 2 Cor. v. 21. Hence He is called, *the Lord our righteousness*. Jerem. xxiii. 6. And he is said to be *made of God*, both *wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption*. 1 Cor. i. 30. And hence the Lord himself saith, *This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord*. Isaiah liv. 17. Hence this scripture, *the righteousness of the righteous, meaning Jesus Christ the righteous*. 1 John ii. 1. and *the wickedness of the wicked*, meaning the awful ungodliness inwrought in the heart by the wicked one at the fall, and never done away in Christ by His holy spirit and regeneration, shall be upon each respectively. Read, in this point of view, the whole passage is pure gospel from beginning to end.

21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live.

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

23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: *and* not that he should return from his ways and live?

24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in

his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

25 ¶ Yet ye say, the way of the LORD is not equal, Hear now, O house of Israel; is not my way equal, are not your ways unequal?

26 When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

27 Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the LORD is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

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

the reader may be able, under divine teaching, to discern the poor, imperfect, law-righteousness of men, which never did, nor ever will save a soul, and that rich and all-perfect gospel righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, which becomes the believer's most complete and justifying robe of salvation before the Lord Jehovah, in grace here, and glory for ever. Isaiah xlv. 24, 25.

30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God: Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

31 ¶ Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

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

CHAP. XIX.

CONTENTS.

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

MOREOVER, take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,

2 And say, what is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions.

3 And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men.

4 The nations also heard of him: he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

This is a very instructive chapter, especially to Ministers of the Gospel. The Prophet, under the similitude of a lioness bereaved of her whelps, sets forth the desolate state of the royal house of David, and the kings of Israel and Judah; and the Lord commands the Prophet to feel for the ruined state of the land, and especially for the princes of it. She had sat as a queen among the nations, and in Solomon's days all the people of the earth had paid tribute to her. But now, like a lion fallen into a pit, and there taken in chains and carried to a cage, the Lord's heritage was given for a prey into the hands of her enemies. Reader! if we spiritualize the subject, and

in what is here said, behold the Church of Jesus (for His Church it was before the after-fall in Adam), what a sad representation doth it afford! Who can behold the melancholy state of Zion, from the fall to the present hour, but must sensibly feel for the desolations the enemy of souls hath induced. And although, blessed be God, redemption is secure, and like Israel from Babylon, when the seventy years determined were run out, deliverance came, yet it behoves the people of God to mourn during the triumphs of the accursed foe. Lament. i. 12.

5 Now when she saw that she had waited, *and* her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, *and* made him a young lion.

6 And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, *and* devoured men.

7 And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof by the noise of his roaring.

8 Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit.

9 And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

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

10 Thy mother *is* like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters.

11 And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches.

12 But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered: the fire consumed them.

13 And now she *is* planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground.

14 And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, *which* hath devoured her fruit, so that he hath no strong rod *to be* a sceptre to rule: this *is* a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

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

REFLECTIONS.

READER! how truly blessed it is, that, amidst all the lamentable circumstances attending Israel and Judah, the God of Israel and Judah is the same, and the worth and efficacy of His salvation is for ever and ever. Though Israel, like a lion's whelp, may be taken in a pit, and carried in chains into captivity, yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah must prevail, and all his enemies be brought under His feet. The royalties of His person and majesty, the courage and constancy of His labours, the triumphs of His glory and salvation, these open to our souls unceasing subjects of delight and joy, and especially when, from our union and oneness with Him, we know our interest in all His victories. Hail! Thou glorious, gracious Lion of the tribe of Judah! in Thy blood and righteousness our sure triumph over death, hell, and the grave, is already accomplished, and we are now *more than conquerors through Thy grace helping us.*

C H A P. XX.

CONTENTS.

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

AND it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

2 Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

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

4 Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge *them*? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers:

5 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day, when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, *I am* the LORD your God;

6 In the day *that* I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt, into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey; which *is* the glory of all lands:

7 Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every

man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I *am* the LORD your God.

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

8 But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

9 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen among whom they *were*, in whose sight I made myself known unto them in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

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

10 Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness.

11 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them.

12 Moreover also, I gave them my sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them.

13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them.

14 But I wrought for my name's sake that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out.

15 Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them*, flowing with milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands;

16 Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols.

17 Nevertheless, mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

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

18 But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers: neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols:

19 I *am* the LORD your God, walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them;

20 And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I *am* the LORD your God.

21 Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against me; they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which *if* a man do he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths, then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

22 Nevertheless, I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.

23 I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries;

24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.

25 Wherefore I gave them also statutes *that* were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.

26 And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through *the fire* all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I *am* the LORD.

Thus slighted and despised by the fathers, the Lord looked to their children, that the rising generation might not be rebellious as their fathers had been. But the sin of rebellion, like a chain of many

links, the Lord found to run alike in father and son. The Lord therefore gave them *statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live*. This could not refer to the law of God given on Mount Sinai, for the Apostle saith, that *the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good*. Rom. vii. 12. Nevertheless, in one sense, (and so the Apostle considers it,) such was and is the nature of the law, that no man could live by it or have life from it. But *by the law is the knowledge of sin*; and the knowledge of sin loudly proclaims Christ. Reader! it will be a blessed improvement of this scripture, if, from the perusal of it, such effects are wrought in our hearts to lead us to Christ.

27 Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me.

28 For when I had brought them into the land for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings.

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

29 Then I said unto them, What *is* the high place whereunto ye go? and the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.

30 Wherefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?

31 For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

32 And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.

33 ¶ *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD; surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out will I rule over you:

34 And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out.

35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.

36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.

37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

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

38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

39 As for you, O house of Israel : thus saith the Lord God ; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter *also*, if ye will not hearken unto me : but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and with your idols.

I detain the Reader at this passage purposely to beg of him to remark with me, the vast difference in scripture between rebels and rebellious. If the Reader will look carefully over the whole Book of God, I believe that he will find, that while the Lord calls His children rebellious, and frequently complains of their rebellion, he never once calls them rebels. And though we find a woe pronounced upon the church, Isaiah xxx. 1—8. and a dreadful woe indeed followed, when the Church was sent into Babylon, yet the sorrow was wholly *temporal*, not an everlasting woe, of being cut off from the Lord. So far from it, that in the 18th and following verses of that same chapter, the Lord declares that He waits to be gracious, and His people shall weep no more ; so that though in many scriptures we find the children of God declared to be *rebellious*, yet never once are they called rebels. See Psm. lxxviii. 8. Isaiah lxxv. 2. Ezek. ii. 3—5. Hence therefore, *rebels*, in scripture language, means the seed of the serpent, of whom the Lord saith, as in this chapter, He will purge them out from among His people. So He did, by Korah and his company. See Numb. xvii. 10. And though Moses did once in his haste call the people of God rebels, Numb. xx. 10. as David did, upon another occasion, call the Lord's people, as well as the ungodly, *liars*, Psm. cxvi. 11. yet it should seem by the history that the Lord was displeased for his doing so.

40 For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me : there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things.

41 I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries, wherein ye have been scattered ; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

42 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *for* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers.

43 And there shall ye remember your ways and

all your doings wherein ye have been defiled : and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

44 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

Nothing can be more striking in proof that love and grace and mercy are at the bottom of all the Lord's corrections to His people, than what those verses express. The Lord's holy mountain, namely, the Gospel Church, shall be the place where Jesus will bring all His redeemed, and where they shall all be accepted in Him. The sweet savour of His person, blood, and righteousness, will be the one gracious cause wherefore they shall all be gathered, and all blessed, and made everlastingly happy.

45 ¶ Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

46 Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop *thy word* toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field ;

47 And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD ; Thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree : the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein.

48 And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it : it shall not be quenched.

49 Then said I, Ah Lord GOD ! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables ?

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

It will be no unprofitable improvement of this chapter, if, from beholding the deception of the heart, in this instance, of the elders of Israel before the Prophet, you and I, Reader, bring home the subject to ourselves. In how many ways, and by how many avenues, evil enters into the soul. Corruption within and temptation without, rob the soul of sweet communion and fellowship with the Lord, even where a work of grace hath passed upon the soul; so that every true believer in Jesus finds but too often cause to complain with the Apostle, *When I would do good, evil is present with me.* And if so, what must it be in the heart wholly unawakened by grace, unregenerated by the Holy Spirit, and uninterested by any sense of the divine goodness? Precious Lord Jesus! how eminently here, as in a thousand other instances of grace and mercy, is the recollection of Thy High Priestly office, in bearing away *the iniquity of our most holy things!* Thy one offering once offered, and the everlasting and eternal efficacy of it, pleaded in Thine unceasing intercession, become the only cause of Thy Church's acceptance. Yea, Lord! our very prayers, but for this, would seal our condemnation. Reader! let us both beg of God the Holy Ghost to impress these soul-reviving considerations upon the mind and heart of each. While you and I but too often, in the great congregation, hear as though we heard not, and pray or sing as though we felt not, oh! what a relief to my poor soul is the conviction; that in the same moment there is one with the Father whom the Father heareth alway, and *Who is the propitiation for our sins.* His glorious person and His finished work become the security and sanctity of all His redeemed. And while the Lord Jehovah hath respect to Him, and the Church in Him, in all the purposes of grace, so the everlasting acceptance and joy of the Church will only arise out of the same, in all the manifestations of glory.

CHAP. XXI.

CONTENTS.

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

AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2 Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem,

and drop *thy word* toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,

3 And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, *I am* against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.

4 Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north.

5 That all flesh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more.

6 Sigh therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of *thy* loins; and with bitterness sigh before their eyes.

7 And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings: because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak *as* water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord God.

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

8 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the LORD; Say, a sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished:

10 It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree.

11 And he hath given it to be furbished, that it may be handled: this sword is sharpened, and it is furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.

12 Cry and howl, son of man: for it shall be upon my people, it *shall be* upon all the princes of Israel: terrors, by reason of the sword, shall be upon my people: smite therefore upon *thy* thigh.

13 Because *it is* a trial, and what if *the sword* condemn even the rod? it shall be no more, saith the Lord God.

14 Thou therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite *thine* hands together, and let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain: it *is* the sword of the great *men that are* slain, which entereth into their privy chambers.

15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that *their* heart may faint, and *their* ruins be multiplied: ah, *it is* made bright, *it is* wrapped up for the slaughter.

16 Go thee one way or other, *either* on the right hand, *or* on the left, whithersoever thy face *is* set.

17 I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest. I the LORD have said *it*.

This seems to be another sermon to the same amount as the former. The Lord directs His servant to continue his alarming

message, and again and again to cry concerning the sword of the Lord's slaughter. And the Prophet himself is to be a sign also to the people, and to cry and howl, and to smite upon his thigh. The ministers of the Lord are expected, in times of national calamity, to take interest in all the Lord's judgments; *to weep between the porch and the altar*; and to look to the Great Intercessor to spare His heritage. Joel ii. 17.

18 ¶ The word of the LORD came unto me, again, saying,

19 Also, thou son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain shall come forth out of one land: and choose thou a place; choose *it* at the head of the way to the city.

20 Appoint a way, that the sword may come to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jerusalem the defenced.

21 For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he made *his* arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver.

22 At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint *battering* rams against the gates, to cast a mount, *and* to build a fort.

23 And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken.

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings, your sins do appear? because, *I say*, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.

Perhaps by the two ways is intended the double attack which the king of *Babylon* made on Jerusalem and the chief city of the *Ammonites*; but concerning which, as this scripture represents, he stood undetermined for a while which to destroy first. But what the Pro-

phet is commissioned more particularly to declare thereby is, that had not sin been found in the Lord's people, no weapon of the King of *Babylon* could have prospered. Reader! think how more than ordinarily offensive is sin in the people of God.

25 And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come when iniquity *shall have* an end,

26 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this *shall not be* the same: exalt *him that is low*, and abase *him that is high*.

27 I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no *more*, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it *him*.

Here the Lord speaks personally to the King of Israel, and a very awful address it is. But what I beg the Reader more immediately to observe is, the promise of One coming, Whose right the crown and diadem of Israel is, and of the royal dignity being lost until His coming. And who could this point to but Christ? Thrice the Lord declares the overturning of his people in this verse, as if to shew what a degraded state the children of Israel should be reduced to before Christ's coming.

28 And thou, son of man, prophesy and say, thus saith the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; even say thou, The sword, the sword *is* drawn: for the slaughter *it is* furbished, to consume because of the glittering:

29 Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of *them that are* slain, of the wicked whose day is come, when their iniquity *shall have* an end.

30 Shall I cause *it* to return into his sheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity.

31 And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, *and* skilful to destroy.

32 Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire : thy blood shall be in the midst of the land : thou shalt be no more remembered : for I the LORD have spoken it.

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

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! the perusal of this chapter will be rendered very profitable, both to your heart and mine, if, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, we gather from it the instructions evidently intended from it to the people of God ; namely, how blessed it is to have the Lord for our God ; and when outward afflictions abound, inward consolations abound also in Jesus. When a child of God is under trouble, still, be the trouble what it may, while he hath a gracious covenant God to fly to, and the righteousness and blood-shedding of Jesus to trust in, all is well. But to have the Lord coming forth as our enemy, when the world presses hard upon us, it is that which aggravates the sorrow, and renders the load unbearable indeed. *Saul*, King of *Israel*, felt this to the full when he cried out, *The Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me*. Here was the bitterness of the affliction. The war of the Philistines had been nothing, for *Saul* had constantly subdued them when the Lord went with him to battle ; but every sword, every arrow of the angry Philistine, became doubly dreadful when the Lord was seen in the appointment. Reader ! let you and I learn from it the blessedness of having Jesus always with us and for us. To Him let us go, and in Him always confide. When He undertakes our cause, victory is sure ; yea, we are made more than conquerors through His grace helping us.

CHAP. XXII.

CONTENTS.

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

MOREOVER, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city ? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations.

3 Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord God; the city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself.

4 Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed, and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come *even* unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries.

5 *Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee, which art infamous, and much vexed.*

6 Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood.

7 In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow.

8 Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.

9 In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

10 In thee have they discovered their father's nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution.

11 And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter.

12 In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood: thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord God.

13 Behold, therefore, I have smitten mine hand

at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee.

14 Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the LORD have spoken *it*, and will do *it*.

15 And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee.

16 And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

The opening of this chapter, in the words of the Lord, is put into the form of a question, not only of *judging*, but it seems as if the Lord condescended to ask His servant, whether he had ought to say in justification of *the city of bloods*, for so the original is; meaning much evil abounded in Jerusalem. And then, as if the Lord knew the Prophet could not say any thing by way of the least apology, the Lord adds, *Then say thou*; that is, then pronounce both their guilt and their punishment; and all that follows in this paragraph is to this amount. Crimes upon crimes, and sins of the blackest nature. And all this found in the Jerusalem of the Lord! *Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon.*

17 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

18 Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they *are* brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are *even* the dross of silver.

19 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye are all become dross, behold therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

20 *As* they gather, silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt *it*; so will I gather *you* in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave *you there*, and melt you.

21 Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof.

22 As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.

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

23 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

24 Son of man, say unto her, Thou *art* the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

25 *There is* a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things: they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed *difference* between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

27 Her princes in the midst thereof *are* like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, *and* to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered *mortar*, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the LORD hath not spoken.

29 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor

and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

30 And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

31 Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.

The close of this chapter is uncommonly beautiful, if we read it with an eye to Jesus. Many had been the intercessors for perishing sinners in the earlier ages, and all of them were types of Christ. *Abraham* interceding for Sodom, Gen. xviii. 23. &c. *Moses* and *Joshua* for Israel, Exod. xxxii. 31. &c. *Joshua* vii. 6. &c. And *Aaron* in the matter of *Korah*, Numb. xvi. 47. But here the Lord seems to be on the look-out, as it were, for some one to arise for Israel. Let the Reader turn to the 63d chapter of *Isaiah*, and he will find Christ making use of the same language; and then taking to himself his great power of redemption. *Isaiah* lxiii. 5.

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. XXIII.

CONTENTS.

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

THE word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, there were two women the daughters of one mother :

3 And they committed whoredoms in Egypt, they committed whoredoms in their youth : there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity.

4 And the names of them *were* Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister : and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters : thus *were* their names ; Samaria *is* Aholah ; and Jerusalem Aholibah.

5 And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine ; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians *her* neighbours.

6 *Which were* clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses.

7 Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them *that were* the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted : with all their idols she defiled herself.

8 Neither left she her whoredoms *brought* from Egypt ; for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her.

9 Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted.

10 These discovered her nakedness : they took

her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her.

11 And when her sister Aholibah saw *this*, she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she, and in her whoredoms more than her sister in *her* whoredoms.

12 She doted upon the Assyrians *her* neighbours, captains and rulers, clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men.

13 Then I saw that she was defiled, *that* they *took* both one way,

14 And *that* she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermillion,

15 Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity:

16 And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea.

17 And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them.

18 So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister.

19 Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

20 For she doted upon their paramours, whose

flesh *is as* the flesh of asses, and whose issue *is like* the issue of horses.

21 Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth.

22 ¶ Therefore, O Aholibah, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side;

23 The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, *and* all the Assyrians with them; all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses.

24 And they shall come against thee with chariots, waggons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, *which* shall set against the buckler and shield, and helmet round about; and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments.

25 And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears: and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.

26 They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels.

27 Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom *brought* from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more.

28 For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand *of them* whom thou hatest, into the hand *of them* from whom thy mind is alienated:

29 And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and

shall take away all thy labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

30 I will do these *things* unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, *and* because thou art polluted with their idols.

31 Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand.

32 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn, and had in derision: it containeth much.

33 Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria.

34 Thou shalt even drink it and suck *it* out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD.

35 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

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

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

36 The LORD said moreover unto me, Son of man, wilt thou judge Aholah and Aholibah? yea, declare unto them their abominations;

37 That they have committed adultery, and blood *is* in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through *the fire*, to devour *them*.

38 Moreover, this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.

39 For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it: and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house.

40 And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger *was* sent; and, lo, they came: for whom didst thou wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments,

41 And satest upon a stately bed, and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil.

42 And a voice of a multitude being at ease *was* with her: and with the men of the common sort *were* brought Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads.

43 Then said I unto *her* that *was* old in adul-

teries, Will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she *with them*?

44 Yet they went in unto her as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot: so went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah the lewd women.

45 ¶ And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood: because they *are* adulteresses, and blood *is* in their hands.

46 For thus saith the Lord God: I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled.

47 And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords: they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire.

48 Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness.

49 And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord God.

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

REFLECTIONS.

READER! what are your own views of human nature at large, in reading the sad account of sin and rebellion in this Chapter? And yet more; what think you of the Israel of God, in beholding the baseness here manifested by a professing people to the God of Israel? What will any man think of taking confidence in himself, after such views of a fallen nature. Reader! is it not enough to cause every

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

CHAP. XXIV.

CONTENTS.

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

A GAIN in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, Write thee the name of the day, *even* of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

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

3 And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set *it* on, and also pour water into it.

4 Gather the pieces thereof into it, *even* every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; fill *it* with the choice bones.

5 Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, *and* make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.

6 ¶ Wherefore thus saith the LORD GOD; Woe to the bloody city! to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.

7 For her blood is in the midst of her: she set it upon the top of a rock, she poured not upon the ground, to cover it with dust;

8 That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance, I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.

9 Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great.

10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned.

11 Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and *that* the filthiness of it may be molten in it, *that* the scum of it may be consumed.

12 She hath wearied *herself* with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum *shall be* in the fire.

13 In thy filthiness *is* lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.

14 I the LORD have spoken *it*: it shall come to pass, and I will do *it*: I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to

thy ways, and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God.

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

15 ¶ Also, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

16 Son of man, Behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke : yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep : neither shall thy tears run down.

17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not *thy* lips, and eat not the bread of men.

18 So I spake unto the people in the morning : and at even my wife died ; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

19 ¶ And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these *things are* to us, that thou doest *so* ?

20 Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth ; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.

22 And ye shall do as I have done : ye shall not cover *your* lips, nor eat the bread of men.

23 And your tires *shall be* upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet : ye shall not mourn

nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.

24 Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign : according to all that he hath done shall ye do : and when this cometh, ye shall know that I *am* the Lord God.

25 Also thou son of man, *shall it not be* in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters.

26 *That* he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee to cause *thee* to hear *it* with *thine* ears?

27 In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb : and thou shalt be a sign unto them, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

It is very blessed when believers can acquiesce, yea, more than acquiesce with the Lord's appointments ; and can approve, and even rejoice in them. *Naked*, said one of old, (and a blessed frame of mind must he have been in when he said it,) *naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave,*

and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord. Precious Jesus! do thou give both to Writer and Reader, (for the gift is wholly thine to bestow,) grace for every exercise, and for every trial. And to whatever thou art pleased to call us in thy providence, give us suitable frames of mind by thy grace. May we under thy blessed teaching have always the same views of thee, and thy love towards us, whatever outward or inward circumstances may arise in thy appointments. Lord, give us to hear thy blessed voice in every dispensation, as to thy servant the Prophet; I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

CHAP. XXV.

CONTENTS.

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

THE word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them;

3 And say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity.

4 Behold, therefore, I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk.

5 And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

6 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast clapped *thine* hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel;

7 Behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

We have here the Lord reckoning with other sinful nations. And first with *Ammon*. This people had been a long enemy to Israel, and upon every occasion did all they could to distress them. 2 Sam. xii. 26. &c. Here therefore the Lord begins to reckon with *Ammon*. And observe on what account it is done, namely, because they rejoiced in the transgression of Israel, and the Lord's displeasure with Israel. *Aha! Aha! so would we have it*; is the language of all carnal men, when gracious souls transgress and fall into sin and trouble. Psm. xxxv. 21. See also the whole prophecy of *Obadiah*.

8 ¶ Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah *is* like unto all the heathen;

9 Therefore behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities *which are* on his frontiers, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim,

10 Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations.

11 And I will execute judgments upon Moab; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

12 ¶ Thus saith the Lord GOD: Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them;

13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make

it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.

14 And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger, and according to my fury, and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God.

Edom, the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob, is the next brought to God's bar, and a solemn judgment and sentence is pronounced upon *Edom*. See, Reader! how plainly the different seeds of nature and grace ran through all the generations of *Esau* and *Jacob*? Oh! to what can we refer distinguishing mercy but to God's sovereign will and purpose! Malachi i. 2, 3. Romans ix. 13, 14, 15, 16.

15 ¶ Thus saith the Lord God: Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy *it* for the old hatred;

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea-coasts.

17 And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. XXVI.

CONTENTS.

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

AND it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken *that was* the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, *now* she is laid waste:

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold, *I am* against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

5 It shall be *a place* for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken *it*, saith

the Lord GOD : and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

6 And her daughters which *are* in the field shall be slain by the sword ; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

7 ¶ For thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

8 He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field : and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

9 And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

10 By reason of the abundance of his horses, their dust shall cover thee : thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets : he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise ; and they

shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses; and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water.

13 And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

14 And I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be *a place* to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken *it*, saith the Lord God.

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

15 ¶ Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?

16 Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at *every* moment, and be astonished at thee.

17 And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, *that wast* inhabited of sea-faring men, the renowned city, which was strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror *to be* on all that haunt it!

18 Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall: yea, the isles that *are* in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.

19 For thus saith the Lord God; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited, when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee;

20 When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited: and I shall set glory in the land of the living;

21 I will make thee a terror, and thou *shalt be no more*: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God.

Those that favour the idea of *mystic Tyre* being here spoken of, and not *antient Tyre*, (which could never be so considerable in point of commerce and of riches,) conclude, that what is here spoken refers to that glorious æra of the Church, when the Lord shall bring again his people. It is very probable, that the Holy Ghost by the Prophet's ministry, directs the Church to this contemplation. The *great slaughter* to be made in Tyre; and the *cry of the wounded*; and the *Princes of the Sea*, coming down from their thrones to *clothe themselves with trembling*, and to *take up a lamentation*; these are no doubt most striking features of some very horrible visitation, and to some great maritime power. But what nation is here meant, I do not presume to say. The Lord in his own time will reveal; and that is consolation enough for the faithful in Christ Jesus. *Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him.* Isa. iii. 10. This, let every real, regenerated follower of the Lord Jesus, carry in his bosom; and beg of God the Holy Ghost to engrave the truth of it upon his heart. One point, here predicted, is abundantly plain, and in which I would wish the Reader to be more earnestly interested; namely, that when this *mystic Tyre* is brought down to the ground, then the Lord saith, *I shall set glory in the land of the living*. And what is Jehovah's glory, but Jehovah's Christ? the one only ordinance of heaven, for salvation, to his Church and people. And who are the living, but those who are regenerated, and become new creatures in Christ? Reader! let no man deceive you. *He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* 1 John v. 12. Nothing short of the new birth, the new life, *hid with Christ in God*, will avail in that day, when God riseth to shake terribly the earth, (or what is the same thing to every individual as it concerns his own everlasting welfare,) the day of every man's death will determine for him finally

and fully, whose he is, and to whom he belongs. Reader! are you in that blessed state now? Hath the Lord, as it concerns *you*, set glory in the land of the living? Is Christ formed in *you*, the hope of glory? Oh! precious testimony of God the Holy Ghost, when witnessing with our spirits, that we are children of God. So that we can, and do, bear witness also, to that soul comforting truth, *Thy God, thy glory!* Isaiah lx. 19.

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. XXVII.

CONTENTS.

The subject of the former Chapter is continued through this, relating to the fall of Tyre. Her riches, and vast trade, are described, and the Chapter closeth with an account of her humblings.

THE word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus;

3 And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, *which art a merchant of*

the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said I *am* of perfect beauty.

It was said in the preceding Chapter, (verse 6,) that *Tyrus* should know by the Lord's judgments, that He was the Lord. In this Chapter, the Lord commands his servant to put *Tyrus* in mind of her pride, and of her impious saying, that she was a perfect beauty. And this seems to be done with a view, that after describing her greatness as a nation, she might then be led to see the cause of her humblings, in her pride and cruelty to the Lord's people. Whether the chief scope of this prophecy be intended for antient history, at the time of the Babylonian captivity; or whether it hath respect to modern times, and this Tyre be mystical of some great maritime nation, I presume not to say. The situation of Tyre, as is here said, being *at the entrance of the sea*, might prompt one to suppose it had relation to some *European* power, if the prophecy hath a remote aspect to the times of the gospel. In this case it might be very easy for the imagination to form conjectures, and to fix it to some one of the great continental powers under the Romish superstition, which have been always, like Tyre of old, enemies to God's true Israel. But here a great difficulty ariseth, because in the following chapter (which is a continuation of Tyre's history) Tyre is said to have been *perfect in her ways, from the day that she was created, till iniquity was found in her*, (verse 15.) And this never could be said of the Church of Rome, in any one period of it. To go back to the days of the Apostles for purity respecting Rome, and because *Clement*, one of the first bishops of Rome, is said to have had his name *written in the book of life*, (Philip. iv. 3.) to fancy that this referred to this perfect state of Tyre, is a far fetched supposition, and a most improbable, ill founded, and unwarrantable, conclusion. It would be more suitable to the general plan of God's government, who concerning his prophecies hath for the most part, if not invariably, been pleased to throw a veil over them, to keep men from penetrating into them, until the things predicted are fulfilled; and then, both the prediction and accomplishment, are found to be exactly corresponding. I fear that all bold conjectures concerning the Lord's prophecies, which have been intruded upon the world, have not been sent forth under the teaching and direction of God the Holy Ghost. And if they carry not that blessed testimony with them, they must be bold indeed. I would therefore recommend the Reader to take the word of the Lord as he finds it: and here in the instance of Tyre to receive it in the simplicity and truth of the relation. Tyre is represented as a proud, rich, and flourishing state. Tyre is said to have been lifted up with it: and Tyre is to be humbled. Here we cannot err. Pride and sin will bring down the Lord's judgments on any nation, and on every nation. And as Tyre is before said to have oppressed Israel, here becomes the crying sin, for that she must be overthrown. Any, and every kingdom that comes up to those characters, may tremble in reading the threatened ruin of Tyre.

4 Thy borders *are* in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty.

5 They have made all thy *ship*-boards of fir-trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee.

6 *Of* the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars: the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches *of* ivory, *brought* out of the isles of Chittim.

7 Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail: blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee.

8 The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise *men*, O Tyrus, *that* were in thee, were thy pilots.

9 The ancients of Gebal and the wise *men* thereof were in thee thy calkers: all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

10 They of Persia, and of Lud, and of Phut, were in thine army, thy men of war; they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness.

11 The men of Arvad with thine army *were* upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect.

12 Tarshish *was* thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all *kind of* riches: with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.

13 Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they *were* thy merchants: they traded the persons of men, and vessels of brass in thy market.

14 They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses, and horsemen, and mules.

15 The men of Dedan *were* thy merchants; many isles *were* the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee *for* a present, horns of ivory, and ebony.

16 Syria *was* thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.

17 Judah, and the land of Israel, they *were* thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm.

18 Damascus *was* thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool.

19 Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus were in thy market.

20 Dedan *was* thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots.

21 Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these *were they* thy merchants.

22 The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they *were* thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.

23 Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, *and* Chilmad *were* thy merchants.

24 These *were* thy merchants in all sorts of *things*, in blue clothes, and broidered work; and in chests of rich apparel bound with cords, and made of cedar among thy merchandise.

25 The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy

market? and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.

26 ¶ Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.

27 Thy riches and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war that *are* in thee, and in all thy company which *is* in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin.

28 The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots.

29 And all that handle the oar, the mariners, *and* all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land;

30 And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes:

31 And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart *and* bitter wailing.

32 And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, *saying*, What *city is* like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?

33 When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise.

34 In the time *when* thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters, thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.

35 All the inhabitants of the isles shall be asto-

nished at thee, and their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in *their* countenance.

36 The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt be* any more.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. XXVIII.

CONTENTS.

The same subject, concerning the Lord's judgment upon Tyrus is prosecuted in this chapter, until, towards the end, Sidon also is arraigned at God's tribunal.

THE word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, *I am a god*, I sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas; yet

thou *art* a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God :

3 Behold, thou *art* wiser than Daniel ; there is no secret that they can hide from thee :

4 With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures :

5 By thy great wisdom *and* by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches :

6 Therefore thus saith the Lord God ; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God ;

7 Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations : and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.

8 They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of *them that are* slain in the midst of the seas.

9 Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, *I am* God ? but thou *shalt be* a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee :

10 Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised, by the hand of strangers : for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord God.

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

11 ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon

the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14 Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God: thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic: therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt* thou *be* any more.

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

20 ¶ Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it,

22 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her; and shall be sanctified in her.

23 For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

24 And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor *any* grieving thorn of all *that are* round about them that despised them; and they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

25 Thus saith the Lord GOD: When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.

26 And they shall dwell safely therein, and

shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God.

These are very sweet promises to Israel with which the chapter closeth, and plainly refer to the restoration of the Lord's ancient people. But how or when the Lord will gather them in; whether by instruments the Lord will work in the accomplishment, or by some miraculous interposition of his own; nothing in scripture authorizeth us to determine. Certain it is, that the call of the Jews in the last day dispensation will be a glorious manifestation of God; and perhaps the work will be greater in the display of it, than the first bringing the Church out of Egypt, for then they were altogether, but now are scattered and dispersed over the whole earth. Lord! hasten in thine own time the mercy *when the Redeemer shall rise out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. XXIX.

CONTENTS.

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

IN the tenth year, in the tenth *month*, in the twelfth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt :

3 Speak and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I *am* against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river *is* mine own, and I have made *it* for myself.

4 But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

5 And I will leave thee *thrown* into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers : thou shalt fall upon the open fields : thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered : I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field, and to the fowls of the heaven.

6 And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I *am* the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

7 When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break and rend all their shoulder : and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

8 ¶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee.

9 And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD; because he hath said, The river *is* mine, and I have made *it*.

10 Behold therefore, I *am* against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste *and* desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia.

11 No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.

12 And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries *that are* desolate, and her cities among the cities *that are* laid waste shall be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

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

13 Yet thus saith the Lord God; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered:

14 And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return *into* the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.

15 It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them that they shall no more rule over the nations.

16 And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth *their* iniquity

to remembrance, when they shall look after them : but they shall know that I *am* the Lord God.

Remark, I pray you, Reader, the blessedness of this promise. Egypt, as a Gentile nation, is to be gathered ; and though ever after she is to be kept in the greatest humbleness, yea, as a *base nation*, but this seems to be spoken of as no disadvantage, it is blessed to be vile in our own eyes, if lovely in Christ Jesus before God. *For God hath chosen base things of the world, and things which are despised, to bring to nought things that are.* 1 Cor. i. 28. Read that sweet promise, Isaiah xix. 18—25.

17 ¶ And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first *month*, in the first *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

18 Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus ; every head *was* made bald, and every shoulder *was* peeled : yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it ;

19 Therefore thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon : and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey ; and it shall be the wages for his army.

20 I have given him the land of Egypt *for* his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God.

21 ¶ In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them ; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

There was a long interval, even of seventeen years, between the first part of this chapter and the prophecy here delivered, and it should seem to have been the last of *Ezekiel's* prophecies. But there is certainly a great reason for its being placed here, because it is a confirmation of what was said before, so that the prediction and fulfillment of it might be read together. Reader ! how beautiful and blessed the chapter ends. Is it not a gracious promise concerning the Lord Jesus Christ ? Who but Christ can be said to be the horn of his people ? And what is the opening of the mouth, spiritually considered, but the Lord Jesus bringing redemption to his Church ?

Precious Jesus! well may thy people so often join in holy *Zacharias's* hymn, and say with him, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.* Luke i. 68, 69.

REFLECTIONS.

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

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

CHAP. XXX.

CONTENTS.

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

THE word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!

3 For the day *is* near, even the day of the LORD *is* near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

4 And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.

5 Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the

mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

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

6 Thus saith the LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord God.

7 And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries *that are* desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities *that are* wasted.

8 And they shall know that *I am* the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and *when* all her helpers shall be destroyed.

9 In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for lo, it cometh.

10 Thus saith the Lord God; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

11 He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.

12 And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken *it*.

13 Thus saith the Lord God; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause *their* images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.

14 And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No,

15 And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No.

16 And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph *shall have* distresses daily.

17 The young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword: and these *cities* shall go into captivity.

18 At Tehaphnehes also the days shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.

19 Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

20 ¶ And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *month*, in the seventh *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword.

22 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken: and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand.

23 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

24 And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand : but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him the groanings of a deadly wounded man.

25 But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down : and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt.

26 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. and disperse them among the countries ; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, Reader, over this chapter, and connect with it the former ; and learn from both the sure and certain purposes of the Lord in their accomplishment. When we thus view the Lord Jehovah going forth to punish the nations, and especially with an eye for the injuries done to his people, what a solemn representation doth it afford of the sovereignty of God ? Oh ! could we but learn more humbly to bend before the just and all-wise decision of the Lord, in his dispensations both of men and things, how differently would be our estimate of right and wrong to what it now is ? Here, in this chapter as well as in several others around, we behold the Lord's jealousy for his people in the punishment of the nations ; in all which we ought to mark his sovereignty, and to bow down implicitly before it. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?* Wherefore and whence his dispensations are so directed ? why Christ, his great gift, is held forth to one nation with a full, free, and extended hand, while others know not the Lord, nor the operation of his hand ? who shall take upon him to determine ? *It is the Lord,* (said an ancient deeply-exercised soul, under the heaviest afflictions,) *let him do what seemeth him good.* This was enough to stop all complaints. He adds no more. Blessed Lord ! give me grace in the reading of thy judgments, and, marking thy mercies, to learn, like David, to sing of both, and to direct my song to thee. For sure I am thy glory is in all ; and when this is the object to be attained, Egypt's destruction or Israel's deliverance, must be right. Again I say, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?*

C H A P. XXXI.

CONTENTS.

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

AND it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness?

3 ¶ Behold, the Assyrian *was* a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.

4 The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.

5 Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.

6 All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

7 Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters.

8 The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty.

9 I have made him fair by the multitude of his

branches ; so that all the trees of Eden, that *were* in the garden of God, envied him.

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

10 ¶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD ; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height ;

11 I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen : he shall surely deal with him ; I have driven him out for his wickedness.

12 And strangers, the terrible of the nations have cut him off, and have left him : upon the mountains, and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land : and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him.

13 Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches :

14 To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water : for they are all delivered unto death to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.

15 Thus saith the Lord GOD ; In the day when he went down to the grave, I caused a mourning : I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed : and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him ; and all the trees of the field fainted for him.

16 I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit : and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

17 They also went down into hell with him unto *them that be* slain with the sword : and *they that were* his arm, *that* dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.

18 ¶ To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden ? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth ; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with *them that be* slain by the sword, *this is* Pharaoh, and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! it is hardly possible to read of the Lord's judgments of other nations, and of his tenderness to Israel, without being struck with astonishment at all we meet with concerning his distinguishing mercy and favour. Well might the people be called, *a people that dwell alone, and who should not be reckoned among the nations*. For we find marks and evidences of this distinguishing peculiarity of the

Lord's chosen through all the Bible. They dwell alone from the very first notice taken of them in the written word, in God the Father's gracious purpose, council, and will; in God the Son's attachment to them, regard for them, and union with them; and in God the Holy Ghost's bringing them to the knowledge, love, and enjoyment, of their singular character, as *not reckoned among the nations*. And, Reader! when you consider the fewness, the littleness, and personal poverty of Israel, and contrast their state with what is here said in this chapter of the grandeur and earthly glory both of *Egypt* and *Assyria*, what an amazing thought it awakens of the glory and grace of a covenant God in Christ? Reader! let us look up for every suited grace to follow up the blessed and merciful appointments of our God; and since the Lord's Israel *dwell alone*, may it be our desire and study to dwell indeed alone, by keeping aloof from all unnecessary acquaintance and connection with a world in whose friendship and interest we are not reckoned. Precious Lord Jesus! be it my portion to be living only to thee and to thy service, that every one may know whose I am, and whom I serve; that being redeemed from among men, and bought with a price, I may glorify *the Lord in my body, and in my spirit, which are his*. Amen.

CHAP. XXXII.

CONTENTS.

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

AND it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, Take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou *art* as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troublest the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.

3 Thus saith the Lord God; I will therefore spread out my net over thee, with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net.

4 Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee,

and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.

5 And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height.

6 I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimdest, *even* to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee.

7 And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.

8 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.

9 I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known.

10 Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, when I shall brandish my sword before them: and they shall tremble at *every* moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall.

11 For thus saith the Lord GOD: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.

12 By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall, the terrible of the nations all of them: and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed.

13 I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters: neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them.

14 Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD.

15 When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I *am* the LORD.

16 This *is* the lamentation wherewith they shall lament her : the daughters of the nations shall lament her : they shall lament for her, *even* for Egypt, and for all her multitude, saith the Lord God.

I cannot but believe, though the thing is not plainly revealed, that the Lord hath in this place a spiritual meaning, and which is principally intended by these scriptures. Surely *Ezekiel* ministry would not be directed, in so large a part of it, to the relation of other nations in their sins, and judgment, and punishment, but with an eye to the people of God for their improvement from them. And what can open an higher improvement than spiritually to contemplate the destruction of all those monarchies for the rejection of God's covenant in Christ? Indeed, from what is said in the book of the Revelation by St. John, we have some authority to look at the subject at least under this view, though not perhaps enough to draw positive conclusions therefrom. There we read that *the court which is without the temple is given to the Gentiles, and the holy city they were to tread under feet forty and two months.* And as the same scripture proceeds to tell us, that this great city *is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt*, we cannot but be led to conclude, that somewhat of this nature is intended from these scriptures. Rev. xi. 2—8. And still more from what is said to be the general intention of the Lord in those chastisements of Egypt, namely, that when the Lord hath made Egypt desolate, and smitten all them that dwell therein, *then* (he saith) *shall they know that I am the Lord.* It should seem to be the ultimate object of all visitations, that when Israel is gathered, the Gentile Church also shall be called. So speaks the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah : *The Gentiles shall come to thy (Church's) light, (in Jesus,) and kings to the brightness of thy rising.* Isaiah lx. 3. Indeed the whole purport of prophecy is to this effect. Isaiah ii. 2, 3, 4. Isaiah iv. 1. &c. Haggai ii. 6, 7. &c.

17 ¶ It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

18 Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, *even* her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.

19 Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised.

20 They shall fall in the midst of *them that are* slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword: draw her and all her multitudes.

21 The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

22 Ashur *is* there and all her company: his graves *are* about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword:

23 Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain: fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living.

24 There *is* Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terrors in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit.

25 They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves *are* round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living: yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of *them that be* slain.

26 There *is* Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves *are* round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living.

27 And they shall not lie with the mighty *that are* fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war; and they

have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though *they were* the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

28 Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie with *them that are* slain with the sword.

29 There *is* Edom, her kings and all her princes, which with their might are laid by *them that were* slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit.

30 There *be* the princes of the north all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with *them that be* slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit.

31 Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, *even* Pharaoh, and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord God.

32 For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with *them that are* slain with the sword, *even* Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

Sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin. This is the unalterable declaration of scripture. So that whenever sin be found, death must follow: temporal death, spiritual death, eternal death. *Death, (saith the same authority) passeth upon all men, because all have sinned.* Hence, where-ever sin is found, unless done away in Christ, there must be *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* Pause over the subject; and with these solemn scriptures in view, read over the whole that the Prophet hath said in this, and the many preceding Chapters, concerning the condemnation of the ungodly. Reader, may God the Holy Ghost accompany by his Almighty teaching, both your perusal, and mine, of these solemn events. And from the uniform correspondence of scripture on those momentous things, may both learn awfully to reverence the striking decrees of God. Here we find the Lord speaking in the same, or similar language, by his servant the Prophet *Ezekiel*, as in another scripture he doth by his servant the Apostle *John*. Here the Lord declares, that he will *cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; that many people shall be amazed, and their kings shall be horribly afraid.* And there the Lord saith, that *the sun shall become black as sackcloth, the moon shall be as blood, and the stars of heaven shall fall upon the earth.* And *the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men; and every bond man, and every free man, shall call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* Precious, precious Lord Jesus! grant to him that reads, and to him that writes, grace to know thee in thy love, and in thy great salvation, that when the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth, we may be found everlastingly safe in thee, as *the Lord our righteousness!* Amen.

CHAP. XXXIII.

CONTENTS.

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

A GAIN the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the

sword upon the land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman :

3 If, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people ;

4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning ; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning : his blood shall be upon him : but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned ; if the sword come and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

7 ¶ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou shalt surely die ; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it ; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

The Prophet here draws the figure of a watchman, and points out the distinguishing features of his office. After which, the Lord declares that he had set *Ezekiel* in this Character, to the house of Israel : and most solemnly admonisheth him of the great responsibility of the charge. And as the blood of souls becomes infinitely more important in this high trust, than the watchman of a city or garrison, in warning the people entrusted to him of the danger of their bodies ; the subject riseth to an higher degree of magnitude. With what holy

fear and trembling, if this thought were duly considered, would the spiritual watchmen in the Church of Jesus, enter into the priesthood! And how would all such cry aloud, and spare not, in admonishing sinners of their danger, and holding up Christ as the only city of refuge for the manslayer to flee to, who by sin had murdered his own soul!

10 ¶ Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins *be* upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

11 Say unto them, *As* I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth.

13 When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live: if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered: but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right:

15 *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live,

17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the LORD is not equal : but as for them, their way is not equal.

18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

20 Yet ye say, The way of the LORD is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.

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

21 ¶ And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, *that* one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.

22 Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

23 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

24 Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land : but we *are* many : the land is given us for inheritance.

25 Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood; and shall ye possess the land?

26 Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife; and shall ye possess the land?

27 Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; *As I live*, surely they that *are* in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that *is* in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that *be* in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence.

28 For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.

29 Then shall they know that *I am* the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate, because of all their abominations which they have committed.

By comparing what the Prophet *Jeremiah*, in his history of the Church hath recorded, with what is here written, we discover that it was a whole year, and more, from the destruction of Jerusalem to *Ezekiel's* knowing it. See *Jeremiah* lii. 4—14. I desire the Reader to turn to the 24th Chapter, verses 24 to the end, as he reads what is here said. The Lord there promised *Ezekiel*, that he would send a messenger to him when Jerusalem was overthrown; and that then the Lord would open his mouth. See here the accomplishment. How faithful is God to his promises! But I beg the Reader also to remark, the graciousness of the Lord, even in his judgments. *They shall know that I am the Lord.* This seems to be the great design, and the general close of all the Lord's dispensation, both in mercy and judgment. His people shall behold his hand in grace. His enemies shall discover the Lord's hand in judgment! Reader! is it not the same now? Doth not God the Holy Ghost in his divine office, *convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment!* John xvi. 8.

30 Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.

31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people,

and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, *but* their heart goeth after their covetousness.

32 And, lo, thou *art* unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

33 And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

Had the Prophet *Ezekiel* lived in the present day of the Church, it is highly probable he would have experienced much the same treatment now as then. Who so abused behind his back, as a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? What bitterness can equal the gall of the carnal heart, against the distinguishing truths of the gospel? Men may preach any thing, yea every thing, if they keep in the back ground Christ and his cross; Christ and his glory. But all hell is up in arms, when the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ are insisted upon as the *only* means of salvation. Reader! make your own observation of this, as you go through life, and you will find it universally true. Do observe, however, though the talk both *by walls and in houses*, was all against the poor Prophet; yet they still find it necessary to attend his preaching. It is probable *Ezekiel* did not know that they were so ill disposed as to talk against him, but the Lord will shew him of it. Sweet thought to a faithful servant of Jesus! To such an one I would say, from this scripture, remember Jesus knows all you go through, and observes all the conduct of your opposers! And, Reader! observe further, this very people were obliged to confess, that there was great power, and great sweetness, in the Prophet's discourses. Is it not to be concluded in the last day, that the condemnation of mere professors will arise from this very circumstance, and God's own word will be their own condemnation? John xii. 47, 48.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Lord Jesus! how can I hear or read of a watchman to the house of Israel, without having my soul led out to the contemplation of thine unequalled love and mercy to the souls of thy redeemed, when thou camest to watch over thy fold and flock, lest Satan should surprize them, and carry them away. Thou hast indeed, blessed Lord, set watchmen upon the walls of thy Zion. Oh! Lord make them faithful to God, and to souls, that *they may never hold their peace day nor night; and give the Lord no rest nor peace, until that thou hast made Jerusalem a praise in the earth!* But blessed Jesus! in vain do men build the house, except the Lord be both the foundation, and the builder! In vain do watchmen take their stand by night, except thou, O Lord, shalt keep the city. Oh! thou

Almighty Watchman and Keeper of thy people! Do not I behold thee, in the glories of thy person, God-man-mediator, set up from everlasting? Do I not trace thy daily love, and nightly vigilance, in all the goings forth for the salvation of thy people? Yea, precious Jesus, are not the goings of my God and king to be seen in his sanctuary? Who but Jesus is set forth in all the Old Testament promises, types, and shadows? And who but Jesus is manifested in all the New Testament fulfilment, in the everlasting realities of grace and salvation? A watchman art thou not, O Lord, in watching over thy Church, who never slumberest nor sleepest? And didst thou not take this office when thou camest up at the call of God thy Father, in thine incarnation? And in all that pertains to redemption-work, thou and thou only, art the great watchman, the standard, the ensign for war, against sin, death, and hell; all of whom thou hast conquered! Precious Lord! watch over me I beseech thee for good; and may I never lose sight of thy watchfulness; so that I may cry out with one of old, *the Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation.*

CHAP. XXXIV.

CONTENTS.

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

AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock.

4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

5 And they were scattered because *there is* no shepherd : and they became meat to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.

6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill : yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*.

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

7 ¶ Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD ;

8 *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, surely, because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock ;

9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD ;

10 Thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I *am* against the shepherds : and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock ; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more : for I will deliver my flock

from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

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

¶ 11 For thus saith the Lord GOD ; Behold, I, *even I*, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered ; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be : there shall they lie in a good fold, *and* in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick ; but I will destroy the fat and the strong ; I will feed them with judgment.

What a sweet relief doth this part of the Chapter afford, after beholding what went before, in the unfaithfulness of *false* shepherds, to hear what is promised to the *true*. Reader! you will not, I am sure, need my pointing out, that it is Jesus who here takes up the subject. His Church is his flock, and for every one of the fold he is intimately concerned. Indeed, under how many characters of a shepherd doth the Holy Ghost represent him, in various parts of his sacred word. At one place as the *chief* shepherd, 1 Pet. v. 4. at another as the *great* shepherd, Heb. xiii. 20. And for the identity of the person and character, in the same Chapter, he is called the *one* shepherd; to intimate that there is no other. See verse 23. And Jesus calls himself the *good* shepherd. John x. 11. And God the Father calls him *my* shepherd. Zech. xiii. 7. And Reader! you and I are not, I hope, without a personal knowledge of him, under every one of those sweet distinctions. And that Jesus hath a flock, a Church, a people, which are his, both by the Father's gift, and his own purchase; this I hope is also well known both to the Writer and the Reader. And this flock, like the glorious Shepherd of it, is known by various names in the word of God, which the Holy Ghost hath given to it. At one place it is called a *little* flock: Luke xii. 32. At another a *beautiful* flock: Jeremiah xiii. 20. And by one of the Prophets it is called a flock of *slaughter*. Zach. xi. 4. But still Jesus's flock is costly, and precious in his eyes. No wonder that the Lord therefore so graciously undertakes those compassionate offices himself, which are here marked down. Reader! are you of Christ's fold? fear not then, Jesus will feed, protect, heal, restore, comfort, bring home, and cause to lie down in his bosom, every poor, diseased, and wandering sheep of his fold!

17 And *as for* you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats.

18 *Seemeth it* a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?

19 And *as for* my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet, and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

20 ¶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them, Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle.

21 Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad;

22 Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.

23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them: I the LORD have spoken *it*.

25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

27 And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

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

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

29 And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with

hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

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

30 Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God *am* with them, and *that* they, *even* the house of Israel, *are* my people, saith the Lord God.

31 And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men, and I *am* your God, saith the Lord GOD.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

But from a subject so truly awful, Reader, let you and I seek relief in looking to Jesus, the good shepherd, who hath given his life for the sheep! Truly, Lord, thy Father graciously gave thee thy flock, and made them thine when thou camest to seek and save that which was lost. Through every part of this Chapter, in all that is promised of the faithful pastor, we trace thy footsteps, and mark the distinguishing features of thy character. Yea, blessed Jesus! it is thou, and thou alone, that hast gone over the mountains, and through every hill and vale, in quest of thy flock; and thou hast brought home, and wilt bring home all and every one on thy shoulders rejoicing. It is

thine office to separate the goats from the sheep; and to distinguish between the precious and the vile. And ere long, thou, who art now the Lamb in the midst of the throne, feeding those now above, and leading them to fountains of living waters, wilt bring home the whole flock that remain out of the spiritual Egypt of this world, and not an hoof shall be left behind. Then blessed Lord, all thy sheep shall be brought into one fold, and everlastingly secured from all future wanderings, when thou, the *Chief Shepherd* shall appear, *they all shall appear with thee in glory.* Amen.

CHAP. XXXV.

CONTENTS.

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

MOREOVER, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it.

3 And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O mount Seir, I *am* against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate;

4 I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD.

5 Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed *the blood of* the children of Israel by the force of the sword, in the time of their calamity, in the time *that their iniquity had* an end:

6 Therefore, *as* I live saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hath not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee.

7 Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out, and him that returneth.

8 And I will fill his mountains with his slain *men*: in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all

thy rivers shall they fall that are slain with the sword.

9 I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that *I am* the LORD.

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

10 Because thou hast said, These two nations, and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it, whereas the LORD was there:

11 Therefore, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee.

12 And thou shalt know that *I am* the LORD, *and that* I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume.

13 Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard *them*.

14 Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.

15 As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount *Seir*, and all Idumea, *even* all of it: and they shall know that *I am* the LORD.

We shall enter into a due apprehension of what is here said, and also the interest the whole Church of Christ hath in it, if we read it as it ought to be read, spiritually; and the Lord the Holy Ghost be our teacher. It is truly blessed, in the conflicts of grace and corruption, to trace each to the original head; and while the children of God all feel, as that they do feel the remains of indwelling corruption in nature, which manifest their alliance to the old man; they no less feel the workings of grace in the spirit, which proves their connection with the new man, *which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.* Ephes. iv. 22, 23, 24. Reader! see a notable proof of this in Paul the Apostle's experience. Romans vii. 14—25. In this memorable relation of the groanings and conflicts of so eminent a servant of the Lord, we ought to find much comfort to all our similar exercises; remembering that our grand relief, under such soul-agonizing trials, is the same as Paul's was, wholly in the Lord Jesus! Oh! it is blessed to be made sensible of our nothingness, when such humblings lead the soul to Jesus and his all sufficiency!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! what an awful thing to be of the *Esau* race! By nature, and by practice, a race of evil-doers: children that are full of hatred and bitterness against the Lord and his Christ. And not only born under the condemnation of a broken law, but their very nature indisposed to all desires after Christ and his righteousness. How truly solemn and affecting is the exhortation the Apostle delivers to the Church, of watching against this root of bitterness springing up in the soul. *Lest (saith the Apostle) there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* Despising Christ; he soon advanced to this point to get rid of him! Lord! blessed for ever be thy name, in keeping thy redeemed, thine Israel, from the Esau's of every generation!

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

C H A P. XXXVI.

CONTENTS.

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

ALSO, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession :

3 Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because they have made *you* desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and *are* an infamy of the people :

4 Therefore ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that *are* round about ;

5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession, with the joy of all *their* heart, with spiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.

6 Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen :

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I have lifted up mine hand: surely the heathen that *are* about you, they shall bear their shame.

8 ¶ But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel: for they are at hand to come.

9 For, behold, I *am* for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown:

10 And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, *even* all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded:

11 And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit, and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better *unto you* than at your beginnings; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

12 Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, *even* my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of *men*.

13 Thus saith the Lord God; Because they say unto you, Thou *land* devouredst up men, and hast bereaved thy nations;

14 Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord God.

15 Neither will I cause *men* to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord God.

This is a most solemn and striking Sermon of the Prophet. Surely it carries with it decisive testimonies under what gracious influence it was delivered. It appears, that in consequence of the Lord's chastening his people the enemy triumphed: *Aha, aha, so would we have it!* But, saith the Lord, have they by their wiles tempted you to evil, and now do they triumph over you for it; this shall not be. And then follows a string of the most blessed promises. Reader!

do not overlook the personal interest every child of God hath in this scripture. All that belong to Christ, are part of Christ, and all the promises in him, *are yea and Amen*. And that is not of the smallest kind which the Lord gave concerning the reproaches of his people, by the Prophet: Isaiah xxv. 6, 7, 8. 2 Cor. i. 20.

16 ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman.

18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *wherewith* they had polluted it:

19 And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.

20 And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These *are* the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.

What a sad account is here! Is it the Lord's Israel that is thus spoken of? And do the house of Israel indeed not only thus disgrace themselves by sin, but bring an odium on the good way, by their conduct? Reader! what a solemn thing is it for the children of God to be thus discovered! Lord, keep thy redeemed ones by thy grace, that they cause not the enemy to blaspheme?

21 But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen whither they went.

22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not *this* for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye went.

23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen

shall know that I *am* the LORD, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

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

24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

29 I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.

31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.

32 Not for your sakes do I *this*, saith the Lord God; be it known unto you; be ashamed and

confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

Reader! pray read over again and again those sweet promises. Are they not like the Chapter of the grapes of *Eshcol*? And oh! how truly blessed to the souls that have partaken of them in the Lord Jesus! Every word is full of grace, and rich with mercy. *First*, the Lord will gather his redeemed to himself. This begins the promise. Are they scattered far and near? Then will he gather them from all lands. And where will he bring them? Into their own land. And if the Reader would see how the Lord will do it! let him turn to one scripture to see *how*. Eph. i. 10. And to another scripture to discover the cause *why*. Jeremiah xxxii. 40. Well; but when they are brought, what will the Lord do *for* them; and what will he do *to* them! These sweet verses declare. Are they polluted? They shall be washed from all their filthiness, in the blood of Jesus. Have they hard hearts? The Lord will soften them. Are they ignorant? The Lord will put his spirit in them. Are they impoverished and poor? The Lord will greatly multiply them. And what shall be the blessed effects of this bounty? They shall remember themselves, and loath themselves for all the evil they have committed. Sweet consideration! Nothing short of a spirit of grace in the soul can induce a self-loathing, for sin in our nature. And on what account is it that the Lord doth all these things to Israel? Because they are Israel his people, his redeemed, his chosen. His own sake, his glorious name's sake, is the sole cause, and his own glory. No merit, no sorrow, no repentance; nothing in them moving the Lord to it. No not even their misery: for his love, and the glory of his name, preceded even their being. Precious salvation of a precious precious Saviour!

33 Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause *you* to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

34 And the desolate land shall be tilled, where-as it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

35 And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities *are become* fenced, *and* are inhabited.

36 Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined *places*, *and* plant that that was desolate; I the LORD have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*.

37 Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will yet *for* this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do

it for them ; I will increase them with men like a flock.

38 As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts ; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men : and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

One might have concluded, that after such a string of the richest promises as we have just reviewed in the preceding verses, the next account might have been of Israel's thankfulness. But the Lord hath not done with promises. He is not only rich in mercy, but we meet with the exceeding riches of his grace, and the abundant overflowing goodness of our God. The Lord so delighteth in rejoicing over his people for good, that when he hath cleansed his people and brought them home, he will cause them to dwell in their own land. And the land shall be fenced, yea, the Lord himself will be a wall of fire round about to keep it. Nothing of desolation shall any more take place. The very heathen shall be constrained to acknowledge the Lord's hand is in the mercies of the Lord's people. It shall be a delightful land, like that of Eden. And all shall plainly prove and testify, that it is the Lord's doing, and the Lord is blessed in his people, and his people made everlastingly blessed in the Lord. One sweet point more is insisted upon in summing up this blessed scripture, and that is, the Lord saith, that for these mercies he will be enquired of to do it for them. Reader! do not overlook this. The Lord's people are a praying people. They are the praying seed of Jacob. And as the Lord loves to hear his children speak to him, the Lord will give them holy errands to his throne. Sweet encouragement to every praying soul. Jesus makes a gracious improvement of it. Luke xviii. 1, &c.

REFLECTIONS.

EVER blessed and ever gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! help every poor sinner that reads this Chapter, on whom these sweet promises come, and for whom they are from all eternity designed ; help him to adore the riches of that free and sovereign grace, by which they are bestowed upon the Church, in and through the finished salvation that is in Christ Jesus! Surely, O Lord! the Gospel was never more fully preached than it is here done, by thy servant the Prophet. Let the enemies of the cross fancy they have triumphed in thy people's humiliation by reason of their sin. Thy people, O Lord, have reason indeed in the view of their transgressions, to be ashamed and confounded for all their ways, and to loath themselves in their own sight. But in the sovereign salvation of God and the Lamb, they may and will rejoice. It is for thine own name's sake. O Lord, that mercy is shewn to thine Israel: yea, Lord, thou hast wrought for thy name's sake, and hast had pity for thine holy name: though thy rebellious children have profaned it by reason of their transgressions in the sight of the heathen, among whom they dwell.

But, praises for ever to thy redeeming love and grace, thou hast, in thy dear Son's merits, blood, and righteousness, procured more glory and honour to thy great name, than could have been done by the everlasting and unsinning obedience of men and angels to all eternity. And oh! thou gracious Lord Jehovah! is not thy Church more lovely when sprinkled from all her filthiness, and from all her idols, by the blood of the Lamb, than could have been done for her had she never been polluted? Is not the Church more beautiful when beheld by our God in the holy garments of Christ's righteousness, than ever she could have appeared in his sight in any righteousness of her own: even had she never polluted herself from the original righteousness in which she was first created! Surely, Lord, the holiness of the Church in Jesus, her glorious head, is more blessed to thy view, now washed, cleansed, and adorned, as a bride for her husband, than in any garment short of Jesus's robe of salvation, men or angels could have found to appear in before Jehovah. Oh then, fulfil those sweet and precious promises in Christ to all thy redeemed. Yea, Lord! cause the heathen that are left round about to know, that it is the Lord that hath built the ruined places of his people, and planted that which was desolate. And do thou, Lord, by the sovereignty of thy grace in the hearts of thy people, as thou hast thus wrought by thy mercy, salvation for thy people, cause every redeemed true Israelite of thine to be continually enquiring of the Lord for those blessings, that the Lord may do what he hath promised for them. Yea, make known thy great name both far and near; and let all the earth know that thou art the Lord our God.

CHAP. XXXVII.

CONTENTS.

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

THE hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones.

2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and, lo, *they were* very dry.

In this vision the mind of *Ezekiel* seems to have been so carried out, that like the Apostle Paul, he hardly knew whether *he was in the body or not*. 2 Cor. xii. 1, 2, 3. The Prophet is here led by the Spirit into a *valley*, probably, thereby signifying this lower world. He is brought to see the *valley full of bones*; to shew, perhaps, the universal state of all men by the fall. The lifeless state the whole was in, no doubt intimated their dead and ruined circumstances. And the

Prophet is caused to take leisurely service of the whole, by being directed to pass around them, that the impression on his mind might be strong. Reader! observe when the Lord is the teacher, how *he teacheth to profit*.

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

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

4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

5 Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you; and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

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

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded, and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold, a shaking, and the bones came together bone to his bone.

8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but *there was* no breath in them.

Here we see a true descendant of Abraham, *who against hope believed in hope*. He simply did as he was commanded. He bid the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and the promise then was the same as it now is, *they that hear shall live*. But what astonishment must have taken possession of the Prophet's mind, when he saw the shaking of the bones, and heard the noise, and found the principle of reviving come upon them! Reader! and is not this uniformly the case, whenever at any time the Lord sends his servants, the ministers of the Gospel to call sinners that are by nature *dead in trespasses and sins*, to a new and spiritual life in Christ Jesus. Every faithful servant of the Lord, may on this occasion, as Peter did on the healing of the cripple, at the gate of the temple, when disclaiming all merit from such an act of power, he referred all into the glory of his adorable Master: *why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk; the God of our fathers had glorified his Son Jesus*. Acts iii. 12, 13. Reader! do further observe, amidst the effects of the Prophet's preaching: though there was a *noise* and *shaking*, and *bone came together to bone*, and *sinews and flesh*; yet there was *no breath in them*. And what do we learn from hence, but that after all man's preaching, except God the Holy Ghost, by his spiritual influence puts life in the soul; there is nothing effectually done to a work of saving grace. Sinners may shake under the word, human strength, like the sinews and the flesh, may make a stir; but the quickening power in the new birth of the soul; this is wholly of God. *Ye must be born again*, at once shews, where grace alone is, and from whom alone it comes. Reader! what saith *your* experience to this statement? I do not ask you what preaching you sit under, or what sermons cause a shaking in your soul. But I would very seriously desire you to ask the question from your own heart; (and oh! that the Lord may by his teaching enable you to give an answer of peace:) are you born again? Have you known that blessedness of having part in the *first* resurrection, on whom *the second death hath no power*. Rev. xx. 6.

9 Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army.

How sweetly this teacheth both ministers and people, not only where to look for divine influences, but how in faith to ask them. The Lord Jesus hath commanded his people to ask the gifts of the Spirit; and numberless parts of scripture testify the blessed efficacy of such prayers. Matt. vii. 7—11. John xvi. 23, 24. Ezekiel xxxvi. 37. Song iv. 16. And oh! what sure and gracious consequences must follow from the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost. Isaiah xlv. 3, 4, 5.

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

12 Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

13 And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves.

14 And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.

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

15 ¶ The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the

stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel his companions.

17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou *meanest* by these?

19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the land of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

21 ¶ And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

24 And David my servant *shall be* king over them: and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have

given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, *even* they and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David *shall be* their prince for ever.

26 Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

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

REFLECTIONS.

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

Chiefly, ye ministers of my God! learn from this divine subject, and of the Lord's own preaching by the Prophet; in whose strength all spiritual labours must be carried on with the least hopes of success; and on whose blessing depends the fruit of all your ministry. All the congregation of the faithful are in themselves, simply no other, than those bones of the valley. The dead in every Church-yard, long buried there, are no more dead to any *bodily* act, than the dead in trespasses and sins are to any *spiritual* exercise. And when we behold a minister of Christ addressing his flock, he is to all intents and purposes, as much as the Prophet in the valley, calling upon the dead to hear the word of the Lord; or as one in the Church-yard would be, in bidding the dead around him to arise at the sound of his voice. Both are alike incompetent to any energy. And the recovery of either must be a miracle. If these things were but properly impressed upon every Preacher's mind, with what earnestness would he plead and wrestle with God in prayer, before he entered upon his labours, for a blessing from the Lord! Will such an one (if peradventure he should condescend to read these observations,) forgive me, if I close the Chapter with an earnest exhortation, that this solemn view of the subject may have its proper weight upon his mind. And oh! that the Lord the Spirit may induce every heart, so engaged in holy things, to be continually looking up to Him for his blessing, both upon himself and his people. Lord, I would say! breath upon the dry bones of the valley, and bid them live; then shall we know that *the Lord hath spoken it, and the Lord hath performed it!*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

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

AND the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the

land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, *I am* against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

4 And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of *armour*, even a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:

5 Persia, and Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:

6 Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands; and many people with thee.

7 Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

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

8 ¶ After many days thou shalt be visited : in the latter years thou shalt come into the land *that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste : but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.*

9 Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

I do not presume to say as much, but I would with reverence humbly ask, is not this a sweet promise to the Lord's people in the midst of the Lord's sore judgments to his enemies ? Gen xlix. l.

10 Thus saith the Lord GOD ; It shall also come to pass, *that* at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought :

11 And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages : I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

12 To take a spoil, and to take a prey ; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places *that are now inhabited*, and upon the people *that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.*

13 Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil ? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey ? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil ?

It will not militate against my humble thoughts on the foregoing verses, to suppose, that the Lord is speaking here of his people Israel, and of the enemies of Israel in the former. The transition from one to another, and that suddenly made, is not uncommon in the sacred writings. The presumptuous boast of the enemies of God is strongly expressed. We have a similar passage, Exod. xv. 9. There is a great beauty in the expression, *unwall'd villages*, in allusion to the Lord's

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

14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

15 And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land: it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

17 Thus saith the Lord God; *Art* thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those

days *many* years, that I would bring thee against them?

18 And it shall come to pass at the same time, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel; saith the Lord God, *that* my fury shall come up in my face.

19 For in my jealousy, *and* in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;

20 So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that *are* upon the face of the earth shall shake at my presence; and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

21 And I will call for a sword against him, throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother.

22 And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that *are* with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone.

23 Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

We have here the Lord's sore judgments denounced upon Gog. But as they are the same in greatness, and in multitude, as the Lord through the whole word of scripture uniformly holds forth to all the enemies of God's Christ, I do not think it necessary to enlarge upon them in a way of comment. All the Lord's judgments are to one and the same purport. *Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him. To the wicked it shall be ill with him.* This is enough for our purpose. More than this, as the Lord hath not thought proper to explain, becomes not us to enquire. There is, it must be confessed, a strong propensity in every man's heart, to enquire *how* the Lord will accomplish his latter day dispensations, and *when* the time shall be? But there is one general answer, and given by the Lord himself to the enquiry of *Daniel*, which men of curious minds would do well to regard. Dan. xii. 8, 9.

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. XXXIX.

CONTENTS.

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

THEREFORE, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say; Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

2 And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel:

3 And will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.

4 Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous

birds of every sort, and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured.

5 Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord God.

6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

7 So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not *let them* pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

The more I read these scriptures, concerning the Lord's judgment upon his enemies, and his peculiar mercy shewn to Israel, the more I feel my mind led to pass over the mere letter of the history, to attend to the spiritual sense, which all along appears to me to be intended from it. The Lord hath one and the same design in all his dispensations, namely, to glorify Christ. In the accomplishment of this purpose, every order, and every dispensation shall be directed, and all shall minister. So that *Gog* and *Magog* shall go so far and no farther, than as their services shall help to bring forward the Lord's gracious designs to his people. Israel shall know this; the heathen shall know it; and God will thereby make manifest his holy name, as a God in covenant for the sure redemption of the Church.

8 ¶ Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God: this *is* the day whereof I have spoken.

9 And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire, and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand staves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years:

10 So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down *any* out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God.

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Is-

rael, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea : and it shall stop the *noses* of the passengers : and there shall they bury Gog, and all his multitude : and they shall call *it*, The valley of Hamon-gog.

12 And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land.

13 Yea, all the people of the land shall bury *them* : and it shall be to them a renown, the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God.

14 And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it : after the end of seven months shall they search.

15 And the passengers *that* pass through the land, when *any* seeth a man's bone, then shall they set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog.

16 And also the name of the city *shall be* Hamonah : thus shall they cleanse the land.

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

17 ¶ And thou, son of man, Thus saith the Lord God, Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field : Assemble yourselves, and come ; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, *even* a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood.

18 Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and

drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

19 And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you.

20 Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.

21 And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.

22 So the house of Israel shall know that I *am* the LORD their God from that day and forward.

23 And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.

24 According to their uncleannesses, and according to their transgressions, have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.

25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;

26 After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made *them* afraid.

27 When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;

28 Then shall they know that I *am* the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into cap-

tivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

29 Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.

What is particularly meant by this sacrifice, and the feast that is promised to be made for the fowl and the beast, is not so very clear as to speak with any certainty! But by comparing scripture with scripture, perhaps a light is thrown on the subject. See therefore Rev. xix. 17, &c. Doubtless it hath reference to the last day's dispensation! But the conclusion which God the Holy Ghost makes of the subject is most plain, and most blessed. The Lord will bring again the captivity of his people. The heathen shall see it, and be astonished. The people of God shall know it, and be blessed. God's covenant relations to them shall be made known, and his Church shall rejoice in them together. So that whatever obscurity attends the apprehension of the precise time and place of fulfilling these prophecies, in the result and termination of them there is no mistake or wrong conclusion whatever. *Jesus will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe; while the enemies of our God, and of his Christ, shall be confounded, and put to silence for ever.* So that we may, in the faith and expectation of these great events cry out, in the language of the Prophet, *Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.* Isaiah xliv. 23.

REFLECTIONS.

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

CHAP. XL.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is in this, and all the succeeding Chapters, to the end of his prophecy, wholly dealing in vision. He describes in these visions of God, the appearance of One like the Son of Man; who delivers to the Prophet an account of a splendid and immense City.

IN the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.

2 In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which *was* as the frame of a city on the south.

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

3 And he brought me thither, and, behold, *there was* a man whose appearance *was* like the appearance of brass with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed: and he stood in the gate.

4 And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee: for to the intent that I might shew *them* unto thee, *art* thou brought hither; declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

The place to which the Prophet was brought by vision, no doubt was Jerusalem. Here is nothing said of a Temple, but of a city: but from what follows in this Chapter, and the several succeeding ones, the whole of the city is considered as a temple. Now I pray the

Reader to mark, with me, the singularity of this account. The visions which *John* the beloved Apostle had of the new Jerusalem, were, that there was no temple there: but of this, whatever city it might be, there is nothing described but of a temple. Rev. xxi. 22. Who is this man spoken of, unless it be the Lord Jesus Christ? Him whom John saw, and which we know was Christ, John describes in similar language, that *his feet were like unto fine brass*. Rev. i. 15. Supposing that this was the Lord Jesus Christ, (as it should seem very evidently to be,) by his being appointed to shew the Prophet, and to measure the dimensions of this city, perhaps was intended to say, that Christ, as the Christ of God, was both the founder of the Temple, and the sum and substance of it. Zach. vi. 13. John xiv. 6. And the object, and design, it should seem, for which Ezekiel was introduced into these visions of God, was not for curiosity, but for use, and that of the highest nature; namely, to shew to the whole house of Israel. All that ministers are, and all the gifts given them, are not for themselves, but for the people.

5 And, behold, a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits *long*, by the cubit, and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height one reed.

6 ¶ Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and he measured the threshold of the gate, *which was* one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, *which was* one reed broad.

7 And *every* little chamber *was* one reed long, and one reed broad: and between the little chambers *were* five cubits: and the threshold of the gate, by the porch of the gate within, *was* one reed.

8 He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed.

9 Then measured he the porch of the gate eight cubits; and the posts thereof two cubits: and the porch of the gate *was* inward.

10 And the little chambers of the gate eastward *were* three on this side, and three on that side; they three *were* of one measure; and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side,

11 And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate ten cubits; *and* the length of the gate, thirteen cubits.

12 The space also before the little chambers *was* one cubit *on this side*, and the space *was* one cubit on that side: and the little chambers *were* six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side.

13 He measured then the gate from the roof of *one* little chamber to the roof of another: the breadth *was* five and twenty cubits, door against door.

14 He made also posts of threescore cubits, even unto the posts of the court round about the gate.

15 And from the face of the gate of the entrance unto the face of the porch of the inner gate *were* fifty cubits.

16 And *there were* narrow windows to the little chambers, and to their posts within the gate round about, and likewise to the arches: and windows *were* round about inward: and upon *each* post *were* palm trees.

17 Then brought he me into the outward court, and, lo, *there were* chambers, and a pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers *were* upon the pavement.

18 And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates *was* the lower pavement.

19 Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without, an hundred cubits eastward and northward.

20 And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof and the breadth thereof.

21 And the little chambers thereof *were* three

on this side, and three on that side : and the posts thereof and the arches thereof were after the measure of the first gate : the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

22 And their windows, and their arches, and their palm trees *were* after the measure of the gate that looketh toward the east ; and they went up unto it by seven steps ; and the arches thereof *were* before them.

23 And the gate of the inner court *was* over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east ; and he measured from gate to gate an hundred cubits.

24 After that he brought me toward the south, and behold, a gate toward the south : and he measured the posts thereof, and the arches thereof according to these measures.

25 And *there were* windows in it, and in the arches thereof round about, like those windows : the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

26 And *there were* seven steps to go up to it, and the arches thereof *were* before them : and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof.

27 And *there was* a gate in the inner court toward the south : and he measured from gate to gate toward the south an hundred cubits.

28 And he brought me to the inner court by the south gate : and he measured the south gate according to these measures ;

29 And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to these measures ; and *there were* windows in it ; and in the arches thereof round about : *it was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.

30 And the arches round about *were* five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad.

31 And the arches thereof *were* toward the utter court: and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it *had* eight steps.

32 And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures.

33 And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, *were* according to these measures: and *there were* windows therein, and in the arches thereof round about: *it was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.

34 And the arches thereof *were* toward the outward court: and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it *had* eight steps.

35 And he brought me to the north gate, and measured it according to these measures;

36 The little chambers thereof, the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, and the windows to it round about: the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

37 And the posts thereof *were* toward the utter court: and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it *had* eight steps.

38 And the chambers and the entries thereof *were* by the posts of the gates where they washed the burnt-offering.

39 And in the porch of the gate *were* two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering.

40 And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, *were* two tables, and

on the other side which *was* at the porch of the gate, *were* two tables.

41 Four tables *were* on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they slew *their sacrifices*.

42 And the four tables *were* of hewn stone for the burnt-offering, of a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt-offering and the sacrifice.

43 And within *were* hooks, an hand-broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables *was* the flesh of the offering.

44 And without the inner gate *were* the chambers of the singers in the inner court, which *was* at the side of the north-gate; and their prospect *was* toward the south; one at the side of the east gate, *having* the prospect toward the north.

45 And he said unto me, This chamber whose prospect *is* toward the south *is* for the priests the keepers of the charge of the house.

46 And the chamber whose prospect *is* toward the north *is* for the priests the keepers of the charge of the altar. These *are* the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him.

47 So he measured the court an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, four square; and the altar *that was* before the house.

48 And he brought me to the porch of the house, and measured *each* post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side: and the breadth of the gate *was* three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side,

49 The length of the porch *was* twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; and *he brought me*

by the steps whereby they went up to it: and *there were* pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.

The Reader will form a better calculation of the extent of this wonderful city, by considering what its dimensions were. A *cubit* for the sanctuary measurement, was one foot and nine inches; and if the Reader will mark down the whole measurement, he will be able to ascertain the out-grounds of this place. But leaving this part of the subject to his leisure, I really beg his present attention to some of the spiritual things, which we may humbly venture to suppose, were intended in what is here said. May we not imagine, that what is said of the *steps* of ascent, is intended to shew how souls redeemed by grace, go up by Jesus's leading, as he here taught and led the Prophet to God? And are not those Palm trees in allusion to what is said of believers flourishing like *Palm trees in the house of God*? Psalm xcii. 1. The gates are already explained by what John was taught to inform the Church of the twelve Apostles. Rev. xxi. 14. And the *tables*, and *porch*, and place for *sacrifice*, and sons of *Levi*, to minister in divine things; all these are very plain representations of what the Gospel Church, in the after ages, set forth, when Christ became both the Table of offering, the Porch, or way to the throne; the Sacrifice; the Sacrificer; and the New Testament Altar; on whom, and in whom, and through whom alone, all offerings were to be made! The Prophet having been thus led to the measurement thus far, the Chapter is closed, and the subject is reserved, to be continued in the following Chapter.

REFLECTIONS.

In following the Prophet in these visions of God, we have now much advantage from the gospel light which the after ages of the Church, through Grace, were blessed with; so that explaining Old Testament scripture, by the New Testament revelation, we are enabled to see more of the Lord's gracious designs, than our fathers in the earlier dispensations could attain. Evidently, these solemn scriptures pointed to the day of gospel grace; and we cannot sufficiently bless God for the discovery he hath been pleased to make of himself, in, and by the Person, work, and grace, and salvation, of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes! blessed Lord Jesus! whatever City, Church, or Temple, the Prophet saw, in thee we now in open glass behold the accomplishment of the whole. Thou art indeed the goodly Mountain of Lebanon! Thou, and thou alone, the foundation-stone Jehovah hath laid in Zion, on whom is built, both of Apostles and Prophets, that temple on which all rest, and in whom all are made secure, and eternally happy. 'Lord! hasten the glorious hour, when all thy Church, founded on thee, shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea, and all nations shall flow to it. Amen!

CHAP. XLI.

CONTENTS.

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

AFTERWARD he brought me to the temple, and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, *which was* the breadth of the tabernacle.

2 And the breadth of the door *was* ten cubits; and the sides of the door *were* five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side: and he measured the length thereof, forty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits.

3 Then went he inward, and measured the post of the door, two cubits; and the door, six cubits; and the breadth of the door, seven cubits.

4 So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits before the temple; and he said unto me, *This is* the most holy *place*.

5 After he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of *every* side chamber, four cubits, round about the house on every side.

6 And the side chambers *were* three, one over another, and thirty in order: and they entered into the wall which *was* of the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the house.

7 And *there was* an enlarging and a winding about still upward to the side chambers: for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house *was* still upward, and so increased *from* the lowest *chamber* to the highest by the midst.

8 I saw also the height of the house round about: the foundations of the side chambers *were* a full reed of six great cubits.

9 The thickness of the wall, which *was* for the side chamber without, *was* five cubits: and *that* which *was* left, *was* the place of the side chambers that *were* within.

10 And between the chambers *was* the wideness of twenty cubits round about the house on every side.

11 And the doors of the side chambers *were* toward *the place that was* left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south: and the breadth of the place that *was* left *was* five cubits round about.

12 Now the building that *was* before the separate place, at the end toward the west, *was* seventy cubits broad: and the wall of the building *was* five cubits thick round about; and the length thereof, ninety cubits,

13 So he measured the house, an hundred cubits long; and the separate place and the building, with the walls thereof, an hundred cubits long;

14 Also the breadth of the face of the house, and of the separate place toward the east, an hundred cubits.

15 And he measured the length of the building over against the separate place, *which* was behind it, and the galleries thereof on the one side, and on the other side, an hundred cubits, with the inner temple, and the porches of the court;

16 The door posts, and the narrow windows, and the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the door cieled with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows *were* covered.

17 To that above the door, even unto the inner house and without, and by all the wall round about, within and without, by measure.

18 And *it was* made with cherubims and palm.

trees, so that a palm-tree *was* between a cherub and a cherub : and *every* cherub had two faces ;

19 So that the face of a man *was* toward the palm-tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm-tree on the other side : *it was* made through all the house round about.

20 From the ground unto above the door *were* cherubims and palm-trees made, and *on* the wall of the temple.

21 The posts of the temple *were* squared, and the face of the sanctuary ; the appearance of *the one* as the appearance of *the other*.

22 The altar of wood *was* three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits : and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, *were* of wood : and he said unto me, *This is* the table that *is* before the LORD.

23 And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors.

24 And the doors had two leaves *a-piece*, two turning leaves ; two *leaves* for the one door, and two leaves for the other *door*.

25 And *there were* made on them. on the doors of the temple, cherubims and palm-trees, like as *were* made upon the walls : and *there were* thick planks upon the face of the porch without.

26 And *there were* narrow windows and palm-trees on the one side and on the other side, on the sides of the porch, and *upon* the side chambers of the house, and thick planks.

I include the whole under one reading, because the scriptural and spiritual illustrations are the same. Much is said of the *doors* and *gates*, in breadth, and height, and length ; and if read spiritually, with an eye to Christ, the whole serves to teach that He is the only way, and truth, and life, for our entrance before God here in grace, and into God's temple hereafter in glory. Precious Lord Jesus, thou hast said, *I am the door ; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.* John x. 9. And when we read of the chambers of this house, who but must think of Jesus the King, bringing his spouse the Church in his *Chambers* : even

into the secrets of sweet and intimate communion and fellowship with him: the mysteries of his grace, the blessed enjoyments of soul refreshing ordinances; the delight of knowing his covenant relations to his people; what he is in himself, and what he is to them in grace here, and will be in glory to all eternity. Surely those chambers may, without violence, be supposed to represent the Lord Jesus making known to all his redeemed by the sweet and private teachings of his Holy Spirit, the mysteries of his kingdom, and shewing to them his love, and the interest they have in all his glory! Song i. 4. And hence also the *galleries* may be equally supposed to mean those restings of the souls of the redeemed upon the person and salvation of Jesus, by whom the King is said to be held? Song vii. 5. If the Reader be disposed to follow the subject through such a spiritual application of it, this Chapter, as well as the others on the subject, will afford large scope for his meditation; and may the Lord, the great Author of it, graciously open it to his view!

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord of thy Temple! how can I read this Chapter, and follow the Prophet's steps whom thou art leading by the hand through the several apartments of thine house, without immediately connecting with the subject the very endearing characters and offices in which thou hast condescended to reveal thyself. Do I not behold thee, O thou unequalled pattern of excelling humbleness, as the gate and door to thy temple, thy fold? Didst thou not at thy Father's call come up before all worlds, as the whole source of thy people's salvation? And art thou not the one and only way of access, in grace here, and glory to all eternity? Can any enter, but by thee? And hast thou not promised that all that come to thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out? Oh! precious Jesus! stand, Lord, I beseech thee widely open, as those wide spreading doors the Prophet saw, that thy people may come like the troops of *Teman*; and fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows! Yea, precious Lord! as thy gracious invitations, and promises, and proclamations of mercy, are going forth to the East, and to the West, and to the North, and to the South; oh, dispose the souls of poor perishing sinners, to come to thy large, and wide spreading doors, and find access in and through thee, by one Spirit to the Father. Surely those blessed gates and ordinances to thee, like the gates of the New Jerusalem above, are never shut day nor night; for Jesus stands ready to receive all that come to God by him, and all that do come, thou hast graciously said, thou wilt in no wise cast out; Oh! Lord! make thy people willing in the day of thy power. Amen.

CHAP. XLII.

CONTENTS.

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

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

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

2 Before the length of an hundred cubits *was* the north door, and the breadth *was* fifty cubits.

3 Over against the twenty *cubits* which *were* for the inner court, and over against the pavement which *was* for the utter court, *was* gallery against gallery in three *stories*.

4 And before the chambers *was* a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors toward the north.

5 Now the upper chambers *were* shorter; for the galleries, were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building.

6 For they *were* in three *stories*, but had not pillars as the pillars of the court: therefore *the building* was straitened more than the lowest, and the middlemost from the ground.

7 And the wall that *was* without over against the chambers, toward the utter court on the fore-part of the chambers, the length thereof *was* fifty cubits.

8 For the length of the chambers that *were* in the utter court *was* fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple *were* an hundred cubits.

9 And from under these chambers *was* the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the utter court.

10 The chambers *were* in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, over against the separate place, and over against the building.

11 And the way before them *was* like the appearance of the chambers, which *were* toward the north, as long as they, *and* as broad as they : and and all their goings out *were* both according to their fashions, and according to their doors.

12 And according to the doors of the chambers that *were* toward the south *was* a door in the head of the way, *even* the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them.

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

13 ¶ Then said he unto me, The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which *are* before the separate place, they *be* holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things : there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering : for the place *is* holy.

14 When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy *place* into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister : for they *are* holy ; and shall put on other garments ; and shall approach to *those things* which *are* for the people.

15 Now when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect *is* toward the east, and measured it round about.

16 He measured the east side with the mea-

asuring reed, five hundred reeds with the measuring reed round about.

17 He measured the north side five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed about.

18 He measured the south side five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed.

19 ¶ He turned about to the west side, *and* measured five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed.

20 He measured it by the four sides : it had a wall round about it, five hundred *reeds* long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.

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

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! while you and I are following the Prophet, led by Jesus, through the several apartments, let us not lose sight of Him, who is himself the habitation of his Church and people, and their portion for ever. Here let us contemplate the Lord indeed, under every endearing character, and we shall find him to be our dwelling place, our Temple, our Altar, High Priest, and Sacrifice ! And how do all his perfections suit our souls, for our abiding place, and rest, and solace, and delight for ever. In his person, righteousness, and grace, are hid and live securely all his redeemed. Jesus takes them all in, brings them all home, clotheth them with his own garments of salvation, feeds them with his own body and blood, and communicates to them of his fulness, grace here, and glory for ever. Exult, my soul, in this delightful view of thy glorious Saviour, and cry out in the words of the Prophet ; *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God : for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness ; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

CHAP. XLIII.

CONTENTS.

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

AFTERWARD he brought me to the gate, *even* the gate that looketh toward the east :

2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east : and his voice *was* like a noise of many waters : and the earth shined with his glory.

3 And *it was* according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, *even* according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city : and the visions *were* like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar : and I fell upon my face.

4 And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

5 So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.

6 And I heard *him* speaking unto me out of the house : and the man stood by me.

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

7 ¶ And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name

shall the house of Israel no more defile, *neither* they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places.

8 In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.

9 Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcases of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.

10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.

11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write *it* in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

12 *This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house.*

What a vast degree of graciousness is manifested here in these words. Surely these promises related to the gospel church, as the Lord had pointed out, and as they are now fulfilled, to the souls of all true believers in Jesus. Jeremiah xxxi. 31, &c. explained by Heb. viii. 8. &c. But Reader! what I particularly desire you to remark with me, is, what is said of this Gospel Church in the last dispensation; that this house shall be most holy, for the Prophet expressly was commissioned to tell the Church; and twice it is repeated, that *this is the law of the house*. And surely every thing tends to confirm the great truth, that it must be so. Our God himself is the builder, and maker of it: how can it be otherwise than holy. Jesus hath pur-

chased it with his blood. And to be sure he must have cleansed it from all uncleanness. And as the bodies of God's children are the temple of the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in them; surely he will put away the unclean thing, and the *Canaanite* out of the land. See Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14.

13 And these *are* the measures of the altar after the cubits: the cubit *is* a cubit and a hand breadth: even the bottom *shall be* a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about *shall be* a span: and this *shall be* the higher place of the altar.

14 And from the bottom *upon* the ground *even* to the lower settle *shall be* two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle *even* to the greater settle *shall be* four cubits, and the breadth *one* cubit.

15 So the altar *shall be* four cubits; and from the altar and upward *shall be* four horns.

16 And the altar *shall be* twelve cubits long, twelve broad, square in the four squares thereof.

17 And the settle *shall be* fourteen cubits long and fourteen broad in the four squares thereof: and the border about it *shall be* half a cubit: and the bottom thereof *shall be* a cubit about: and his stairs shall look toward the east.

18 And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These *are* the ordinances of the altar, in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.

19 And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin-offering.

20 And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put *it* on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it.

21 Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house without the sanctuary.

22 And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin-offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse *it* with the bullock.

23 When thou hast made an end of cleansing *it*, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish.

24 And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up *for* a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

25 Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat *for* a sin-offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock; and a ram out of the flock without blemish.

26 Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves.

27 And when these days are expired, it shall be *that* upon the eighth day, and *so* forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings: and I will accept you, saith the Lord God.

Here we have a further relation of the house, and the ordinances of it; and all with an eye to Christ; to whom all his people are priests, and ministering servants to the Church of the living God. And it is very blessed, when our long lost, wandering, and sinful souls, are brought into an heartfelt acquaintance with Christ's fulness, and our own insufficiency. Oh! how truly blessed is it to see here, as in all the other parts of God's holy word, that holiness to the Lord is in Christ, and only to be obtained in and by him. Precious Jesus! thou art the holiness of thy people: *in thy light shall we see light*. In Jesus's holiness we are found; and Christ is *made of God to us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; for then will be our glorying, as is most suitable it should be, in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

REFLECTIONS.

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

Was this house a type of the Gospel Church? Do all his people whom he hath made kings and priests to God and the Father, belong to this house? Ask then your own heart, yea, let every Reader ask himself, what entrance hath been admitted to him into this holy house? Have you got boldness to enter into it by the only way in which any can enter, even by the blood of Jesus. By whom did you enter, and who was the porter that opened to your view Jesus and his glory; Jesus, and all his sufficiency; and prompted you to believe in him? What are the sanctifying impressions wrought upon your soul by this allowed entrance? Here you see your own vileness, and Jesus's glory? Are you well pleased for his righteousness' sake, and do you repose in it? Are you renouncing all other holiness, and fully determined to be found in Christ's only? These enquiries, when truly answered, are sweet, and precious evidences of being entered in; and that He, whom *Ezekiel* saw in vision, you have seen also by faith, and are rejoicing now *in hope of the glory of God!* Precious Lord Jesus! do as thou hast said. Dwell now for ever in the midst of thy people, and suffer them no longer to be defiled in their abominations, but be thou their God, and make them thy people; and cause them through thy grace, to separate themselves, and come out from among all the polluted around, that they may touch not the unclean things, but be truly, and in heart, made the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty! Amen.

CHAP. XLIV.

CONTENTS.

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

THEN he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east: and it *was* shut.

2 Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it: because the LORD the God of

Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

3 *It is* for the prince : the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD : he shall enter by the way of the porch of *that* gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

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

4 Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house : and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD : and I fell upon my face.

5 And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof : and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

What a beautiful view is again and again given of the *Shechinah*, or glory of the Lord filling the house. And what an holy awe do we always find induced by it, on the minds of holy men of old. Isaiah vi. 1—5. Dan. x. 7, 8. Reader ! what a blessed dispensation is that of the Gospel, to which we are called, who have Jesus to go to, and Jesus to trust in at all times, and who is the Lord our righteousness, and hath brought us nigh by his blood ?

6 And thou shalt say to the rebellious, *even* to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God ; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations,

7 In that ye have brought *into my sanctuary* strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, *even* my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat

and the blood, and they have broken my covenant, because of all your abominations.

8 And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves.

9 ¶ Thus saith the Lord God; No stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.

10 And the Levites that are gone away far from me when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols: they shall even bear their iniquity.

11 Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, *having* charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt-offering, and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.

12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity: therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord God, and they shall bear their iniquity.

13 And they shall not come near unto me to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most *holy place*: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

14 But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me,

and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God.

16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

17 ¶ And it shall come to pass, *that* when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins: they shall not gird *themselves* with any thing that causeth sweat.

19 And when they go forth into the utter court, *even* into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

20 Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long: they shall only poll their heads.

21 Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter into the inner court.

22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.

23 And they shall teach my people *the difference* between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; *and* they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies: and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

25 And they shall come at no dead person to

defile themselves : but for father or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister, that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves.

26 And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days.

27 And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin-offering, saith the Lord GOD.

Here are very important commissions given to the Prophet to deliver to the people, all which are plain and express, and in which we find the sacred jealousy the Lord hath for his holy name and ordinances. Reader! our approaches now under the gospel dispensation, ought not to lessen our reverence, but increase it; seeing we have Jesus to give us boldness in his blood, it should make us delight ourselves to draw nigh. Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

28 And it shall be unto them for an inheritance : *I am* their inheritance : and ye shall give them no possession in Israel : *I am* their possession.

29 They shall eat the meat-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering ; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs.

30 And the first of all the first-fruits of all *things*, and every oblation of all of every *sort* of your oblations, shall be the priest's : ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.

31 The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

I pray the Reader not to overlook the abundant grace of our adorable Jesus in what is here said, that he is the inheritance, and he is the possession of his people. Twice it is repeated in one verse; as if the Lord would have the impression of it not to pass away from their minds. If the Reader observes, as I hope he doth observe, that when this is said, it is said in peculiar reference to the Lord's priests; I cheerfully acquiesce in the same; but I beg the Reader no less to remember, that all God's people are said to be *a nation of priests to the Lord*. And in Jesus' Church, He hath made all his redeemed, both *Kings and Priests, to God and the Father, by his blood*. Pray turn to those sweet scriptures in confirmation. Exod. xix. 3—6. 1 Peter ii. 9. Rev. i. 6. Rev. v. 9, 10. Gal. iii. 27, 28, 29.

REFLECTIONS.

AND art thou, my soul, indeed a Priest, in this glorious House of thy God? Oh! then consider the great Apostle, and High Priest of thy profession, Christ Jesus. It is by virtue of thy union *with Him*, and redemption *by Him*, that thou art brought into this royal Priesthood, and made an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. *In him*, all thine authority is found. *By Him*, all thy priestly exercises are carried on. *Through Him*, is the whole, both of thy person and offerings accepted. And *for Him*, and His sake alone, Jehovah hath respect to the whole Church, which is His body. Hail! thou Lamb of God! who art still the Lamb *in the midst of the throne*: equally attentive to thine house below, as to thine house above! All is made holy, and blessed, being chosen by Jehovah, in thee, before the world began! And now, and for ever, is every individual member of thy mystical body made honorable and glorious, by the sprinkling of thy blood, and by the sweet communications of thy blessed Spirit. Lord! add a blessing to these immense privileges, and cause me daily, hourly, minutely, to remember, and live up to that remembrance, that thou art my inheritance; that I have no inheritance in any thing here below; no possession in earth, and earthly concerns; for *the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup, thou maintainest my lot*! And oh, for grace, to be as momentarily living to the glory and praise of my Lord; and presenting my body *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is my reasonable service*.

CHAP. XLV.

CONTENTS.

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

MOREOVER, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the LORD, an holy portion of the land; the length *shall be* the length of five and twenty thousand *reeds*, and the breadth *shall be* ten thousand: this *shall be* holy in all the borders thereof round about.

2 Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred *in length*, with five hundred *in breadth*, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof.

3 And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the

breadth of ten thousand : and in it shall be the sanctuary *and* the most holy *place*.

4 The holy *portion* of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD : and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary.

5 And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers.

6 ¶ And ye shall appoint the possession of the city five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy *portion* : It shall be for the whole house of Israel.

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

7 And *a portion shall be* for the prince on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy *portion*, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy *portion*, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward : and the length *shall be* over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border.

8 In the land shall be his possession in Israel : and my princes shall no more oppress my people :

and *the rest* of the land shall they give to the house of Israel, according to their tribes.

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

9 Thus saith the Lord God ; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel : remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord God.

10 Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath.

11 The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer : the measure thereof shall be after the homer.

12 And the shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs ; twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.

13 This *is* the oblation that ye shall offer, the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley :

14 Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, *ye shall offer* the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, *which is* an homer of ten baths ; for ten baths *are* an homer.

15 And one lamb out of the flock out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel ; for a meat-offering, and for a burnt-offering, and for peace-offerings, to make reconciliaton for them, saith the Lord God.

16 All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel.

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

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

18 Thus saith the Lord God ; In the first *month*, in the first *day* of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary :

19 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering, and put *it* upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court.

20 And so thou shalt do the seventh *day* of the month for every one that erreth, and for *him that is simple* : so shall ye reconcile the house.

21 In the first *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days : unleavened bread shall be eaten.

22 And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock *for* a sin-offering.

23 And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt-offering to the LORD, seven bullocks, and seven rams without blemish, daily the seven days : and a kid of the goats daily *for* a sin-offering.

24 And he shall prepare a meat-offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah.

25 In the seventh *month*, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin-offering, ac-

according to the burnt-offering, and according to the meat-offering, and according to the oil.

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

REFLECTIONS.

To whom shall I look, blessed Jesus, but to thee, as the glorious Prince here spoken of, and the sovereign of thy Church, thine house, and thy people. Surely, Lord, all and every oblation is of thine own free cost, and thou art the sum and substance of all. In whatever point of view thy redeemed behold thee, under whatever period of thy Church, thou art regarded, thou art the same: the Alpha and Omega; the Lord of thy Temple; the Prophet, Priest, and King. Through every dispensation, whether Law, or Gospel; under every government, in thy suffering state, and triumphant state; the reign of grace, and the reign of glory: the Church militant, or the Church victorious; the millennial, or the everlasting kingdom; thy dominion extends through all, and thou art over all, God blessed for ever! Oh! then cause every man to bow before thee, and every tongue to confess that thou art Jesus Christ, the ever blessed ever glorious Prince and Saviour, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

CHAP. XLVI.

CONTENTS.

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

THUS saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days: but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

2 And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priest shall prepare his burnt-offering and his peace-offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall

go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening.

3 Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.

4 And the burnt-offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath-day, *shall be* six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.

5 And the meat-offering *shall be* an ephah for a ram, and the meat-offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

6 And in the day of the new moon *it shall be* a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram; they shall be without blemish.

7 And he shall prepare a meat-offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram; and for the lambs, according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

8 And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of *that* gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof.

9 ¶ But when the people of the land shall come before the LORD in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate: he shall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it.

10 And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth.

11 And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat-offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah.

12 Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt-offering or peace-offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, *one* shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt-offering and his peace-offerings, as he did on the sabbath-day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth, *one* shall shut the gate.

13 Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt-offering unto the LORD *of* a lamb of the first year without blemish: thou shalt prepare it every morning.

14 And thou shalt prepare a meat-offering for it every morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat-offering continually, by a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD.

15 Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat-offering, and the oil, every morning, *for* a continual burnt-offering.

16 Thus saith the Lord God; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons, it *shall be* their possession by inheritance,

17 But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after, it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them.

18 Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression to thrust them out of their possession; *but* he shall give his sons' inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.

Mysterious as the subject is in many points, respecting these offerings, looking as this scripture evidently doth, to a period of the Church, when the daily offering was for ever to cease; yet one point is abundantly clear and satisfactory; namely, that the Prince was to be in the midst of his people, both at their going in, and going out. Such we know Christ to be, in all his Churches; and indeed without

his presence, their assembly would be in vain. It is a precious consideration to the faithful, this promise of their God and Saviour: and which He hath very graciously given to them, for their comfort in all ages. Matt. xviii. 20. Matt. xxviii. 20.

19 ¶ After he brought me through the entry, which *was* at the side of the gate into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and behold, there *was* a place on the two sides westward.

20 Then said he unto me, This *is* the place where the priests shall boil the trespass-offering and the sin-offering, where they shall bake the meat-offering, that they bear *them* not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people.

21 Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and behold, in every corner of the court *there was* a court.

22 In the four corners of the court *there were* courts joined of forty *cubits* long, and thirty broad: these four corners *were* of one measure.

23 And *there was* a row of building round about in them; round about them four, and *it was* made with boiling places under the rows round about.

24 Then said he unto me, These *are* the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people.

We are at a loss to apprehend the precise meaning of this passage, from the same cause as the former. Indeed, no part of the prophecies of scripture carry with them a greater mysteriousness, than the whole of this part of Ezekiel's prophecy, as contained in the last *nine* Chapters. Some indeed have determined their meaning in what is said here, to the ministry of the Lord's servants in the courts of his house. But certain it is, that too much obscurity is cast over it, to speak of this with precision. It will be sufficient for all our purposes of improvement, to receive those sacred things, with reverence, as the word of God, and to wait the Lord's own time for the full explanation; knowing that *no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* 2 Peter i. 20, 21.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we have now for several Chapters past, been following the footsteps of the Prophet through the wonderful apartments of this great city, which the Lord shewed in vision to the man of God; and whether it relates to the Church militant, or millenary, in either sense or in both, still it becomes an interesting question; are we citizens of it, and entitled to its blessed privileges? Truly, we may take up the language of the Prophet concerning it, and say, *glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!* Surely an admission here must be blessed. Surely the inhabitants of it must be peculiarly under the eye and good will of their Lord. Say then, my brother, do we speak the language of Canaan; delight in the place; the society; and above all, in the glorious king. Is Jesus precious; his Name always as ointment poured forth for fragrancy; his people, ordinances, holy days, greatly beloved by us? It is truly gracious to have these testimonies in proof, that our conversation is in heaven, and that we are looking for the Lord's return to it, that when He, who is our life shall appear, we may appear with him in glory. Precious Lord Jesus! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, sweet and incontestible evidences, that we are thine, and growing up in thee to an holy temple in the Lord. Oh! the blessedness of belonging to the household, and family of faith; for if thou Lord hast made us free, in thee we shall be free indeed!

CHAP. XLVII.

CONTENTS.

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

AFTERWARD he brought me again unto the door of the house, and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; for the forefront of the house *stood toward* the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar.

2 Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

3 And when the man that had the line in his

hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters: the waters *were* to the ancles.

4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters: the waters *were* to the knees: again he measured a thousand, and brought me through: the waters *were* to the loins.

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

6 And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen *this*? then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

If we compare scripture with scripture, (and which God the Holy Ghost commands, 1 Cor. ii. 13.) we shall take the most effectual method of arriving to the proper apprehension of what is here said, looking up to the Great Author of his holy word, to make it profitable. Now it was among the promises of Jehovah, that the last day dispensation of grace should be distinguished by the Lord's pouring out his spirit, like water, and dews, and showers, upon the mown grass. Several of the Prophets were directed to speak of the Holy Ghost coming upon his people in this manner. Isaiah xlv. 3, 4. Joel ii. 28. And *Zechariah*, as if in confirmation of what *Ezekiel* had before said, declared that *living* waters should go out from Jerusalem. Zech. xiv. 8. And the beloved Apostle *John*, as if in clearer terms to give a comment upon this vision of *Ezekiel*, speaks of a river, and water of like, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. Rev. xxii. 1. I stay not to remark many beauties in allusion to the day of gospel grace, which this scripture abounds with; but certain it is, that the manner of expression which *Ezekiel* hath made use of, becomes truly significant. The Prophet did not see from whence these waters arose; the spring was hidden; so are our lives *hid with Christ in God*. Coloss. iii. 3. *John* explains the source, when he saith, *from the throne of God and the Lamb*: meaning from all the Persons of the Godhead; in, and through the Lamb. For God the Father is a fountain. Jeremiah ii. 13. God the Son, is a fountain. Song iv. 15. God the Spirit, is a fountain. *John* vii. 37—39. And all pour their rich mercies like a river, through the mediation of the God-man Christ Jesus. *John* xiv. 6. And is there not a great beauty also, in the thought suggested by the door of the house, and the right side? Jesus calls himself by the name of *the door* to his sheep-fold. *John* x. 9. And we know whose side it was that was pierced, when forthwith came thereout blood and water. *John* xix. 34. And as all these things were seen by the Prophet, in his vision concerning Jerusalem, from whence the waters issued: so Jesus first sent forth his Gospel, after his redemption work was finished, from that

beloved city. Luke xxiv. 47. Concerning the swelling of those waters; they form a most beautiful type or figure, of the glorious spreading of the Gospel. Jesus's cause must increase, must run and be glorified, and be a blessing through the earth. Such will be the latter day glory. Psalm lxxii. 8—17. Some have thought that the Prophet's path, as marked in these waters, first reaching to the ancles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and afterwards to an ocean, to swim in; is meant to shew the progress of grace, and our knowledge in the divine life.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on the one side, and on the other.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: *which being* brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

9 And it shall come to pass, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth whithersoever the river shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

10 And it shall come to pass, *that* the fishers shall stand upon it, from En-gedi even unto Englaim: they shall be a *place* to spread forth nets: their fish shall be according to their kinds as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

11 But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

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

Here are many similar allusions, such as were before, in reference to the Lord Jesus, and his Gospel. The trees on the bank of this

river cannot be misunderstood, if we read what is here said, with what John the beloved Apostle hath said on the same subject. Rev. xxii. 2. Surely the Lord Jesus is the tree of life in the Paradise of God. And being placed on either side the river, most fully shews the presence of the Lord, in both his Churches, as well here as above. Subordinate to this view of the tree of life, we may behold *the very many trees* here spoken of, also, as those trees of righteousness, which are of the Lord's right hand planting, and represent all true believers in Jesus. Some already transplanted into the kingdom above, and some still on this side the river below. Isaiah lxi. 3. The current of these waters towards the east country, the desert, and the sea; and the wonderful property of them in their healing quality, are most lovely and beautiful similitudes, to shew the extensive influence of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the blessed effects of his salvation, wherever the Lord shall send it. And the difference between the marshes and miry places, compared to the ground that shall be healed, most strikingly set forth the distinguishing nature and property of grace. Such indeed ever hath been, and ever must be, the effect of the Gospel. While to some it proves *the savor of life unto life*, to others it becomes *the savor of death unto death*. 2 Cor. ii. 16. Ministers of the Gospel, like the fishermen here spoken of, may cast their gospel net from *Engedi* (formerly called *Hazeron Tamar*, nigh to the Dead Sea) even unto *En-eglaim*, (which reacheth towards Jordan;) but unless Jesus gives the commission, like the pool of *Bethesda*, there will be no saving ordinance, for the want of that mighty Angel descending upon the waters. Oh! how blessed is it to see both Prophecy, Law, and Gospel, all uniting to the testimony of the truth, *as it is in Jesus*. The waters will heal, will give life, will restore; and the fruit of the tree shall be both meat, and the leaf for medicine, when Jesus is in both, and in all: But without Him, the one will afford no food, neither the other health, to any dying, dead, or sin-sick soul!

13 ¶ Thus saith the Lord God; This *shall be* the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph *shall have two portions*.

14 And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another; *concerning* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance.

15 And this *shall be* the border of the land toward the north side: from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad;

16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which *is* between the border of Damascus, and the border of Hamath: Hazar-hatticon, which *is* by the coast of Hauran.

17 And the border from the sea shall be Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath, and *this is* the north side.

18 And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel *by* Jordan, from the border unto the east sea : and *this is* the east side.

19 And the south side southward, from Tamar *even* to the waters of strife *in* Kadesh, the river to the great sea : and *this is* the south side southward.

20 The west side also *shall be* the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath : *this is* the west side.

21 So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel.

22 And it shall come to pass, *that* ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you : and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel : they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give *him* his inheritance, saith the Lord God.

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

REFLECTIONS.

HERE let my soul take her stand, where the Prophet once stood, and as I behold by the eye of faith, as he then did by vision, the waters issuing from under the threshold of the Lord's house, I would call to mind and contemplate that pure water of life, clear as crystal, which *John* also saw, to the same purport, and from the same cause,

even from the throne of God and the Lamb. Yes! truly, O Lord, all blessings flow in and from Jehovah in his threefold character of Person; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; through the Lamb, Christ Jesus. And oh! how full of healing, sovereign, quickening, cleansing, refreshing, sanctifying grace, are all the thousand streams. Oh! what rich, full, everlasting, everflowing, and overflowing waters, these are! How they run in the ordinances of the Gospel, and through the several means of grace! In some places to the ancles, in others to the knees, in others to the loins, and in others becoming even a river for the redeemed souls to bathe in! Surely they are commissioned by Him, from whom they issue, to give life, and to give it more abundantly! It is only those marshy and miry souls, who resist the life-giving stream, that are given up to perpetual barrenness! But every where, even to the Dead Sea of dead sinners' hearts, where this water comes, it quickens to immediate life. Truly, blessed Jesus, mightest thou well call this perennial spring *living water*; and *the water of life*; for it springeth up in my soul, and in every soul whom thou causest to partake of it, *a well of water springing up to everlasting life*. Oh! for every poor sinner that hears of this lifegiving stream, to come to it, freely given as it is, *without money and without price*!

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

CHAP. XLVIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet, having been led by the hand through all the Apartments of this wonderful house, is now, in the close of the whole, instructed concerning the portions of the people. The several tribes of Israel are enumerated, with their several proportions, and the prophecy closeth with the most blessed title given to the city, intimating the perpetual presence of Jehovah.

NOW these are the names of the tribes: from the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus northward, to the coast of Hamath; for these are his sides east and west; a portion for Dan.

2 And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side, a *portion for* Asher.

3 And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a *portion for* Naphtali.

4 And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a *portion for* Manasseh.

5 And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a *portion for* Ephraim.

6 And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side, a *portion for* Reuben.

7 And by the border of Reuben, from the east side even unto the west side, a *portion for* Judah.

8 ¶ And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side shall be the offering which ye shall offer of five and twenty thousand *reeds in* breadth, and *in* length as one of the *other* parts, from the east side unto the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it.

The Reader will observe, that the Prophet is here describing the several tribes on the *north*, according to their portions. I the rather wish to consider the subject spiritually, and therefore cannot but behold what is here said, as being in reference to the glorious state of the Church, in the latter-day dispensation; when temporal possessions will not be the only happiness of the Lord's Israel, but spiritual and eternal. The portion of each will be the portion of all. And this will be *not the precious things brought forth by the sun, nor the precious things put forth by the moon; but the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.* And who but Jesus is this; or who can be a portion to live upon, either here or hereafter, but *the Lord our righteousness?* Deut. xxxiii. 13—16.

9 The oblation that ye shall offer unto the LORD *shall be* of five and twenty thousand in length, and of ten thousand in breadth.

10 And for them, *even* for the priests, shall be *this* holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand *in* length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east

ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length; and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the midst thereof.

11 *It shall be* for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

12 And *this* oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

13 And over against the border of the priests, the Levites *shall have* five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length *shall be* five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand.

14 And they shall not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the first-fruits of the land: for *it is* holy unto the LORD.

15 And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane *place* for the city, for dwelling and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof.

16 And these *shall be* the measures thereof; the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred.

17 And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty.

18 And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy *portion shall be* ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward; and it

shall be over against the oblation of the holy *portion*: and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve the city.

19 And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel.

20 All the oblation *shall be* five and twenty thousand, by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation four square with the possession of the city.

21 And the residue *shall be* for the prince on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince; and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house *shall be* in the midst thereof.

22 Moreover, from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, *being in the midst of that* which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince.

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

23 As for the rest of the tribes from the east side unto the west side, Benjamin *shall have a portion.*

24 And by the border of Benjamin from the east side unto the west side, Simeon *shall have a portion.*

25 And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar *a portion.*

26 And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun *a portion.*

27 And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a *portion*.

28 And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar unto the waters of strife in Kadesh, and to the river toward the great sea.

29 This *is* the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these *are* their portions, saith the Lord God.

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

30 And these *are* the goings out of the city on the north side, four thousand and five hundred measures.

31 And the gates of the city *shall be* after the names of the tribes of Israel, three gates northward : one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.

32 And at the east side four thousand and five hundred : and three gates : and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan.

33 And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures : and three gates ; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.

34 At the west side four thousand and five hundred, *with* their three gates ; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali.

35 *It was* round about eighteen thousand measures : and the name of the city from *that* day *shall be*, The LORD *is* there.

It is hardly possible to read this account of the gates, and of the tribes, in each direction of the gates, without having our minds instinctively led to the contemplation of the beloved Apostle's account of the New Jerusalem. Rev. xxi. 10, &c. But what crowns all, and gives the highest finishing to all, is that glorious name with which the prophecy closeth, and which ensures the everlasting happiness of the people: JEHOVAH SHAMMAH ! *The Lord is there.*

And wherever the Lord is, that makes heaven, and constitutes everlasting felicity. In the Jewish Church, this glorious *Shechinah* formed the whole of blessedness. In the Christian Church, JESUS is still the *Shechinah* of his people. The *millennium* happiness will arise from the same. And in the eternal state, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH is the whole glory. Reader! pause over the wonderful account. Is JEHOVAH SHAMMAH thy happiness now? So then will He be to all eternity. The joys of heaven, and the joys of the Church on earth, is made up of one and the same. *Here*, the Lord's presence with his people, is the sum and substance of all their happiness. *There*, their felicity is, that they shall be *for ever with the Lord*. Even so. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

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

And now adieu, Ezekiel, faithful servant of thy God! Thou hast indeed shewn, that thou wert rightly named *Ezekiel*, which is, *the strength of God*. For thou hast shewn the strength of the Lord to have been in thee. Highly favoured Messenger! What though the river *Chebar* witnessed thy captivity; yet made free in Jesus, *thou wert free indeed*. And blest with such visions of thy God, how peculiarly set apart wert thou for thy Lord's service. Through every generation thy inspired records have been commissioned to thy Lord's glory. I thank thee, as my Lord's servant, for what He hath taught me by thee. I thank my God for raising up such a servant in his Church. And now, thou hast long seen all the grand events here

taught thee in vision, assuredly to be realized in their due season; thou hast sat down among the goodly fellowship of Prophets in heaven, waiting under the golden altar their final accomplishment! Farewell for a little space, *Ezekiel*, until the whole Church meet in this blessed city thou 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-