

But while we find cause thus to bless God, that we are come to this better dispensation, *founded upon better promises*; let us never forget that in those types and shadows the gospel was preached unto them, as well as unto us. Christ then was, as well as he is now, *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*.

Dearest and ever-blessed Jesus! give me to see that all the ordinances in thy sacred book, and the numberless rites, both moral and ceremonial, there appointed, were *the shadows of good things to come, but the body was and is Christ*. Be thou the sanctuary, the altar, the mercy-seat, the sacrifice, the offering, the priest, the all in all of my poor oblations! And may this be my highest and most encouraging consideration in every approach to God my Father, that *having such an High Priest over the house of God, I may draw nigh, through thy blood and righteousness, with a true heart in full assurance of faith*. Amen and Amen.

NUMBERS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IN opening this *fourth* Book of the writings of Moses, I must again request the pious Reader to call to mind, that *Moses wrote of Christ*. And if the Holy Ghost shall be graciously pleased to take of the things of Christ, and shew them to the Reader, no doubt he will find here, as in the former books of Moses, that *he hath testified of Jesus*.

The book of *Numbers*, hath its name from the circumstance of its containing the numbering of the children of Israel. It forms a very interesting volume on that account; in that it carries with it in its bosom, an evidence of the fulfilment of God's promise. The Lord had assured Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, Gen. xv. 5. And here we find the accomplishment.

In respect to the period of time the book of *Numbers* contains, it is somewhat about thirty-nine years. The history commences in the second month of the second year, after the Israelites left Egypt; and ends in the eleventh month of the fortieth year.

There is a mixture of laws and of history in this book, of which it is composed. The Reader will very easily distinguish the one from the other. But here, as in all other instances, in searching the sacred oracles, it must be God the Holy Ghost, which can alone enable the Reader to discern spiritually, and convey his divine teaching to the mind, so as *to make us wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus*.

I only pray, that Holy and Eternal Spirit, under whose inspiration all scripture is written, that he will be both with Writer and

Reader, while going through the sacred pages, that we may discover Christ to be the sum and substance of the whole law of Moses, and the *end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS.

This sacred volume opens in this Chapter, with the Lord's command to Moses, for the numbering the people: the persons appointed to this service; and the exception of the Levites.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first *day* of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

The period in which the Lord gave this commandment is not unmeriting notice. The Reader, by calculating the intermediate space, from Israel's going down into Egypt to this time, will see how the Lord's promise had been graciously accomplishing. In the space of 215 years, from 75 souls Israel was now multiplied to the vast number this chapter expresses, of so many hundred thousands. Well may we exclaim what hath God wrought! Read that scripture, and see what application you can make of it to your own experience: Joshua xxiii. 14.

2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of *their* names, every male by their polls;

3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

Had not this method of numbering by families a particular design, more clearly thereby to ascertain the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ? Heb. vii. 14.

Let the Reader remark with me, what dignity God hath put upon his people, in thus causing them to be numbered. At this time there were many nations, aye and great ones too in their own esteem, but yet no account is made of them. Whereas this handful of people is taken account of, as if the whole world was nothing in comparison of them. Reader, cannot you explain it? The Bible doth most fully. They were the *Segullah*, the jewels, the precious ones of God. And if the Reader would know the reason the prophet will tell him. Isa. xliii. 4—4.

5 And these *are* the names of the men that shall stand with you: of *the tribe of* Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur.

6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

7 Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

8 Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

9 Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon.

10 Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

11 Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni.

12 Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

13 Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran.

14 Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

15 Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan.

I only detain the Reader, after the perusal of these verses of names, (with whose sound we are scarcely acquainted, and of the persons themselves to whom they belong, we know nothing) I only detain him to observe, what a succession of persons and of generations doth the pilgrimage of the human life afford? Think, Reader, what an assembly that will be which, at the archangel's trumpet, shall arise to the wonders of eternity! John v. 28, 29.

16 These *were* the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

17 ¶ And Moses and Aaron took these men which are expressed by *their* names.

However uninteresting this account of names may seem to the Reader, yet spiritually considered, may it not serve to teach the happiness of those whose names are written in the book of life. Reader! depend upon it, *the Lord knoweth them that are his*. And if the Lord said to Moses, *I know thee by name, and thou hast found favour in my sight*; let no one doubt but that his people are all brought into the same account. Consult these sweet scriptures, Luke x. 20. Phil. iv. 3. Rev. iii. 5. xx. 12. xxi. 27.

18 And they assembled all the congregation together on the first *day* of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families,

by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls.

19 As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

It is very endearing to behold the Lord Jesus giving in the account of *his* people. John xvii. 6—12.

20 And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

21 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Reuben, *were* forty and six thousand and five hundred.

22 Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbered of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

23 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Simeon, *were* fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

24 Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

25 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Gad, *were* forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.

26 Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

27 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Judah, *were* threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.

28 Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war ;

29 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Issachar, *were* fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

30 Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war ;

31 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Zebulun, *were* fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.

32 Of the children of Joseph, *namely*, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war ;

33 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Ephraim, *were* forty thousand and five hundred.

34 Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war ;

35 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Manasseh, *were* thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

36 Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their

fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

37 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Benjamin, *were* thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

38 Of the children of Dan, by their generation, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

39 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Dan, *were* threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

40 Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

41 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Asher, *were* forty and one thousand and five hundred.

42 Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

43 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Naphtali, *were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

There is certainly somewhat very striking in those scriptures which mention the number of the children of Israel. It is plain, that it is of the highest importance in the divine esteem, otherwise the Holy Ghost would not have caused it to be so particularly set down. Compare this with Rev. vii. 4—8. Then hear what Paul saith, Rom. ix. 27, and Rom. xi. 26. Let the Reader pause to remark with me the superiority of attention, in point of numbers, which is paid to the tribe of Judah. Heb. vii. 14.

44 These *are* those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of

Israel, *being* twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.

45 So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel;

46 Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

Pause again, my brother, and reflect, what a standing miracle of mercy must it have been in the Lord, to have fed this great multitude in the wilderness, day by day for forty years together. And when the Reader hath duly contemplated this subject, let him consider further, what an everlasting miracle it must be of grace in the Lord Jesus, to have fed, and to be still feeding, his flock from age to age, amidst all the wilderness dispensations of this world, and amidst all their own barrenness, and the host of foes every where around them! Dearest Lamb of God! that art in the midst of the throne! do thou feed me with that living food, which is thyself, and *tell me where thou feedest thy flock at noon*: for otherwise, where shall I find bread in this waste and howling wilderness? Rev. vii. 17.

47 ¶ But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them.

48 For the LORD had spoken unto Moses, saying,

49 Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel:

50 But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that *belong* to it: they shall bear the tabernacle and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.

51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

52 And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every

man by his own standard, throughout their hosts.

53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

54 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

The separation of the Levites had certainly some very important signification. Perhaps to manifest the distinguishing tokens of grace. And it is probable, that it meant to shew, that as in *profession* the whole people of Israel were distinguished from all other nations; so in a *special* manner among Israel, there were some eminently set apart by the Lord. Lord, grant me those sweet, special, appropriate, and personal characters, by which, as the church of old, I may say, *My beloved is mine and I am his*. Song. ii. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

WHO can behold the Lord's attention to Israel, as recorded in this chapter, in commanding the people to be numbered and registered; without calling to mind the blessed and distinguishing privileges of the Lord's Israel in all ages. Oh! the happiness of that people and that person, whom the Lord marketh for his own, and of whom the Lord of hosts hath said, *they shall be mine in that day, when I make up my jewels*. Reader! I charge it upon thine heart and mine, that we both look well to that feature, by which the Lord's Israel are known: a separate, a chosen, a distinguished, a peculiar generation. *Lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations*.

Be not cast down, my poor afflicted brother, whosoever thou art, that through the temptations of the enemy, and the unbelief of thine own heart, art prompted to fear, as if there were but few which shall be found among the true Israelites. Read this chapter, and see how numerous they then were which were numbered: think what multitudes have been added since, from among the children which were then unborn; and though *the carcasses* of so many from that deadly sin of unbelief, *fell in the wilderness*, yet never forget that the Lord hath in all ages *a seed that shall serve him*. See how in the short period of a few years the people multiplied, and comfort thyself with this assurance, the Lord's promise must be fulfilled; the Redeemer must see *of the travail of his soul and be satisfied*. *Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel!* But chiefly may my soul be led to look unto thee, thou dear Redeemer, through whose gracious undertaking thy people, which were far off are brought nigh; and from whose complete and finished salvation alone, their names are recorded in thy book of life. Hail! precious Jesus! It is thou who hast purchased for me this glorious privilege: It is by thy blood and righteousness secured for me: It is confirmed both by the Father's gift, and the Holy Spirit's

seal: and shall I at length, not only read my name written there, but enter thereby into the joy of my Lord? Oh! may I rejoice more in this, than if *the devils were all subject to me through thy name*. For, by and by, I shall awake to the full enjoyment of the promised possession, and have a real, intimate, and soul-transforming communion, with all the persons of the Godhead, in the face of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. II.

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As the former Chapter contained an account of the numbering of Israel; so in this, here is the divine appointment for the arranging the people into distinct and separate battalions, and tribes.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

2 Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

Even in this appointment, where we might least expect to find the Lord Jesus, methinks among the standards of Israel, I discern him who is said to be set up as the Lord's standard to the people. Isaiah xlix. 22. And is not Jesus that very standard, which the Holy Ghost, it is said, shall lift up, when the enemy cometh in like a flood? Isaiah lix. 19. But, Reader! do not overlook in this place, that the Israelites were to pitch the standard *far off*: while we, blessed be God, are now *brought nigh* by the blood of Christ. Oh! the happy, happy privilege of the gospel state! Ephes. ii. 13.

3 And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab *shall be* captain of the children of Judah.

4 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.

Doth not the warlike state of Israel, in this appointment, represent the warlike condition of all true soldiers of Jesus! Hence the church is represented as *terrible as an army with banners*. Song vi. 10. I think it more than probable, that the usage among warriors in the subsequent ages of the world, of having standards with devices put upon them, took its rise from this circumstance of the divine appointment. But alas! how hath it degenerated! Let my banner be the lion of the tribe of Judah, and *Jehovah nissi* for the motto. Rev. v. 5. Exod. xvii. 15. I would have the Reader remark with me, that in precedence

Judah takes the lead. If we would know wherefore, see Heb. vii. 14. See another instance, Judges xx. 18. It is truly interesting to behold how in all things Jesus is typified as having the pre-eminence. Coloss. i. 18.

5 And those that do pitch next unto him *shall be* the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar *shall be* captain of the children of Issachar.

6 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, *were* fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

7 *Then* the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Elon *shall be* captain of the children of Zebulun.

8 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, *were* fifty and seven thousand and four hundred

9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah *were* an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth.

10 On the south side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben *shall be* Elizur the son of Shedeur.

11 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, *were* forty and six thousand and five hundred.

12 And those which pitch by him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon *shall be* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

13 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

14 *Then* the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad *shall be* Eliasaph the son of Reuel.

15 And his host, and those that were numbered

of them, *were* forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty.

16 All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben *were* an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies. And they shall set forth in the second rank.

17 Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.

18 On the west side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud.

19 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* forty thousand and five hundred.

20 And by him *shall be* the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh *shall be* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

21 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin *shall be* Abidan the son of Gideoni.

23 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

24 All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim *were* an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies. And they shall go forward in the third rank.

25 The standard of the camp of Dan *shall be* on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

26 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

27 And those that encamp by him *shall be* the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran.

28 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* forty and one thousand and five hundred.

29 'Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan.

30 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

31 All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan *were* an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards.

32 'These *are* those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts *were* six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

I only beg to detain the Reader, with general observations on those verses, because the leading doctrine of each belongs equally to all. The order observed in those appointments, manifests the Lord to be a God of order. And as it is he which hath fixed the bounds of our habitation, what a precious thought it is, in particular hours, when the mind is full of fear, lest being found out of the way, that, as Job saith, he knoweth the way that I take. Job. xxiii 10. Let the Reader, who contemplates in this view of Israel, the privilege of the Lord's people, in having their standards near the tabernacle, contemplate at the same time, the greater privilege of those around whom the Lord himself encampeth, and defendeth them. Psm. xxxiv. 7.

33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

34 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they

pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

If the Reader would know the reason of this detachment of the Levites, let him consult Joshua xviii. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

SEE, my soul, thy God and Saviour is himself thy standard, ensign, and banner! Behold how he is lifted up to draw thee unto him! Lord give me grace and a discerning eye, to view thee in thy person, character, and office, as the standard of my Father's house! Let me behold thee in thy faithfulness, in thy love, and in every thing that may tend to endear thee to my heart. Let me see thee set forth in type, in all the Old Testament shadows; and realized in all the New Testament substance. And, O my God, give me power in thy strength, to fight under thy banner, against sin, death, and Satan, and all the enemies of my salvation. And dearest Jesus! do thou go before me through all the warfare, that I may feel in my own experience, that glorious promise of my God and Father fulfilled, wherein he saith, *Behold I have given him for a witness, a leader, and commander to the people.* Even so, Amen.

CHAP. III.

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As the preceding Chapter related to the numbering Israel in tribes, and families; so the present hath reference, to the ordering the Levites, as the more immediate servants in the Lord's ministry. The close of the Chapter, contains the order for the redemption of the firstborn.

THESE also are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day that the LORD spake with Moses in mount Sinai.

I think it worth observation in the opening of this chapter, that Aaron is mentioned before Moses. Probably on this account: as in this chapter of the order of the Levites, an eye to the priesthood is particularly attended to; Aaron, as a type of the ever-blessed Jesus in the order of the priesthood, supersedes the authority of the law, in the person of Moses. Heb. vii. 12, 15, 16.

2 And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office.

4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD,

in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.

Let the Reader not lose sight of the intention, which probably the Holy Ghost had in view, in causing the sin of Aaron's two eldest sons to be again mentioned. The church of God is a sacred inclosure out of the world's wilderness. Let no man rush into it with strange fire, and sparks of his own kindling. Remember *Nadab* and *Abihu*? Levit. x. 2. My soul! though thou seekest the acceptance, both of thy person and thy offering, only in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, take heed how thou ventur'est into the divine presence, in a careless, unconcerned and indifferent frame of mind! See Levit. x. 3.

5 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.

8 And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

9 And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they *are* wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.

10 And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

It is well worth the pious Reader's observation, that notwithstanding the great attention here shewn to the tribe of Levi, the Lord Jesus descended not from that tribe. Heb. vii. 13, 14.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;

13 Because all the firstborn *are* mine; *for* on

the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I *am* the LORD.

Let the Reader remark with me, on the perusal of those verses, that the highest honour of birthright is to be the Lord's. The world's policy hath in many instances reversed this. The younger branches of some families are thought good enough for the Lord's service. But what a blessed privilege are those begotten to, who are, as the apostle calls them, *a royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Holy and Eternal Spirit! do thou anoint me, by thy qualifying influences, to this sacred office! Consecrate and set me apart, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, to this service of my God and Father; that I may at all times draw near in that precious and appointed way, which he hath opened for all his people, in his alone merits and death; and offer *spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

14 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,

15 Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them.

It is worthy the Reader's closest attention here, that while Israel at large, were only numbered from the age of 20, and upward; the children of the Levites were commanded to be numbered from a month old. Yes! our dearest Redeemer hath told us, that in *his* record little infants as well as elder years are enumerated; for *of such is the kingdom of God*. Mark x. 14. And what a sweet scripture that is, which from the lips of the same precious Saviour, enjoins the greatest caution of despising one of his little ones, *for in heaven their angels do always behold the face of their Father which is in heaven*. Matt. xviii. 10.

16 And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.

17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari.

18 And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families; Libni, and Shimei.

19 And the sons of Kohath by their families; Amram, and Izechar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

20 And the sons of Merari by their families; Mahli, and Mushi. These *are* the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers.

21 Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these *are* the families of the Gershonites.

22 Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, *even* those that were numbered of them *were* seven thousand and five hundred.

23 The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward.

24 And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites *shall be* Eliasaph the son of Lael.

25 And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation *shall be* the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,

26 And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which *is* by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof.

27 And of Kohath *was* the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these *are* the families of the Kohathites.

28 In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary.

29 The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward.

30 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites *shall be* Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.

31 And their charge *shall be* the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof.

32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *shall be* chief over the chief of the Levites, *and have* the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary.

33 Of Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: *these are* the families of Merari.

34 And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* six thousand and two hundred.

35 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari *was* Zurriel the son of Abihail: *these* shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northward.

36 And *under* the custody and charge of the sons of Merari *shall be* the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto,

37 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords.

38 But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, *even* before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, *shall be* Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

39 All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, *were* twenty and two thousand.

I do not detain the Reader, through this whole account of the numbering of the Levites, with any observation, in order to avoid the unnecessarily swelling the extent of our Commentary. But I cannot suffer the relation of the sum total to be closed, without calling upon the Reader to remark with me, that from this calculation, it appears the

tribe of *Levi* was the smallest of all the tribes of Israel. And yet this was peculiarly the Lord's. And are they, indeed, what Jesus called them, *a little flock*? Luke xii. 32. Lord! grant, however few, that I may be found among the number, whom Jesus will own for his own, when he cometh to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. 2 Thess. i. 10.

40 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Number all the firstborn of the males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names.

41 And thou shalt take the Levites for me (*I am* the LORD) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel.

42 And Moses numbered, as the LORD commanded him, all the firstborn among the children of Israel.

43 And all the firstborn males by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen.

Is not this direction concerning the firstborn, in allusion to the only begotten Son of God? Did not God our Father give and exchange, as it were, his firstborn and only Son, for the people of his everlasting love, when he gave him up to the service of the whole law, as their law-surety and sponsor; and to the death of the cross, in their law-room and stead? John iii. 16.

44 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

45 Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: *I am* the LORD.

46 And for these that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the first born of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;

47 Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece

by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take *them*: (the shekel is twenty gerahs:)

48 And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons.

The sum here appointed, amounted in value to about 2 shillings and 3 pence halfpenny of our current coin.

49 And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites:

50 Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

51 And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

The apostle Peter, hath given the best comment upon this, and other scriptures of the like nature, when he draws a line of everlasting distinction between redemption by money, and redemption by the precious blood of Christ. See 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE again, blessed Jesus! while reading the separation of the Levites to the service of the sanctuary, here let me behold thee in thine unequalled office; consecrated, and set apart to thy father's service, in the salvation of souls! With what earnestness didst thou enter upon the work; with what diligence and faithfulness perform it; with how much tenderness to us, didst thou take upon thee the form of a servant, when thou wast Lord of all, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with God: and with how much obedience to thy Father didst thou magnify the whole law, and make it honourable; never desisting from thy labour of love, until thou couldst say unto God the Father; *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.* Hail again and again, thou ever adored Redeemer! Lord, number me among the sons of Levi, and purge my soul as gold and silver, that I may offer to the Lord, an offering in righteousness. And while I behold my God and Saviour, though Lord of all, thus set apart, and becoming the servant of all; may my soul be so devoted to thy service, that with one of old, I may cry out as he did: *Truly, I am thy servant, I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds.* Psm. cxvi. 16.

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

The same subject as occupied the former chapter, is continued through this. The numbering and ordering the several branches of the Levites, the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites; together with the number and particular service of each.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers,

3 From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Let the reader observe upon the particular age of the Levites, appointed to minister in holy things, that this service did not begin till after the *thirtieth* year. And surely the Reader will not forget that the blessed Jesus opened not his special ministry until *his* thirtieth year. Luke iii. 23.

4 This *shall be* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, *about* the most holy things:

5 And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it:

Was not this typical of Him of whom it is said, *he should destroy the face of the covering cast over all people?* Isaiah xxv. 7.

6 And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over *it* a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.

7 And upon the table of shew-bread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon:

Was not this continual bread typical of Jesus? John vi. 51.

8 And they shall spread upon them a cloth of

scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof.

9 And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff-dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it:

10 And they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put *it* upon a bar.

11 And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof:

12 And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put *them* in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put *them* on a bar:

13 And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon:

14 And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, *even* the censers, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basons, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it.

Reader! observe the repeated precept, as to covering the different vessels in the tabernacle. Then call to mind, what the apostle saith of the darkness of that ministration, and learn to bless God for the day light of a better covenant, established upon better promises. Heb. vii. 22, &c.

15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear *it*: but they shall not touch *any* holy

thing, lest they die. These *things* are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

16 And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *pertaineth* the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, *and* the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein *is*, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof.

17 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Observe what sanctity is required of those which minister in holy things. That is a striking precept of the prophet to this amount. Isa. lii. 11. But what are the constant stated privileges of God's people now, who have boldness at all times, to draw nigh in the blood of Jesus! Dearest Lord! oh give me grace ever to keep this in view. Heb. x. 19—22.

18 Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites:

19 But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden:

20 But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

The service of the *Kohathites* is striking. They were to carry the holy things of the tabernacle. It was dangerous to go into the holy place, for God had commanded that this should be done only once in a year, and that by the high priest with burning incense: thereby typifying our glorious High Priest entering in once into the holy place not made with hands, there to appear in the presence of God for us. But as the church now was in the wilderness, and the ark of God dwelt between curtains, it was necessary when at any time that Israel moved from place to place, that the ark should be moved also. And therefore no doubt provision was made that the Kohathites should minister in this removal and be exposed to no danger. Reader! think with what holy solemnity all that now minister in holy things should be engaged in the service. Oh! precious Jesus! how sweet is it to consider, that by thee and in thee, thy people whom thou hast made kings and priests to the Father, may minister in the sacred service of thy church.

21 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

22 Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families;

23 From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

24 This *is* the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens:

25 And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that *is* above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,

26 And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court which *is* by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve.

27 At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens.

28 This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge *shall be* under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

29 As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers;

30 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

31 And this *is* the charge of their burden, ac-

cording to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof,

32 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden.

33 This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

In the service of the *Gershonites*, we may learn some sweet and interesting instructions, also, spiritually considered. Was not the numbering of those that ministered in this tabernacle service, emblematical of Jesus's numbering his people, and calling them all by name? John x. 3. And was not the putting up, and taking down the tabernacle, by the pins and cords thereof, intended to shew how the bodies of the saints, which are expressly said, in the New Testament dispensation, to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, are removeable by death, and will be erected again, when those bodies shall become glorified bodies, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, at the resurrection? See 1 Cor. xv. 42—44.

34 And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites after their families, and after the house of their fathers,

35 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation:

36 And those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty.

37 These *were* they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

38 And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, and by the house of their fathers,

39 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation,

40 Even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty.

41 These *are* they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD.

42 And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers.

43 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation,

44 Even those that were numbered of them, after their families, were three thousand and two hundred.

45 These be those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

46 All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers,

47 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation,

48 Even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and four-score.

49 According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Similar instructions, as to their respective services, are given also to the *Merarites*; that in the general charge, to the tabernacle ministry, all might have their distinct and separate work; that all things might be done decently, and in order. But how sweet is it to the true believer in Jesus, to observe, that he, and he alone, hath wrought the work, finished the labour, and hath the care of all his church and people. It is thine office, dearest Jesus, both to serve and to bear the burden, both to carry the weight of the curtains of the tabernacle of the true sanctuary, which the Lord hath pitched, and not man; and, as the prophet beautifully expresseth it to have hung upon thee, all the glory of thy Father's house! Oh! thou precious God of all our mercies, be thou to us, *as a nail fastened in a sure place, and thou wilt be for a glorious throne to all thy people.* Isaiah xxii. 23.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE my soul! pause and behold, how the Levitical service of the sons of Aaron shadowed forth thy Saviour in his gracious ministration. He it was, indeed, that alone could remove the face of that covering, by which, our nature was hid, and lost from all his people. Oh! that my eyes were more enlightened to behold this Great High Priest, in all his blessed offices, and characters! Thou art indeed the true tabernacle, dearest Lord, without a covering; for by thy precious undertaking, thou hast opened a new and living way for us in thy blood, and righteousness; thou hast opened, and none can shut: neither will the covering be any more upon it, but on all the glory shall be a defence. And oh! what a glory, what an inconceivable weight of glory, will break in upon the soul, when this earthly tabernacle of our's shall be taken down, and the pins, and the sockets, with their silver cords and instruments, be broken at the cistern: and Jesus shall again raise it up, a glorified body, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! What rapture will break in upon the soul, when our vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body; and when those dear partners of affection, the soul and body shall again unite, never, never more to part; and never, never more to thwart each other, being both redeemed together by his great salvation! Dearest Saviour! be thou now by faith my joy, and then by sight, wilt thou be mine everlasting light, and my God, my glory.

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

This chapter contains an order for the removal of the unclean, from the Camp. Here is also a repetition of the law, concerning the restitution to be made in cases of trespass; and the mode of trial to be observed, in the instance of a wife suspected of adultery.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead:

3 Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell.

4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel.

It is always both pleasing and profitable, to observe in the letter of the law, the spiritual meaning of it! And here, if I mistake not, in the precept issued, concerning the removal of the unclean, from the camp; a very striking allusion is intended to that blessed dispensation of mercy in the gospel, in which, as the Lord himself, hath tabernacled in substance of our flesh among us, nothing that is unclean can be suffered to dwell. Here again, dearest Jesus! as in former instances, so in this, how delightfully art thou pointed out to me! Oh! give me grace to come out from among all that is filthy, and to touch no unclean thing; but as He who hath called me is holy, so may I be holy in all manner of conversation. 1 Peter i. 15. And is there not an allusion also in this doctrine, to that kingdom of glory, which is above, as well as to the kingdom of grace, which is leading to it here below? Certainly, our God will one day come, and *gather out of his kingdom all things that offend*. Lord grant that I may be found, in that day, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and that I may be holy, and without blame before thee, in love. Ephes. i. 4.

5 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

6 Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty;

7 Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass

with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth *part* thereof, and give *it* unto *him* against whom he hath trespassed.

8 But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, *even* to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.

9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his.

10 And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

Is there not, under this precept, concerning trespasses in general, somewhat couched, respecting the special and particular atonement made for offences universally by our nearest kinsman, the Lord Jesus? As the recompense *here*, was ordered to be made by the kinsmen, so *there*, it was the kinsman who made restitution for all our injustice and trespasses. It was Jesus that put his name in the bond debt, to answer for all his people. He, and he only, could say: *then I restored that which I took not away.* Psm. lxi. 4. Dearest Jesus! praised be thy mercy, that I am not in the situation of the man, spoken of in this scripture, that hath no kinsman to recompense the trespass for him, for thou art my kinsman Redeemer! And I hope that I can say, and with the same well grounded assurance of faith, as Job did, *I know that my* (Goel) *Redeemer liveth.* Job xix. 25.

11 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him,

Is there not somewhat of a spiritual adultery intended also to be conveyed here? As Jesus was the husband of his people: and as He had said, thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee; is not this going aside, intended to shew how very jealous the Lord is and will be of his own honor? Hosea iii. 3.

13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and *there be* no witness against her, neither she be taken *with the manner*:

14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled : or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled :

15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth *part* of an ephah of barley meal ; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon ; for it *is* an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD :

17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel ; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put *it* into the water :

18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which *is* the jealousy offering : and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse :

19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness *with another* instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse :

20 But if thou hast gone aside *to another* instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband :

21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD

doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell;

22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make *thy* belly to swell, and *thy* thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen.

23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot *them* out with the bitter water:

24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, *and become* bitter.

25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar:

26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, *even* the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water.

27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, *that*, if she be defiled and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, *and become* bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot; and the woman shall be a curse among her people.

28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed.

29 This *is* the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside *to another* instead of her husband, and is defiled;

30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.

31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

These verses contain a very circumstantial account, of the law of jealousy. The process of trial is very solemn and awful; and the event, suited to the nature of the dispensation, under which the church then was. But among the disciples of a better dispensation, founded upon better promises, there can need no waters of jealousy, for we know that God judgeth the secrets of all hearts by Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest of our profession; and though in the present day of abounding transgression, sins of uncleanness and unfaithfulness abound; yet that scripture is not less in force, *whoremongers and adulterers will God judge*. Lord! keep us from all our enemies, and especially from the defilements of our own corrupt nature, and may we learn as members of Christ's mystical body, to say with the same holy zeal and indignation, as the Apostle: *shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!* 1 Cor. vi. 15.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED God! here let me learn the sanctity, which ought to be preserved in those that approach thy church, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. Lord! do thou enable me to keep my foot when I go to the house of God; and do thou keep my heart from all defilement. Precious Redeemer! here again let me behold and rightly prize thy invaluable redemption; by which alone, my soul, which hath deserved to be banished without the camp, by reason of the uncleanness I have contracted; yet being cleansed from all sin by thy blood, is brought within the vail, and come within the holy place! Oh! God of my salvation, let me upon earth be for ever singing the glories of the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed poor sinners to God by his blood; and by and by, I hope, through thy grace, most loudly to proclaim it, amidst the glorified inhabitants of heaven. And do thou, dearest Lord, who hast paid all the fine of trespasses *for* me, graciously rule, and so govern every affection of my heart, that there may be no allowed trespasses *in* me. To thee I look up, with the same awakened earnestness of prayer and supplication as one of old, and cry as he did: *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

And blessed Redeemer, since thou hast graciously condescended to make me thine, and hast betrothed me to thee for ever. Oh! let nothing tempt me to go aside or wander from thee; no Lord not in thought, or word, or deed. But like the church of old, let it be my glory that I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, and thy desire is toward me.

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

As the preceding chapter contained the law respecting unclean persons, in this we have the law concerning the Nazarites who were de-

voted to the Lord by their vows. The chapter is rendered interesting also, from another consideration, in that it closes with the blessing, where-with the Lord enjoined the priests to bless in his name the people.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate *themselves* to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate *themselves* unto the LORD.

It is hardly possible to enter upon the perusal of this chapter, on the subject of the Nazarites, without calling to mind him, who at his entrance into the world, in substance of our flesh, we are told, *came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets: He shall be called a Nazarene.* Isaiah describes Jesus under this character, of the branch growing out of the roots of Jesse; the word "branch" is *Nitzar*, signifying of Nazareth. Isaiah xi. 1. Though there are many circumstances in the law concerning Nazarites, which cannot be at all applicable to the blessed Jesus; for he both touched dead bodies and drank wine, and yet was never unclean, but remained as before, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; yet strictly speaking, as being eminently devoted to the Lord; Jesus was the very Nazarene himself, to whom all the law, concerning the Nazarites typically referred. Hence *Joseph*, as his type, was a Nazarite, being separated from his brethren. Gen. xlix. 26. And *Samson*, a very striking type in this respect, as a Nazarite of the Lord Jesus. I exhort the Reader to beseech the God of Israel, to grant him grace, while perusing this chapter, that he may discern the typical circumstances in it, pointing to the ever-blessed Jesus. And may that adored Redeemer, do by both Writer and Reader, as he did by his disciples at *Emmaus*. Luke xxiv. 44, 45.

3 He shall separate *himself* from wine, and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.

4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

And was not Jesus separated, and solemnly set apart to the service of his Father? Reader, do not forget what Jesus hath said himself, respecting this, of being sanctified or set apart for his people. John xvii. 19.

5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth *himself* unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

How precious is it to behold, in this instance also, the blessed Jesus typified. The Church is described by Solomon under this similitude: *Her hair is a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead.* Song iv. 1. And are not the Lord's people like the hairs of his head, a multitude which grow upon him, and on which no razor of separation shall ever come? Do not his people live upon him, depend upon him, draw all their life, and strength, and nourishment from him, and be part of himself, never to be separated from him? Oh! thou glorious Nazarene! however despised and rejected of men, be thou nearer and dearer to me than language can express; and may it be said of my soul among thy people, as it was of the church of old, by virtue of her union with thee; *her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire.* Lament. iv. 7.

6 All the days that he separateth *himself* unto the LORD, he shall come at no dead body.

7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die; because the consecration of his God *is* upon his head.

8 All the days of his separation he *is* holy unto the LORD.

Our dear Lord here manifested his holiness, for though touching a dead body, as in the case of those he raised from the dead, yet he himself contracted no uncleanness! How sweet and delightful it is to see, that in all he did and suffered for us, it conveyed no shadow of taint to him. He was made sin, nay, a curse for us; but yet knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth! How precious that scripture! 2 Cor. v. 21. Reader! let you and I live upon it.

9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it.

10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day.

12 And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb

of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled

Secondarily and subordinately to the grand subject, of being typical to the ever blessed Nazarite, the Lord Jesus Christ, we may behold in this chapter, several circumstances which had a reference to the character of the Nazarites in general. Those verses particularly point out the law, as it relates to them. Ministers especially, and even lower orders in the church, whose lives are engaged about sacred things, may here observe, how graciously the Lord hath made provision for errors of infirmity, and offences of oversight. See! what a merciful God in Christ, we have to do with. Sweet is that scripture to this effect, Psalm ciii. 10, 14.

13 And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

14 And he shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings,

15 And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings.

16 And the priest shall bring *them* before the LORD, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering:

17 And he shall offer the ram *for* a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: and the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering.

18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put *it* in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

19 And the priest shall take the sodden shoul-

der of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put *them* upon the hands of the Nazarite, after *the hair* of his separation is shaven :

20 And the priest shall wave *them* for a wave offering before the LORD: *this is* holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.

21 *This is* the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, *and of* his offering unto the LORD for his separation, beside *that* that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

Let not the Reader overlook in all this process of the sin-offering, and meat-offering, and drink-offering, and peace-offering, how that one grand and all sufficient-offering of the Lord Jesus is shadowed forth. The waving before the Lord evidently manifested to whom the offering was made: and while it testified the sense of sin, it loudly proclaimed, that pardon and peace could only be obtained by the Saviour. Dearest Jesus! may the account of all the sacrifices I read of under the law have this happy effect, to lead my heart to thee, who hast by *thy one sacrifice, once offered, for ever perfected them that are sanctified.* Heb. x. 14.

22 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

23 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

I have often considered the blessing here appointed by God himself, as being a very striking form of expression. This is what may be considered as the great standard for blessing God's people, in the Old Testament dispensation, as that expressed by the apostle Paul, is the order under the New: 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And a little attention to both will shew that they are only different methods of expressing one, and the same thing. Reader! observe the manner and form made use of, and

then judge for yourself, whether the words of the blessing do not particularly express the several distinct and special mercies which each person of the Godhead is said, in other parts of scripture, to manifest towards the people of God in Christ. First, remark with me, that the incommunicable and glorious name of JEHOVAH, or LORD, is thrice repeated. Next observe, how each time the form is altered. *The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.* The blessing and keeping of God's heritage, is in a very peculiar and express manner ascribed to God the Father. See in proof of this, these scriptures. Ephes. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3, 5. John xvii. 11. So again, when it is said; *the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.* Is not this the peculiar blessing of God our Saviour? when *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God* is given to us *in the face of Jesus Christ*? See 2 Cor. iv. 6. iii. 18. John i. 14. 18. And is it not through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that we find mercy from God even the Father? Romans v. 11. Coloss. i. 20. And is not the peculiar office of God the Holy Ghost, very strikingly adverted to in this expression; *the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.* Among the special offices of God the Spirit, that of comforting his people with the light of his countenance, is very eminently striking; and of making peace in the soul, by the application of all the sweet graces and blessings of the Lord Jesus? See the church's lamentation, when under the want of this; Lament. i. 16. Hence the Lord Jesus's promise, John xiv. 26. Hence also the prayer of the apostle, Rom. xv. 13. When the Reader hath made his own remarks upon these things, I would beg him to take with him another observation on this precious blessing; and that is, that the blessing is personal; the Lord *bless thee*, and *keep thee*. Yes! Reader, you and I must not be content with *general* things, we must see and know our own personal interest in them. Dearest Lord! grant this to both Writer and Reader! And let me beg the Reader to bear with me, while I add another observation on this sweet passage. The priests, the sons of Aaron, who were appointed to bless the people in this way, could only pray the Lord that it *might* be so, and that the Lord's blessing would follow. But our Jesus, whom they represented, *commands* the blessing which he pronounceth; for we are told by an authority not to be questioned, that *God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless us.* Acts iii. 26. Dear Jesus! how precious is it to see that in all things, thou hast the pre-eminence. Coloss. i. 18. Let me detain the Reader only with a prayer over the whole, that the blessed promise in the close of this chapter, may be our portion; that Jesus our High Priest, may put the name of our God upon us, as his children, and we shall be blessed indeed! Rev. ii. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE, my soul, let me stand and view, in the contemplation of the Nazarites, that holy Nazarite, that unequalled spotless Son of God, who for my sake separated himself from all that was corrupt in our nature, when in that nature he undertook and accomplished, the salvation of his people. Well is it for me that thou, blessed Jesus, hast fulfilled all righteousness on my behalf; for I groan daily, being burthened with the weight of corruption in my nature; and I feel that in me, that is in my

flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Lord, what power hath the remains of indwelling corruption in my nature over me! How little of the principles of the true Nazarite do I find in my heart! And yet, how earnestly do I desire to be dedicated unto God. Oh! precious Jesus! how sweet and endearing is it to my soul, that thou art here, as in every other instance, *the Lord my righteousness*.

Reader! let us not close the chapter, until that we have jointly bent the knee of prayer together, that our great High Priest and Saviour may pour upon us the precious blessing contained in it. Father of mercies! do thou bless us and keep us! Holy Saviour! cause thy face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us! Eternal Spirit! lift up thy countenance upon us, and we shall be whole. Lord give us peace, even that peace in the blood of the cross, which shall both in time and in eternity keep our hearts and souls, in and through Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

This chapter contains the account of the offerings of the princes of Israel, at the dedication of the tabernacle, and of the altar. It is rendered the more remarkable, in that it relates the gracious condescension of God, in speaking to Moses from the mercy seat.

AND it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them;

2 That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who *were* the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered:

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, serves to explain the cause and origin of this free-will offering of the princes, when it tells us that it is *God which worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Philip. ii. 13.

3 And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered waggons, and twelve oxen; a waggon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox; and they brought them before the tabernacle.

If, as some suppose, these waggons were for the purpose of carrying the tabernacle furniture, from place to place; doth it not serve to teach that every thing on earth, even ordinances and temple service are move-

able things in God's house. None but Jesus is a lasting mercy. Sweet Lord! it is thy peculiar character, that thou art the same *yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. Heb.-xiii. 8.

4 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

5 Take *it* of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service.

What a gracious God is Israel's God, who accepteth according to that a man hath, if there be a willing mind. 2 Cor. viii. 12. But Reader! never forget that the acceptance of our poor gifts, pre-supposeth the acceptance of our persons; and both in Jesus only. Ephes. i. 6. It is said of Abel that the Lord had respect to his person, and (then) to his offering. Gen. iv. 4. Dearest Jesus! grant that my soul may be accepted in thee; and then am I sure that my poor breathings of praise, however poor, will not be rejected by thee. Job here is a sweet type of Jesus. Job xlii. 8.

6 And Moses took the waggons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites.

7 Two waggons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service:

8 And four waggons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

9 But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them *was that* they should bear upon their shoulders.

I only detain the Reader to remark in the perusal of these verses, the striking difference in the sons of *Kohath*, to that of the others. Upon their bare shoulders their burden was to be borne; no doubt by way of intimating the preciousness of the treasure they carried. Nothing is holy enough to bear the ark of God. Nothing, my soul, in thee is holy enough to touch Jesus, of whom the ark was a type: and yet blessed be his name, he condescends to touch thee, see Matt. viii. 3. See that awful instance in the case of *Uzzah*, for the reverse of this: 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. But what sanctity ought to distinguish those who minister in holy things, and bear the vessels of the Lord? Isaiah lii. 11.

10 ¶ And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar.

11 And the LORD said unto Moses, they shall

offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

12 And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah:

13 And his offering *was* one silver charger, the weight thereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them *were* full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

14 One spoon of ten *shekels* of gold, full of incense:

15 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

16 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

17 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer:

19 He offered *for* his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

20 One spoon of gold of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

21 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

22 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

23 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

24 On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, *did offer*:

25 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

26 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

27 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

28 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

29 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year; this *was* the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, *did offer*:

31 His offering *was* one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

32 One golden spoon of ten *shekels* full of incense:

33 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

34 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

35 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, *did offer*:

37 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

38 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

39 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

40 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

41 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year; this *was* the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

42 On the sixth day Eliasaph, the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, *offered*:

43 His offering *was* one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

44 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

45 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

46 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

47 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year; this *was* the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48 On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, *offered*:

49 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

50 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

51 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

52 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

53 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day *offered* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh:

55 His offering *was* one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

56 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

57 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

58 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

59 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideon, prince of the children of Benjamin, *offered*:

61 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

62 One golden spoon of ten *shekels* full of incense:

63 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

64 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

65 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Abidan the son of Gideon.

66 On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, *offered*:

67 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

68 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

69 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

70 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

71 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, *offered*:

73 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

74 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

75 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

76 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

77 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78 On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, *offered*:

79 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel

of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

80 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

81 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

82 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

83 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84 This *was* the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold:

85 Each charger of silver *weighing* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels *weighed* two thousand and four hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary:

86 The golden spoons *were* twelve, full of incense, *weighing* ten *shekels* apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons *was* an hundred and twenty *shekels*.

87 All the oxen for the burnt offering *were* twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering: and the kids of the goats for sin offering twelve.

88 And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings *were* twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This *was* the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed.

If I avoid detaining the Reader, while going over these many verses, it is not because any or either of them is uninteresting; but, because, in the Poor Man's Commentary I am studying to compress all I can, within the smallest compass. Indeed, but for this, I should detain the Reader to observe to him, how gracious it was in the Holy Ghost, thus to cause every man's offering to be particularly, and specially noticed. Reader say, supposing you had borne a part, in those solemn services and dedications to the Lord; would you not be glad to find your name

graciously marked down: and on the contrary would you not have been much distressed, if neglected, or passed over unnoticed? It is very refreshing to a true believer in Jesus, to know by such marks that God doth not overlook, or forget his labour of love. Heb. vi. 10. Reader! take notice of the *sin-offering*, joined to the gifts of the princes. Yes! Jesus must be in all our offerings to atone for them, for there is sin mixed with all we do. Reader! remark also, that the gifts of the princes were all alike. Yes! the greatest offerings of the rich, and the humble offerings of the poor; all must be sanctified by Him who alone sanctifieth both the gift, and giver. And who is that but Jesus, who is all in all, to his people. 2 Cor. viii. 15. But above all, Reader, do not overlook that the Lord Jesus is himself, both our tabernacle, our altar and offering. And while we bring at any time of our poor oblations to the Lord, oh! for grace to think duly of that *one offering of himself, by which he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.* Heb. x. 14.

89 ¶ And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that *was* upon the ark of testimony from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.

Here would I desire the Reader to pause, and to remark with me, the gracious goodness and wonderful condescension of our God. What a proof was this in speaking from the mercy seat, that God hears prayers, and answers them. But while this becomes so truly encouraging to the people of God in all ages of his church; let us reflect yet further upon the mercy, in considering by whom, and through whom, this revelation was then, and still is made. Who was it, think you, that thus spoke to Moses? Was it not the Lord Jesus! Remember what John saith. *No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* John i. 18. Hence we may infer, that it was the Lord's Christ, by whom his mercy was manifested: and then, as well as now, all communion between the Holy Trinity, and our nature is carried on by the Lord Jesus! Precious thought! Reader! I charge you think of it, and pray for grace to keep it always in view, and especially when approaching the mercy seat. There, I would say to my soul; there is One, whom the Father heareth alway; and through whom I may at all times approach; not as a servant, but as a son; not *in the spirit of bondage, but in the spirit of adoption, whereby I may cry, Abba Father!* Rom. viii. 15.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord! while I here behold the rich offerings of the princes, and thy gracious acceptance of them: and while I look into myself, and perceive that I have nothing to offer but my sins, and transgressions; how shall I venture to hope the finding favour with thee. But my soul be encouraged. The poor widow's offering was a costly gift in the

sight of God; and a broken and contrite heart, the Lord hath said he will not despise. It is in Jesus alone all must be accepted. The rich have nothing truly valuable, but as they are rich in him; and the poor can need nothing while *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.*

In the contemplation of the Lord's speaking to his servant *Moses*, from between the cherubims; let me steadfastly behold thee, thou ever gracious Redeemer, speaking to thy people in all the tender tokens of thy love. It was thy love which led thee to engage as our surety; it was the same love which prompted thee to assume our nature; it was the same love carried thee on through all the interesting circumstances of redemption work; and it is by the effects of the same everlasting and unchanging love, that all the sweet tokens of communion with our Father are conducted now. Thou art God still, and still thou dwellest on the mercy seat, between the cherubims, to communicate blessings to thy people! Oh! then speak to me, and tell me thou art my great salvation. Dearest Jesus! be thou my portion now, and my glory for ever.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

As the golden candlestick in the tabernacle consisted of seven lamps; this chapter contains directions for the lighting of them. Here is also the order for the consecration of the Levites, to their particular office, by the purifying of their bodies and garments: with some other circumstances of the like nature.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him:
When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps
shall give light over against the candlestick.

If the Reader will consult Exod. xxv. 31. he will find similar directions given concerning this service. But it was here that the first precept is given of the order for lighting the lamps. But let the Reader attend to the more important things of a spiritual nature, veiled under this service. Are not the seven lamps here spoken of, typical of the Holy Ghost's influence described in the book of Revelation, under the same number, the seven spirits of God? There can be no doubt but that the number of seven is intended, not by way of implying a plurality in the person of God the Spirit, as to his nature; but solely to intimate that there is a diversity in his gifts, and operations, and influences. See Rev. i. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 8. 11. But this is not all which is couched under this type; are not the lamps themselves emblematical also of the word of God? See Psalm cxix. 105. Prov. vi. 23. And observe moreover, that those lamps were intended to give light, over against the candlestick; that is, to the table of shew-bread: meaning no doubt as the shew-bread was a type of the ever blessed Jesus, the true shew-bread, and the bread of life; John v. 39. so the scriptures like the lamps of the tabernacle, all point to Him. And as the whole body of

lamps lighted to the shew-bread; so the Holy Ghost whom those lamps represent in all his offices, points to the Lord Jesus. John xvi. 14.

3 And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Observe here who was expressly appointed to the office of lighting the lamps; it was *Aaron*. Yes! It was Jesus our Almighty Aaron, that sends to us the Holy Spirit, as the Father's gift, to enlighten the souls of his people, and as the fruit and effect of his own ascension-gifts to his church. Hence David saith, *Thou Lord wilt light my candle*. Psalm xviii. 28. Dearest Jesus! thou art both the light, and the life of thy people, and *in thy light, shall we see light*. Psalm xxxvi. 9.

4 And this work of the candlestick *was of beaten gold*, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, *was beaten work*: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

What a beautiful though short description, is given of the candlestick; namely, of beaten gold: intimating most probably, the Godhead and glory of Him, who is as the church describes him in himself, as the head of his people, as the most fine gold, both in his divine nature and in his headship, as God over all, one with the Father who is blessed for evermore. Song v. 11. Exod. xxxvii. 17.

5 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

6 Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.

7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and *so* make themselves clean.

8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, *even* fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering.

9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together:

10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the

LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:

11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD *for* an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.

12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites.

13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them *for* an offering unto the LORD.

14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.

15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them *for* an offering.

16 For they *are* wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, *even instead of* the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

18 And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.

19 And I have given the Levites *as* a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel,

when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

The Levites were before appointed to this service, and here is the form of their ordination. See chap. iii. 6, &c. But let the Reader remark with me, the gospel feature strongly pointed out. The Levites, even though Levites, and chosen of God, partake of the common corruption of our fallen nature: they must be therefore cleansed from this. And how? Nothing but the blood of Jesus, can cleanse from sin; and nothing but the water of regeneration of the Holy Ghost can renew our fallen nature. See God's promises to this effect in reference to gospel times. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. Titus iii. 4—6. Souls thus regenerated and cleansed, are said to be dedicated to the Lord. So were these Levites. Ephes. v. 26, 27. Rom. xii. 1. But the type goes further.

20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.

21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.

All this was to be done with sacrifice. Yes! in every thing, and by every service, Jesus, the great sacrifice both for sin, and for our acceptance is held forth. That sweet scripture of the apostle to the Hebrews, is a gracious instruction to us upon many occasions. Heb. x. 14.

22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

This self-dedication as following the Lord's appointment, is among the evidences of our being the Lord's. *Paul* hath a sweet observation upon this: 2 Cor. viii. 4, 5.

23 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

24 This *is it* that *belongeth* unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:

25 And from the age of fifty years they shall

cease waiting upon the service *thereof*, and shall serve no more :

26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

The age of *twenty-five*, from whence this dedication to the Lord's service began, was meant no doubt, to point out the ripeness of age, required for his sacred employment. The apostle hath given the like direction for the gospel ministry, under the Holy Ghost's authority. 1 Tim. iii. 1. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE my soul, while by faith thou walkest in the sanctuary of the Old Testament dispensation, and in viewing the golden candlestick with the lighted lamps, behold thy adored Redeemer, as divinely represented shining forth, in and through all his New Testament revelation, under the fulness of all the Holy Spirit's influence. Oh! how gloriously did *he* shine, of whom this golden candlestick with its seven lamps was but the faintest image, unto whom the Spirit was not *given by measure*. Hail! thou ever blessed, ever glorious Jesus! thou that art both the light, and the life of thy people. From thee and thy precious influence, do all the lights of the temple derive their lustre. By thee they shine; for thee they minister; and to thy glory they serve. Lord! communicate to my dark and benighted heart the rays of thy grace. Shine in precious Jesus, on my cold and lifeless soul, and warm my frozen affections; be thou my *everlasting light, and my God my glory*.

And while I thus look up to thee my God and Saviour, as the fountain and source of all that is truly glorious, may my soul behold in the dedication of these Levites to the temple service, how high a dignity those souls are called to, who, by the Lord's appointment, minister in holy things. Let me offer a prayer before the mercy seat, for all of this description and character, who are the true Levites before God; I mean such as are of the Holy Ghost's commissioning, that He who hath called them may qualify for the work. Oh! Lord, consider their earthen vessels: pity and compassionate the weakness of their frame; and by the powerful influences of thy grace, do thou give in unto them that they may give out to thy people! may a gracious God and Saviour make them faithful, to shine as lights in thy church here; and, by turning many to righteousness, may they shine as the stars in the church above, for ever, and ever!

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter, we have a repetition of the law concerning the Passover. Here is also, a provision made for such of the people as, by

reason of any ceremonial uncleanness, were prevented from the observance of it at the season appointed. The Chapter concludes with an account of the journeying of Israel through the wilderness.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

2 Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.

3 In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.

It is very worthy observation, that this precept for the commemoration of the passover, and most probably, the same day in the year after the Israelites deliverance from Egypt, was by the express commandment of God. For if the Reader will consult *Exod. xii. 25*, he will there find, that the precept for the perpetual observance of the passover, was not enjoined until the people were come into the land of promise. And it is likely I think, as the scripture is silent upon this head, that the children of Israel, did not again observe the passover, until they came into Canaan, see *Joshua v. 7—10*. But Reader! do not pass over those verses, without taking with thee into view, the reference made herein to Him, whom the Apostle calls *our passover*. Behold with an eye to him, our observance is perpetual. *1 Cor. v. 7, 8*.

4 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover.

5 And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

There is somewhat meant no doubt in the expression, that it was in the wilderness of *Sinai*, the passover was kept. And what more likely to be conveyed under the expression than this? that the blessings of *Mount Zion*, are most distinctly seen and enjoyed in the view of the threatenings of *Mount Sinai*. I mean, Reader; that the gospel salvation becomes doubly sweet and precious, when the soul hath been shut up under the condemnation of the law. Jesus is dear, indeed, to every poor sinner, in whose soul the iron of bondage, by reason of sin and corruption, hath entered. *Rom. v. 20, 21*.

6 And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could

not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:

7 And those men said unto him, We *are* defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore we are kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel.

I beg the Reader to take notice with me of the true marks of grace in the persons here mentioned; in that they felt the disadvantage they laboured under, in being kept back from the ordinance, and complained of it as their affliction. When the Lord in his providence, by sickness in ourselves or death in others, is pleased to shut up his people, from going up to the house of prayer; it is a precious sign of grace, and grace in lively exercise, when our soul longs and faints, like *David's*, for the courts of the Lord's house. See Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 2. Psalm xlii. 1, 2, &c.

8 And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you.

Here the servants of the sanctuary may learn a profitable lesson, from the example of Moses. This highly honoured minister of the Lord, so well taught as he was, did not presume to determine upon any point respecting divine things, between the Lord and his people, without first asking counsel of God. It is always profitable, when both minister and people bring all their spiritual cases before the throne, and by prayer and supplication make their requests known unto God. That is a promise never to be forgotten, Psalm xxv. 14.

9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

10 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or *be* in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD.

11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, *and* eat it with unleavened bread and bitter *herbs*.

Oh! how gracious is the Lord, in making suitable provisions for his people. Reader, it may be your lot, or it may be mine, amidst the various and sometimes perplexing circumstances of this wilderness state, to be kept back from the means of grace; but never, never, will the Lord suffer any of his people to be kept back from the God of the means. Dearest Redeemer! it is thou which hast brought thy people

nigh by thy blood: and through thee we have at all times and upon all occasions, not only in means of grace, but not unfrequently without them, access by one Spirit unto the Father. Ephes. ii. 18.

12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

Observe, how particularly that part of the passover service is again insisted upon; nothing of the paschal lamb is to be left, and not a bone broken. Dearest Jesus! what can a poor sinner leave of thee, who needs in every point a *whole* Saviour? And what a pleasing thought is it to thy people, that, amidst all the bruises of thy crucified body *no* bone was broken, that the scripture might be fulfilled. Exod. xii. 10. 46, with John xix. 33. 36.

13 But the man that *is* clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

Reader! remark the striking difference between the souls of trembling, fearful, believers, kept back from ordinances, through various causes preventing; and the man who wilfully neglects so great salvation. Heb. x. 25, 26, 38.

14 And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

Sweet mercy to the stranger! And was not this a type of Jesus's mercy, to every poor *Gentile* stranger? Is not this in reference to the promise in the Covenant, in which the Heathen are given to the Redeemer for an inheritance? Nay, my soul, to come nearer home, wast not thou a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, when Jesus called thee by his grace, and made thee his? Ephes. ii. 11—13.

15 ¶ And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, *namely*, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning.

16 So it was alway: the cloud covered it *by day*, and the appearance of fire by night.

Beside the *historical* sense of this passage, let the reader not over-

look the *spiritual*. If he consults the Prophet, he will discover that the Lord himself, is both the pillar of fire and the cloud. Isaiah iv. 5, 6. xxvii. 3.

17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.

18 At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents.

19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.

20 And *so* it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD, they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.

21 And *so* it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and *that* the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed; whether *it was* by day or night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.

22 Or *whether it were* two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed.

23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

I detain the Reader in the perusal of these verses, only to remark to him, that those testimonies of the Lord's pleasure, for the movement or detention of Israel, beheld with an eye to the wilderness journeys of his

spiritual Israel now, are very striking. The whole pilgrimage of Israël through the wilderness, had it been pursued, even with a moderate pace, might have been completed in about *eleven* days; for from Mount Horeb to *Kadish-barnea*, the borders of Canaan, it required no more. And what are the movements of the Lord's people up and down now, but of the same kind? And what were the uncertainties of their journeys then, but figures of our removals now; who know not whether to-night or to-morrow the Lord may not call upon us to depart. Reader, it is a delightful account, which the Psalmist gives of the people's sojourning state: who though they wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, and not unfrequently found it to be a rough way, yet was it a *right* way by which the Lord led them to a city of habitation. Psalm cvii. 3—7.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord! in the perusal of this chapter, let me chiefly discern by thy Holy Spirit's teaching, Him who is the passover of his people; and may a gracious God enable me not only once a year, but every day, to keep the feast. May it be my desire, like those whose souls melted within them with an earnestness of longing, when at any time kept back from rejoicing before my God in his ordinances, to seek those renewals of love; and may I esteem every pledge of a Redeemer's kindness in the several means of grace, and especially at his table and his supper, more than my necessary food. Oh! may my soul cry out under the enjoyment of those privileges; *blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee.*

Hail! thou glorious pillar of cloud! thou holy Jesus, who art both the light and the life of men: be thou my constant, uniform director, guiding me by day, and sheltering me by night. In every season of darkness, ignorance, corruption, and trouble, do thou manifest forth thy glory, and shine as the sun of righteousness, with healing in thy wings. Grant me grace by the sweet influences of thy Holy Spirit to follow thee wheresoever thou goest. Go before to guide me in the way, and cause me to rest wheresoever thou shalt be pleased to intimate thy will for my remaining. Never may I run unsent and uncalled: and never may I loiter in the heavenly way when Jesus calls. Dearest Lord; may it be my portion to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, until at length Jesus shall come and take me to himself, *that where he is, there I may be also.* Amen.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

This is an interesting chapter. It treats of the form and uses of the silver trumpets for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the people. Herein is also contained, the account of the removal of the people from Mount Sinai to Paran: an affecting relation of Moses's entreaty of Hobab, not to leave him: and Moses's blessing and prayer, at every removal or resting of the Ark.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
 2 Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.

No doubt but beside the more immediate use and purpose for which the trumpets were sounded, that was a special one, which typified the sounding of the gospel. For what is the call of Jesus's gospel, but a call to the assembling of sinners before the Lord, and his holy word directing their journey through life? The prophet *Isaiah*, with a view to this, speaks of the gospel day, when the great trumpet shall be blown, and the blessed effect of it, through grace, in causing those to approach, who were ready to perish: *Isaiah* xxvii. 13. Reader! do not overlook the type in that interesting part of it, that ministers are commanded to cry aloud and spare not, but lift up their voice like a trumpet. *Isaiah* lviii. 1.

3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Observe God's precept. Precepts and promises are sometimes joined together; not as if the Lord's mercies were depending upon the desert of man, but to intimate that the Lord hath graciously appointed means to the end. The Psalmist hath drawn a nice, but proper distinction between the means, and the blessing on the means, when he pronounceth a blessing on those that *know*, not simply *hear* but *know*, the joyful sound. *Psm.* lxxxix. 15. Reader! pray be careful to mark the striking difference.

4 And if they blow *but* with one trumpet, then the princes, *which are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.

5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.

6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.

7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm.

Here again the Gospel is strikingly represented, in the diversity of sounds. There was in the camp of Israel, the *war* trumpet, which this chapter speaks of, verse 9, the *fast* trumpet, *Joel* ii. 15, the *jubilee* trumpet, *Levit.* xxv. 9. And the trumpet for calling the assemblies, as here stated. But the particularity of the sound, denoted to what pur-

pose it was blown. And is it not so with the glorious sound of the gospel, in all its multiform proclamations of mercy, grace, peace, promises, and threatnings? The apostle's observation meets every case, 1 Cor. xiv. 6—8.

8 And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.

Observe another striking similitude. The sons of Aaron were to be the trumpeters. The ministers of Jesus are his heralds, and no other. That is an awful Scripture of the Lord by the prophet. It were well, if it were duly considered by all preachers, Jer. xxiii. 21.

9 And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.

Remark how very gracious the Lord is in his promises. Lord! give me grace, to be always looking and crying unto thee, in all my warfare. 1 John v. 4.

10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

Did not this mean to say, that God in Christ is to be enjoyed in every thing. And what, indeed, are all our feasts and sacrifices except Jesus be in them? Psalm lxxxi. 1—4.

11 ¶ And it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.

Is there not a great deal of gospel in this verse? What was the removal of the cloud from off the tabernacle, when near Mount Sinai, but the intimation that when Jesus in substance of our flesh should tabernacle among us, that then the cloud of partition between God and us, now reconciled in his Son, should be removed, and the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, should be manifested, John i. 14. 18. Certainly we have authority to make this conclusion, from what Paul, commissioned by the Holy Ghost, tells the Church! Gal. iv. 24, &c.

12 And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai ; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.

13 And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Moses gives a further account of this, Deut. i. 6, 7. But Reader ! do not forget to remark with me, that though Israel moved forward towards Canaan at the command of God, the removal was but from one wilderness to another. Reader, it is so and must be so, wholly through life. Wheresoever we are, howsoever situated, still while this side the land of promise, we are in a wilderness state. While we are *at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*. But, how precious the thought, Jesus though unseen, and too often unacknowledged, is ever with us. Reader ! turn to those delightful promises in the moment of thinking on the subject. Matt. xxviii. 20. Isaiah xliii. 1, 2, &c.

14 In the first *place* went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies ; and over his host *was* Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

I must not suffer the Reader to go through this account of the order, in which Israel took their journeys, without detaining him to observe, that *Judah* takes the lead. Doth the Reader ask wherefore ? Let him recollect that our Lord sprang out of Judah. The sceptre was to be in Judah, and to him the gathering of the people. Hence our Lord is emphatically called *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*. Lord Jesus ! do thou go before me, and may thy Holy Spirit grant me power to follow thee. See those scriptures, Gen. xlix. 8—10. Heb. vii. 14. Rev. v. 1—10.

15 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar *was* Nethanceel the son of Zuar.

16 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun *was* Eliab the son of Helon.

17 And the tabernacle was taken down ; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle.

18 And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies : and over his host *was* Elizur the son of Shedeur.

19 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon *was* Shelumiel the son of Zuri-shaddai.

20 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad *was* Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

21 And the Kohathites set forward bearing the sanctuary: and *the other* did set up the tabernacle against they came.

22 And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies: and over his host *was* Elishama the son of Ammihud.

23 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh *was* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

24 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin *was* Abidan the son of Gideoni.

25 And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, *which was* the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts: and over his host *was* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

26 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher *was* Pagiel the son of Ocran.

27 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the son of Enan.

28 Thus *were* the journeyings of the children of Israel according to their armies, when they set forward.

No doubt the order, here pointed out by divine authority, was not without particular significance. But it should seem, from a passage in the Psalms, that each tribe had a special regard to the divine presence. Psalm lxxx. 1, 2.

29 And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

It is more than probable, that this Hobab was either the same as Jethro, or the son of Jethro. Certain it is, that the same word signifies both father in law, and brother in law. See Exod. xviii. 1—27. But leaving this point, as not very important, I would rather the Reader

should attend to the very interesting subject, contained in Moses' pressing invitation to Hobab, to accompany Israel to Canaan. Reader! is not the same language made use of by gracious souls now to call others to the like fellowship in Jesus? Are not we journeying to the place of rest, which remaineth for the people of God? My brother, sister, father, friend, relation, in all the ties of nature, I would say to every one I know, come thou with us, there's enough in Jesus for all. Depend upon it God hath spoken good concerning Israel. That is a sweet scripture, Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

Behold! the universal voice of nature! See how earthly affections cleave to the earth. That is an awful scripture, Luke xiii. 26.

31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.

32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

Gracious souls cannot give over pleading. See the holy importunity of Angels on this point. Gen. xix. 17. 22.

33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

It is not positively said, whether Hobab was prevailed upon or not. I think it most probable, that the grace of God inclined him to go, and that he went with Israel, as we find mention made of his family. Judges i. 16. and again, 1 Sam. xv. 6. But, let us rather attend to what is said in this memorable verse. Israel departed from mount Sinai; that wonderful spot, where God had manifested himself in so awful a manner. And is not this the case of souls when leaving Mount Sinai for Mount Zion: taking refuge from the law in the gospel? Observe, the *ark*, which was a type of Christ, was with them. Yes! we can never be said to have left the covenant of works, until we are brought into the covenant of grace; neither the law of works, until we are found in Jesus, resting wholly in him, and as Moses did the ark, so we take Jesus with us as our righteousness and security for ever. Heb. xii. 18—24.

34 And the cloud of the LORD *was* upon them by day, when they went out of the camp.

Reader! remark with me, that it is truly grateful to the soul to have tokens of Jesus' presence with us, whether in a cloud or more open

manifestations, whether we move or rest. See that sweet promise, Deut. xxviii. 2—6.

35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

This prayer of Moses is in the spirit of prophecy. As if he had said, When the Lord goeth before his people their enemies shall be scattered. And when they rest, the Spirit of the Lord is upon them, causing them to rest. Isaiah lxiii. 14. Reader! remember it is not the many thousands of Israel, or as the word might have been rendered, the *ten thousand thousand*, which constitute their security, but the Lord's presence as a defence. Isaiah iv. 5. See that precious scripture, Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE, my soul, let me pause a little, and in the relation of the silver trumpet service, calling the Lord's people to the assembly of his saints, ask my heart whether I have heard and known *the joyful sound*, which is proclaimed in the gospel, of Jesus' blood and righteousness! and am now walking in the light of the divine countenance? If I am thine, thou dearest Jesus, then do I know thy call, both for the assembling with thy people, and for my journeying with thee! Lord do thou go before me in my pilgrimage through life. Thy presence, whether in removing from *Sinai* to *Paran*, or from one border to another, (for every removal is but a wilderness state here below), will make every thing to smile. Be thou but with me in every resting place, or setting forward, and all will be well, my delight will be found in Jesus, amidst his ordinances and people.

And no less do thou, ever blessed Spirit, excite in my soul an earnestness like thy servant Moses, to invite others to partake of the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Well satisfied as my soul is, of the inexhaustible fulness that there is in thee, for the many thousands of thy Israel, may it be the daily language of my heart to call upon the unawakened around me, *to come, and taste and see how gracious the Lord is*. And oh! grant, Lord, this unspeakable mercy both to him that writes and him that reads, that from a conviction of the infinite importance of salvation by Jesus, we may gladly leave a world from which we are daily journeying, with all its perishing connections, and go forth by faith, like faithful Abraham, at the call of God, not knowing whither he went, to the sure possession of that city of foundations, *whose builder and maker is God*.

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains a melancholy relation of Israel's disobedience, and the Lord's displeasure. The people murmur. Moses' meekness forsakes him; and in his fretfulness he ventures to expostulate with God. The lust of Israel is gratified, but the Lord's judgment follows.

AND when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp.

What could the people find occasion to murmur at? A people so fed, so led, so protected! Reader! if the Lord's dispensations towards you are at any time trying, pray for grace to be kept from murmuring. But search the cause. If sin be found heavy, depend upon it afflictions will be light. There is a need be for every trial. That is a sweet prayer of Job's, Job xxxiv. 31, 32. The Lord's displeasure at the people plainly proves the transgression. Reader! do you remark the mighty difference between complaining *to* God and complaining *against* God! We have a beautiful instance of the *former*, Psalm lxxvii. And an awful example of the *latter*, Psalm lxxviii. 19, 20, &c.

2 And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, and the fire was quenched.

Is not Moses here a type of the ever-blessed Jesus? Reader! do not fail to learn from hence, in all thy trials, and under all thy transgressions, to go to Jesus. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

3 And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

Taberah means a burning.

4 ¶ And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

Observe, the murmuring begins with the mixed multitude, but it doth not end there. Israel also is soon infected. How necessary that precept, Eph. v. 11. My soul! are not all the lusts of a corrupt nature of the same kind? Rom. iii. 9.

5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

Observe, to what a desperate state of daring impiety the soul may be led, when no longer under the restraints of grace. See an awful instance in the case of Jonah, Chap. iv. 8, 9. How could Israel be so lost, as to talk of their pleasures and enjoyments in Egypt, when they had so long groaned under their oppressive bondage? Exod. i. 8—14. The *mélons* were probably the same fruit which the *Arabians* call *Batechim*. They grow on the banks of the *Nile*, in the rich clayey earth. The Egyptians found this fruit useful, both for meat, drink, and medicine.

6 But now our soul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beside this manna, *before* our eyes.

7 And the manna *was* as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

8 And the people went about, and gathered *it*, and ground *it* in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.

9 And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.

See how wretched a state the mind of man is capable of being reduced to by sin! To speak lightly and contemptuously of angel's food, which fell around their tents, without labour on their part to procure, and without pains to gather. Is there not a spiritual illustration of this passage? May we not be said to be lusting after the flesh pots in Egypt, and thinking slightly of heavenly food, when we prefer any thing that is our own by nature, to the sweet gifts and graces which are alone in Christ Jesus, the heavenly bread, which came down from heaven? John vi. 28—36, and 48—60.

10 Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.

Paul's advice on this subject is very earnest, 1 Cor. x. 1—11. But what I would most earnestly beg the Reader to keep in view in this history is, the spiritual illustration of it by *Paul*. He calls it *spiritual* meat; and positively explains it, in the Chapter I have just referred to, in reference to the Lord Jesus. Hence the Lord's anger was greatly kindled at the people's contempt of it. And the reason is obvious. It was in effect desprising his rich salvation, and preferring the Egyptian bondage to the freedom of the gospel. Reader! how stands the case with *your* soul? Do you prefer the bread of life in the wilderness state with Jesus for your portion, to all the luxuries of Egypt in the carnal enjoyment of sin for a season? May the Lord give you and me the faith spoken of. Heb. xi. 24—26.

11 And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore

hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?

12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?

13 Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat.

14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because *it is* too heavy for me.

15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

Let us pause over these verses to lament the corruptions and imperfections of our poor fallen nature, which we behold even in so great a man as Moses bursting forth so unseemly. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments, when left but for one moment void of the preserving grace of God! Dearest Jesus! may every renewed view of the universal corruption, either in myself or others, tend to endear thee to my heart! Sweet is that scripture, Isaiah xlv. 22—25.

16 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

There is no immediate reason given why the number appointed should be *seventy*; but it is remarkable that the Lord Jesus in after ages appointed *seventy* disciples by way of aid to the apostles. And the *Sanhedrim*, which was the great court of the Jews, consisted of the same number. Luke x. 1.

17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which *is* upon thee, and will put *it* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear *it* not thyself alone.

Not that the Lord lessened the influences of his Holy Spirit on the mind of Moses, in order to impart the same to others. There is

enough in God to supply all. One sun warms and enlightens the whole world. Reader! how sweet the thought; there is enough in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, to warm and enlighten all his people. And though he hath been, and still is, and ever will be, supplying out of his fullness the millions of his churches, in all ages and in eternity itself; yet has he, in himself, the same unlesened fullness. Heb. xiii. 8. Coloss. ii. 9.

18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for *it was* well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;

20 *But* even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which *is* among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came ye forth out of Egypt?

Reader! behold in this instance the awfulness of having our appetites, according to the wishes of our corrupt nature, gratified. Was not that prayer of *Agar* founded on a conviction of this? Prov. xxx. 8, 9. There is but one object in the universe but what cloy in enjoyment, and that is Jesus. Reader! depend upon it the more you know, the more you enjoy, the nearer you approach him, and the longer you live upon him, and in him, the more will you desire him. See the frame of the church, Song v. 8.

21 And Moses said, The people, among whom *I am*, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month.

22 Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?

Reader! do not overlook the weakness of Moses's faith in this instance. Is this the same person who at the Lord's command fetched water from the very rock? Learn from hence what man is when left to himself, and what the same man may be when supported by divine aid. Phil. iv. 13.

23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the

LORD's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

It is very profitable to convert this question into a prayer when we plead at any time with God. Isaiah lix. 1.

24 And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.

25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that *was* upon him, and gave *it* unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, *that*, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

Reader! do not forget that the same Almighty God is now frequently descending by the influences of his Holy Spirit on the minds of his people, for their sanctification; for this is among the ascension gifts of the Lord Jesus. John xiv. 16, 17. Neither overlook the evidence this passage, among others which occur in the Bible to the same effect, carries with it of the agency of the Holy Ghost, 1 Sam. x. 6.

26 But there remained two *of the* men in the camp, the name of the one *was* Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle; but they prophesied in the camp.

Observe, that those persons were *written*, that is appointed to this service, and then the blessing is the same. It is very precious to have our names enrolled among the Lord's people. See what a distinguishing mark of approbation the Redeemer puts on this, Luke x. 20.

27 And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophecy in the camp.

28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, *one* of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.

Doth not the conduct of those who were displeased on this occasion correspond to the party spirit of later ages? Let Jesus be but glorified, and his real disciples will never despise the poverty or weakness of the instrument. See Paul's maxim on this subject, Phil. i. 15—18.

29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for

my sake? would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, *and* that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

30 And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

Oh! what a lovely feature of character doth Moses manifest in this instance! And is it not the wish and prayer of every true follower of the Lord? Rom. x. 1. Is not the Reader reminded of an interesting scene in the ministry of Jesus in this transaction? See Luke ix. 49, 50.

31 ¶ And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let *them* fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits *high* upon the face of the earth.

32 And the people stood up all that day, and all *that* night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread *them* all abroad for themselves round about the camp.

If, as some have thought, these *quails* were the same in nature and genus as the *locusts*, which came up at the command of God into the land of Egypt, the blessing was doubly grateful: that what, in the one instance, proved so destructive, should in the other become so nourishing. Exod. x. 12—15.

33 And while the flesh *was* yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague.

Reader! behold again in this instance the awful consequence in having our carnal, ungovernable appetites gratified. Lord! do thou regulate our inordinate affections, and bring every thought and desire into captivity to the obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. x. 5.

34 And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted.

Kibroth Hattaavah means the graves of lust, 1 Cor. x. 6.

35 And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! pause over this Chapter, and behold in Israel's murmuring and disobedience the picture of thine own heart. How often hast thou repined at thy God's appointment, when matters have for a short space appeared a little thwarting to flesh and blood? Many a time since grace renewed thy heart hast thou looked back to the days of thine unregeneracy, and like Israel, to the flesh pots of Egypt, seemed to think, in an angry hour, it was better with thee then than now. Lord! give me grace to admire and adore, in the reviews of thy forbearance and long-suffering, how unchangeable thy love is to thy people. Well may it be said concerning the sovereignty of thy tender purposes, as thou didst to the church of old, *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

But my soul, chiefly in the view of this Chapter, do thou contemplate him in his everlasting priesthood, whom Moses personated when the people cried unto him in their distress, and he prayed unto the Lord. Yes! thou ever precious Jesus! thou wert made our great High Priest with an oath; and our God and Father hath in the most solemn manner anointed thee to be our priest for ever, *after the order of Melchisedec.* Help me then in all my afflictions and distresses by reason of sin, to be looking unto thee who art mighty to save. Help me also to be feeding on thee by faith, and never, never slight or despise this heavenly manna; nor covet the flesh pots of a carnal appetite. May a gracious God and Father take of his Holy Spirit, and put upon me, as upon the seventy elders: and may this be my happiness under such gracious influence, to be living in the constant apprehension of the knowledge and enjoyment of *the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the relation of the further exercises of Moses. Miriam and Aaron join in speaking against Moses. God himself takes up the business, and Miriam is smitten with a leprosy. Moses intercedes for her. She is restored to her former health, but punished by being shut out seven days from the camp.

AND Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

If this Ethiopian woman was *Zipporah*, it is somewhat remarkable that the displeasure of Aaron and Miriam should begin only now. But it should seem that this was but the pretence, and not the real cause of their displeasure! Alas! what seeds of sin are in the heart even of God's people! Certain it is, that both Aaron and Miriam were among the distinguished servants of the Lord. See in proof, Micah vi. 4. Exod. xv. 20. My soul! do not overlook, in such a striking example,

the evidence it carries with it of universal corruption. Dearest Jesus! there is none but thou who art holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners! Heb. vii. 26. Aaron, though a priest, and an High Priest, corresponds to that character the apostle hath given of him, when he said, *The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity.* Heb. vii. 28.

2 And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? and the LORD heard it.

Reader! remark though Moses is not said to have heard or answered their accusations, the Lord heard it. Was not Moses here a type of the ever blessed Jesus, of whom it was said of him in the days of his flesh, that *he was as a deaf man which heard not.* Psalm xxxviii. 12—15.

3 (Now the man Moses *was* very meek above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth).

This is a precious testimony which the Holy Ghost gives of Moses. But Reader, do not forget that however eminent, in the general, Moses was for meekness, yet there were times when it forsook him. See chap. xi. 11—15. Numb. xx. 10—12. Yes, Reader! none but the Lamb of God himself could say, *Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Matt. xi. 29.

4 And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

Suddenly! that is, immediately. God denominates himself a *swift* witness: Malachi iii. 5.

5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

The same *Shechinah* as had all along manifested the Lord's presence. Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6.

6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, *and* will speak unto him in a dream.

Probably it was by dreams when his servants were sleeping, and by visions when they were waking, that the Lord revealed himself to the patriarchs and prophets in those early ages. But how much happier is our dispensation of grace to which we are brought, since the Lord Jesus

finished redemption-work, and that promise is fulfilled, John xiv. 16, 17, 26.

7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

What a beautiful observation hath the apostle made on this passage, by way of enhancing the dignity of our adorable Redeemer. Heb. iii. 1—6.

8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

Great was the privilege of Moses, and high his dignity. But Reader! recollect what the Lord Jesus said concerning John the Baptist, and if you are really a child of God, learn in this place a new and additional motive to thankfulness. Matt. xi. 11.

9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

Alas! what can testify the Lord's displeasure to a child of God equal to that of his departing, though but for a season, from him. The soul who in his spiritual exercises knows what this is, will best know the importance of that prayer, Psalm li. 11.

10 ¶ And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

Reader! observe the striking nature of the punishment. Moses' face was made glorious from being much with God in communion. Miriam's face is leprous when God departs. Dearest Jesus! what am I but full of leprosy, unless thou wash me clean in thy blood? It was the office of the priest to look upon the leper, and determine the disease. Think how Aaron felt, who though not partaking in the punishment, as he might justly have done, was conscious of his partaking in the sin. Here again let us be led to behold the preciousness of him who alone taketh away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 2 Cor. v. 21.

11 And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.

12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

Observe, the sense Aaron had of the leprosy that he thought her as

one that is dead. Such, but only in an infinitely higher degree, is the leprosy of the soul. All that are under it are void of spiritual life, more than half dead, loathsome in the sight of God, and ripe for everlasting misery. Oh! thou dear Redeemer! what eternal praises are due to thee, who by thy precious undertaking hath quickened and cleansed the souls of thy people in thy blood, Eph. ii. 1.

13 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

Who doth not, or who will not behold the Lord Jesus here represented, in his glorious character of our intercessor; Reader! behold him in an unequalled moment of the kind on the cross, when he prayed for his murderers, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do.* Luke xxiii. 34.

14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, if her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in *again*.

Though God pardons iniquity, yet our backslidings shall correct us. Jer. ii. 19. And it is a blessed and true token of repentance, when we accept the punishment of our iniquity. Levit. xxvi. 40—42.

15 And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in *again*.

It is the most painful of all afflictions to a gracious mind to be barred approaching the Lord's sanctuary. See what distress of heart David felt, Psalm lxiii. 1, 2. Read the cries of Jonah, chap. ii. 4.

16 And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

Paran joined to the border of Canaan on the south. And from hence it was but a stage more, had Israel gone the direct road, to the promised land. Reader! our distance from the Lord is made greater, like Israel's, by sin. Isaiah lix. 2.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT an interesting character is Moses, and in how charming a light doth he appear in this Chapter! To all the unprovoked unkindness of his brother Aaron, to whom he had been so friendly, we find he made no unkind return, but recompensed the cruelty both of Aaron and Miriam with his prayers. But here again, my soul, as in a thousand other instances, pass over the contemplation of creature-excellencies, to behold the unequalled loveliness of Creator-love, and mercy, manifested to thy ingratitude in the person of the Lord Jesus. Oh! thou holy Redeemer! how dost thou unceasingly intercede at the right hand of power, for me, and for all thy unworthy ungrateful people; who in the

very moment that thy blood, and righteousness, is pleading for our salvation, are causing thee *to serve with our sins, and wearying thee with our iniquities*. Son of God! compassionate the leprosy of my soul, and shut me not out from thy presence, but say to me, as thou didst to the poor creature in the gospel, who cried out, *Lord! if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean; I will be thou clean; and immediately my soul will be cleansed!*

Reader! do not close this Chapter without having an eye in the intercession of Moses for Aaron and Miriam, to the intercession of Jesus on the cross, for those who crucified him. Oh! what a volume is folded up in that one prayer of Jesus to comfort poor sinners, and to shew the all-prevailing efficacy of Jesus's advocacy. Father! forgive them for they know not what they do. Oh! Lamb of God! let this first cry of thine upon the cross, be the first and last of my soul-reviving consolations under all the discouragements by reason of my unworthiness and neglect of thee. Surely, dear Lord! when I sin against thee, I know not what I do.

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter we have recorded the account of Israel's plan, in prosecuting their journey. Being arrived, to the very borders of Canaan, Moses is commanded by God to send a man of every tribe of Israel, to spy out the land. The persons deputed to this office are here mentioned, and an account is given of their journey: after forty days search, they return, bringing with them some of the fruits of the land: but all, excepting two of them, report unfavourably of the ability of Israel to conquer the country.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

If we compare those verses with Deut. i. 19—23, we shall discover that, though as in this place it is said, that the Lord spake unto Moses concerning those spies, going to search the land, yet the thought originated in some of the people. The Lord himself had spied out the land for them long before, and declared it to be a good land, and had promised it to their fathers; but notwithstanding this, they chose to see it for themselves, and did not wish altogether to trust to the Lord. See Ezek. xx. 6. Gen. xiii. 12—17. Alas! what unbelief, distrust of God's mercy, and self-confidence, is in the heart of man! Reader! do you not discover, upon many occasions, evidences of the same in your own?

3 And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men *were* heads of the children of Israel.

4 And these *were* their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur.

5 Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.

6 Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

7 Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.

8 Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.

9 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.

10 Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.

11 Of the tribe of Joseph, *namely*, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi.

12 Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.

13 Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael.

14 Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.

15 Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

16 These *are* the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.

The Holy Ghost hath been pleased to mention by name, the persons who went on this embassy. But observe with what particular attention Joshua is mentioned, and his name changed. The addition of the first syllable of the glorious name of JEHOVAH, to Hosea, is no doubt meant in great honor. If the Reader will consult Jeremiah xxii. 28. he will find an instance where the taking off this first syllable was intended in disgrace. *Coniah's* original name was *Jeconiah*, See 2 Kings xxiv. 8—15. But the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to mark down Joshua's name with this particular mark of distinction, from yet another consideration, in that his name signifies a Saviour, and Joshua is in a most eminent degree a type of the Lord Jesus, as in the book of Joshua very strikingly appears.

17 ¶ And Moses sent them to spy out the land

of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

18 And see the land, what it *is*; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they *be* strong or weak, few or many;

19 And what the land *is* that they dwell in, whether it *be* good or bad; and what cities *they be* that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

20 And what the land *is*, whether it *be* fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time *was* the time of the firstripe grapes.

Are not all these enquiries, in a spiritual sense, suited to the awakened soul? questions concerning that upper and brighter world, of which the promised land was a type? And when, by faith in lively exercise, we are enabled to believe what God hath said of the joys which he hath prepared for them that love him; are not these things similar to the spies going up to search the land?—Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, to live by faith, in the full assurance of those everlasting realities, and to have the same spirit, as those worthies we read of, Heb. xi. 13—16.

21 ¶ So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, *were*. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought* of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

The sacred historian hath here marked the outline of the spies route through the promised land. The map of that country shews that they went quite through it; for from the wilderness of *Zin* to *Rehob*, is nearly south to north. *Hebron*, which they visited, is a memorable spot, rendered so by its being near to the cave of Abraham and Sarah, their great Ancestors. And Reader! it is worthy your observation, that as the Lord promised this land to Abraham and his seed for a possession, here the dead bodies of Abraham and Sarah lay, to keep, as it were possession of it, until the time of the promise arrived, for his *living* race fully to enjoy it. See Gen. xxiii. xxv. 9, 10. I cannot help detaining the Reader just to remark to him, that the grapes of *Eshcol* were to the *believing* Israelites as a sample of the fruitfulness of the country, so they were a sweet type of the first fruits of the Spirit, on the minds of the Lord's people now; an earnest, as it were, of what the soul will be fully satisfied with, when we come to *receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of the soul.* 2 Cor. v. 5.

26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it.

28 Nevertheless the people *be* strong that dwell in the land, and the cities *are* walled, *and* very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

Here we have the report of the spies; and a very sinful one it was. They could not but own the fruitfulness of the land, for the grapes, and pomegranates, and figs, manifested what it was. But when they magnified the power of the enemy, whom Israel, when upheld by the arm of Omnipotence, had so often subdued, and whom God had promised to drive out from before them, what a wretched proof do they afford of unbelief, of impatience, disobedience, and distrust! But stop Reader, in the perusal of this rebellious spirit of Israel, search thine own heart. See, if you cannot find similar instances, in your own experience. Hath not God promised his people now a better country

than even *Canaan*? Is not our Jesus gone before, to take possession of it in our name? And doth he not send to us, in the sweet influences of his blessed Spirit, every now and then most evident tokens both of its reality, and of our assurance of one day obtaining it by his blood and righteousness! And yet do you not find, amidst all this, that you sometimes question the whole, as if it were a delusion? Lord! I would say for myself and Reader, Lord, increase our faith!

30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

Reader! do not fail, in this view of *Caleb's* zeal, to remark the blessed properties of distinguishing grace! And is not Caleb, in this instance, a type of all the true soldiers of the Lord Jesus, who in spite of the evil report of the ungodly, encourage the hearts of the Lord's heritage to hold on, and hold out, assured of victory through the blood of the Lamb. See in the following chapter the Lord's gracious approbation of this, verses 22—24.

31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they *are* stronger than we.

32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature.

33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! in the sad picture this representation holds up to thy view of unbelieving, distrustful Israel, do thou behold a true image of thyself. Hath not my God and Father promised to bring all his people into the promised land? Is there not *a rest for the people of God*? Is not this at once both the gift of the Father's love, and the purchase of the Redeemer's grace; and is not the Holy Ghost most graciously engaged, by the conquests of his power, to drive out all my enemies before me, and to bring me in by his own sovereignty? And yet, in the midst of all these positive assurances, am I not frequently questioning the reality of heaven's joys, the sufficiency of Jesus's redemption, and the suitableness of what that blessed Redeemer hath done and suffered, to answer my own personal wants therein? Dear Lord! how

just would it have been to me, hadst thou dealt by me as I have richly deserved; and, if considered without reference to my interest in thy righteousness, to have given me up to an hardened, unbelieving mind. Son of God! I beseech thee cause my soul, through the softening influences of thy blessed Spirit, to be humbled upon all occasions for the weakness of my faith! And while I look back, by the Holy Ghost's aid in that precious part of his character, as the Remembrancer, to bring to my recollection through what a series of mercies, like Israel from Egypt, to this wilderness of *Zin*, the Lord hath brought me; oh! may I hear thy gracious voice, in the tender expostulations of thy love, saying personally to my heart, as to his disciples of old, *Oh! thou of little faith wherefore dost thou doubt.* Lord! grant that the many tokens of thy love in quickening grace, reviving grace, confirming grace, may be to my soul in recollection, as the grapes of *Eshcol*: and may my God give me the spirit of *Caleb*, to know and believe that I shall at length overcome all the enemies of my salvation, and be more than conqueror through thy grace enabling me.

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

This is a most interesting Chapter, and as an apostle had it in commission from the Holy Ghost, to tell the church that the written account of Israel's history was intended for our example, that we come not into the same condemnation through unbelief; it demands our attention the more. Here are contained, the relation of the murmurs of the people at the evil report of the spies; the ineffectual attempts made by Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, to still the minds of the people; the Lord's interposing: his awful sentence: Moses interceding: the immediate death of all the spies excepting Joshua and Caleb: the presumptuous attempt of some of the people, in going up without the Lord's command to the conquest of Amalek: and their discomfiture in consequence thereof, before the Amalekites and Canaanites.

AND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

Reader! behold in this instance one proof more of human wickedness. God hath promised every thing of blessing to Israel, and why distrust his word? Alas! God's people in all ages are the same, prone to unbelief. If the sweet influence of the spirit be for a moment withheld, in that moment the faith of the best of men fails. *They that are kept, are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* 1 Pet. i. 5.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in the wilderness!

3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us

unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

Reader! stand still, and solemnly review the awful progress of sin. First, it broke out in unavailing cries and tears a whole night. *Next*, in murmurings against the divine government. *Then*, in daring wishes, that they had died in Egypt or even in the wilderness, and this in the very moment when they saw before their eyes, God's solemn judgments by death, upon the spies who had brought back an evil report. And still advancing, (if it were possible to proceed further in impiety), they next bring forth blasphemous charges against God, as if the Lord had actually had no other design in view, in first bringing them forth from Egypt, but to deliver them and their wives, and their harmless little ones for a prey. And lastly, to crown all, observe the daring act of making a captain to return unto Egypt. It is probable that they actually did appoint a captain for this purpose. See Nehemiah ix. 17. Reader! if such be the progress of sin, how much need have we to pray the Lord to keep our hearts for us *with all diligence, since out of it are the issues of life*. Who should have conceived this of Israel? It was but a little more than a year and a half since they left Egypt. Had they forgotten their bondage so soon? A little straw to have helped them in making bricks, would have been thought a mercy: and now their souls loathed the quails and the manna. Besides what a madness must it have been to have thought of returning to Egypt! Could they expect that the *pillar of cloud* would have guided them back! Could they propose to themselves the Lord's dividing the Red Sea for them to go through? And could they suppose, that the Egyptians would have taken them into their arms? But alas! in Israel we behold the universal corruption of human nature! The Lord's people feel it, and groan under it like others. Happy is it for us, when a sense of our unworthiness leads the soul *to* God, and not *from* God. See a sweet picture of grace in exercise: Jerem. xxxi. 18—20. and another, Hosea xiv. 1—4.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

It is very refreshing to a gracious soul to behold through all this eventful history, how the Lord Jesus in his glorious character of our intercessor, is typified by his servants. The apostle hath given a faint idea of the strong cryings and tears of the Redeemer on these occasions. Heb. v. 7.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of them that searched the land, rent their clothes;

7 And they spake unto all the company of the

children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, *is* an exceeding good land.

8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they *are* bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us: fear them not.

It is worthy the Reader's notice, the leading arguments the true spies made use of to still the minds of the people; that the Lord not being with their enemies, was a sure token of victory; while on the other hand his presence with Israel already insured their success. That is a precious scripture to this effect; Isaiah iv. 5.

10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

It should seem that the rulers or persons of greater influence than the common people, were leaders in this rebellion. But is there not a spiritual sense here? Have not the holy men and prophets of the Lord in all ages, been stoned and persecuted by the enemies to divine things, when executing their commission with fidelity? See the case of Stephen: Acts vii. 57—60.

11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

Observe, how every thing of grace and mercy is made to pass through Moses. Herein reader! do not overlook Moses as a type of the ever blessed Jesus. See Isaiah xlii. 1.

13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear *it*, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them);

14 And they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land: *for* they have heard that thou LORD *art* among this people, that thou LORD art seen face

to face, and *that* thy cloud standeth over them, and *that* thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

15 Now *if* thou shalt kill *all* this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying,

16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

18 The LORD *is* long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation*.

19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

Nothing can be more beautiful and interesting, than these pleas of Moses. Reader! remark with me the arguments he makes use of; all which terminate in this one grand consideration; namely, the glory and honour of the Lord's holy name. Every promise of God which is in Christ Jesus, is secured to his people in the pledge of his great name. Joshua vii. 9. And God himself hath graciously condescended to add to this as an argument, the reproach of the enemy. See Deut. xxxii. 26, 27. And that was not the smallest part of Moses's address that the Lord had before pardoned their idolatry, and wherefore not now? If the *mercy, rejoicing against judgment*, had brought no reflection upon the Lord's perfections in former instances, wherefore should it now? See Exod. xxxii. 11, 12. Mal. iii. 6.

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:

Observe the expression, *I have pardoned*. Yes, Jesus is *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Hence the efficacy of that blood *which cleanseth from all sin*, reacheth through all ages. Rev. xiii. 8. It is one of the most precious doctrines of the gospel this, that our God hath already provided for his people in a covenant, that is

ordered in all things and sure. The mercy you and I want, the pardon we this day need, is all laid up in Jesus. Reader! mark this down in the memorandums of your best remembrance; and as a striking instance in proof of the doctrine, take with it the case of Peter: whose fall Jesus not only foretold, but at the same time added to it this very assurance; *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.* Luke xxii. 31, 32.

21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

God's glory is the ultimate object of all his dispensations. The work of *creation*, is expressly put down to this design. Rev. iv. 11. The work of *redemption* the same. Isaiah xliii. 21.

22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice:

If the reader wishes to count the ten times here spoken of, he will find them as I have here marked them. *First*, at the *Red Sea*, Exod. xiv. 11. 2dly. At the waters of *Marah*. Exod. xv. 23. 3dly. In the wilderness of *Zin*. Exod. xvi. 2. 4thly. In rebelling against God's commandment, in leaving of the *manna* until the morning. Exod. xvi. 20. 5thly. In going out to seek for manna on the Lord's day contrary to command. Exod. xvi. 27. 6thly. In chiding Moses at *Rephidim* respecting water. Exod. xvii. 2. 7thly. In the idolatry of the *golden calf*, while Moses was in the mount. Exod. xxxii. 4. 8thly. At *Taberah*, in murmuring. Numb. xi. 1. 9thly, At *Kibroth hattavah*, in lusting. Numb. xi. 4, 5, 6. And 10thly, the present instance, in believing the report of the evil spies.

23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

This is that memorable instance so pathetically mourned over in the New Testament, and so solemnly held up to our view to warn against the same dreadful example of unbelief. The apostle Paul dwells upon it very largely. 1 Cor. x. 1—11. And again: Heb. iv. 1—11.

24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Reader! while you pause over this verse, to mark, in the instance of *Caleb*, the blessed effects of distinguishing grace; be very particular to note the cause of this mercy, in the precious gift this man had of *another* spirit from the evil spies. It is this which makes all the difference between one man and another: *between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.* Oh Lord! give to me that first, and best, and greatest of all the gifts, which Jesus as a prince and a Saviour is exalted

to give, even the gift of thy most Holy Spirit, by which alone the heart may be regenerated, and the soul *sealed unto the day of redemption*.

25 (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley). To-morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

What an awful going back is here! They were now within a short stage of *Canaan*, but in consequence of their rebellion, they are to wander yet longer in the wilderness. And is there not in all this a most striking type of the wilderness dispensations of the Lord's people now, when for backsliding and disobedience Jesus hides his face, and the soul wanders on *the mountains of leopards, and among the dens of the lions*. Dearest Jesus! call me in those seasons as thou didst the spouse of old, and I shall again run after thee. Song iv. 8, 9.

26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

27 How long *shall I bear with* this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

28 Say unto them, *As truly as I live*, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:

29 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, *concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein*, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

32 But *as for* you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness.

33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness.

34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even forty days*, each day for a

year, shall ye bear your iniquities *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

Reader! remark with me, with what precision and exactness even in divine judgments, a man's own ways determine the event. The people had waited for the spies' return very patiently 40 *days*: was it not just that in their punishment for unbelief they should wait 40 *years* for the fulfilment of God's promise? It should be remembered however, that in this 40 years, the whole of their journey from *Egypt* to *Canaan* is included. And was it not a suitable punishment corresponding to their sin, that they who wished to die in the wilderness should also be buried there? The Patriarchs, their fathers, who died in the faith of the promised land being possessed by their children, commanded even their dead and dry bones to be lodged there. Whilst their unbelieving followers seemed to covet, that neither in life nor death would they lodge in Canaan. Lord! keep my soul from that most dreadful, base, and vile affection, which so much marks the character of our fallen state, an unbelieving heart; and from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, I would say, Good Lord deliver me!

36 And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land,

37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

There must have been somewhat very striking and awful in the sudden death of these men. And the more so, as it was a specimen of what God had said of the death of *all* that congregation. Indeed the remarkable cases of divine judgments, which in every age have been shewn in the sudden destruction of sinners, is declared by an apostle to be an example, like the destruction by the flood, and the fire in Sodom and Gomorrah, of what will be the final end of the ungodly. 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6.

38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of the men that went to search the land, lived *still*.

Reader! do not overlook the care of a gracious God, which he exerciseth in the same moment with his chosen ones, while punishing the ungodly. That's a sweet scripture to this effect: Malachi iii. 17, 18.

39 And Moses told these sayings unto all

the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.

By what follows in the close of the chapter, it appears that this sorrow was not a gracious sorrow for having offended the Lord, but for having lost Canaan. Reader! learn to distinguish between that sorrow which worketh death, and that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of*, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be *here*, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.

41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper.

42 Go not up, for the LORD *is* not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.

43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you.

44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.

45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, *even* unto Hormah.

Observe, the Lord had commanded the people to go back towards the way by the Red Sea. But they, self-willed and presumptuous, will go up towards Canaan. Alas! what a continual perverseness there is in our unhumbed nature! What unbelief and daring presumption. My soul! look within. Am I not too frequently doing the same, when I go out in my own strength, and in my own righteousness, against the enemies of my salvation? Reader! do not forget what the sacred historian so particularly describes here, that *nevertheless*, though the people went up, the *ark of the covenant* of the Lord went not with them. If Jesus, whom that ark represented, go not with us to the battle, the great enemy of souls, and the world of foes, like the *Amalekites* and the *Canaanites*, will soon discomfit our weak powers and smite us even unto *Hormah*. Lord! I would pray carry me not up hence, no not even to Canaan itself, except *thy presence go with me*. And may it be my happiness, like one of old, *to go forth in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of thy righteousness even of thine only*. Psalm lxxi. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

I WOULD charge it upon my soul, while reading in this chapter the unhappy conduct of Israel, to seek continually for grace, lest I fall after the same example of unbelief. For am I better than they! No! in no wise. They sinned, it is said, *ten* times, in tempting God, and not hearkening to his voice. Whereas my rebellious and unbelieving heart, hath made it a life of disobedience to the voice and call of God all the way along. Oh, thou gracious God and Father in Christ Jesus! how precious to my view is that endearing character in which thou art represented, as not executing the fierceness of thine anger, because thou art God and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thy people. And thou, no less ever precious, ever blessed Jesus, by whose unceasing merits, in the complete work of thy redemption, and thy perpetual pleadings, in which Moses as thy representative upon earth stood up for the people, thou ever livest to make intercession for sinners; how increasingly dear art thou in thy person, offices, and character, to my soul under all the renewed convictions I am continually receiving, of my unworthiness and unbelief before thee! Lord Jesus! undertake for me, and by the sweet constraining influences of thy Holy Spirit, guard my poor heart from all murmuring, lest being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, wilderness frames extend the continuance of wilderness dispensations, and even, when in the very view of the promised land, the Lord lead me back again, instead of carrying me up to immediate possession.

Oh, thou Holy Spirit! thou comforter of thy people, and guide into all truth, grant me the same inestimable blessing as *Caleb* thy servant, that I may follow the Lord fully. And then, under thy divine influences I shall be enabled as he and Joshua did, to stand up for the cause of a faithful master, amidst the gainsaying and evil slander of ungodly and profane men. Oh! for this new heart and right spirit within me, which are both thy free unmerited gift. For then gracious Lord shall I not come into condemnation with the ungodly and unbelieving world, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness; but through the Father's gift, and the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, I shall surely be brought by thee, thou Holy Spirit, into the good land, and attain that rest *which remaineth for all the people of God.* Amen.

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

There seems to be a most gracious design in the Holy Ghost's introducing the law for sacrifices, immediately after the melancholy relation of the rebellion of the people. And, inasmuch as all the sacrifices under the law were typical of Jesus, surely it ought to be a great relief to the mind of the sinner, to see the ever blessed Jesus thus again represented as set forth, a propitiation for sin by the sacrifice of himself. Here are contained—the order for the meat offering and the drink offering; provision for the stranger also in those offerings: together with the law respecting the heave offering: sacrifices appointed for

sins of ignorance: and the punishment appointed for sins of presumption. A short history is introduced into this chapter relating to a sabbath breaker. The chapter concludes with the law respecting the fringes and borders of garments.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you,

The expression here made use of, *when they were come unto the land of promise*, carries with it this plain and evident token of mercy, that though in the foregoing chapter the Lord was wrath with his people, yet was he now reconciled. The change was not in God but man. The individuals who murmured were to suffer: but the body of Israel were the Lord's people still. Respecting the gospel state in the present day, as concerning Israel, the apostle beautifully reasons: Rom. xi. 1—6. Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of God's graciousness, the foundation of the whole chapter of mercy in the covenant of redemption. All is founded in the everlasting love of Jehovah, and secured in his faithfulness. Read that sweet assurance of it: Psalm lxxxix. 30—37.

3 And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a free will offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd, or of the flock:

4 Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth *part* of an hin of oil.

5 And the fourth *part* of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb.

6 Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare *for* a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third *part* of an hin of oil.

7 And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third *part* of an hin of wine, *for* a sweet savour unto the LORD.

8 And when thou preparest a bullock *for* a burnt offering, or *for* a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace offerings unto the LORD:

9 Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering of three tenth deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil.

10 And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine, *for* an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

11 Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid.

12 According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number.

The proportions of flour and oil in all these offerings, were to correspond to the size of the offering: the burnt offering and the meat offering were to suit each other. A *tenth deal* of flour was in quantity about *five* pints. And the *hin* contained nearly about *five* quarts. Oil in these countries was used as butter is in ours. No doubt every part of the sacrifice was typical of somewhat referred to, in the dispensation of grace by Jesus Christ. His people are said to be anointed with the oil of grace, and they did eat of the flour and bread of life, which is Christ himself. John vi. 32—34.

13 All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

14 And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever *be* among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; as ye do, so he shall do.

15 One ordinance *shall be both* for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth *with you*, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye *are*, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.

16 One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.

It is very striking to observe, even in the wilderness state of the church, and while the Lord was seemingly governing his people, to the exclusion of all other nations, how here and there we find distant allusions made to the gospel state, when the Lord would gather his people both Jew and Gentile into one fold. Though in the relations of civil society, very different was the law to strangers compared to that shewn to Israel, yet in

religion one ordinance was to be for both. Yes! one Lord Jesus Christ, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all; one precious salvation is enough for all. Delightful to this purport was the prophet's prediction when led by the Holy Ghost, to look into the gospel church and describe its leading principle; when the Lord should be king over all the earth, then there should be one Lord and his name one. Zech. xiv. 9.

17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

18 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you,

19 Then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the LORD.

20 Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall ye heave it.

21 Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations.

The Reader should take notice in this place, that this heave offering was appointed to be observed when Israel came into the land of promise. It was an offering of tribute intimating that the blessing of food came from God's bounty. In the wilderness this offering was not so essential, for as the people were fed with manna which descended from Heaven, the place it came from proved who was the giver. But in *Canaan*, the people were to be fed from the fruits of the earth. And as their own labour helped also to bring forth their sustenance, their hearts might be prompted to say, my hand and my might have done this. My soul! learn here to note it down, that all blessings, whether above or below, are from the Lord. Be always ready to give thine heave offering for all thou hast. Dearest Jesus! do thou sanctify all, for all is from thee; and of thee, and in thee, may I enjoy all. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

22 And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses.

23 Even all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations:

24 Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one

young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering.

25 And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance:

26 And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them: seeing all the people *were* in ignorance.

27 And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering.

28 And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.

29 Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, *both for* him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

Reader! I charge it upon your conscience as I pray for grace, to keep it always alive upon my own, that as every sacrifice under the law referred to that one glorious sacrifice of Jesus, so we see here by the special pointing out of God the Holy Ghost, that the efficacy of that precious atonement not only referred to sins of knowledge and confession, but took in and included sins of ignorance also. Precious Jesus! to what extent in my life doth this reach? Who can understand his errors? Even to what in the vain confidence of my heart I might sometimes have been led to hope were faultless, in seasons of worship, moments of devotion, and the like. Oh! how sweet is the reflection, that it is Jesus which taketh away the iniquity, even of our most holy things: Exod. xxviii. 38. It should seem that many of God's pious people were particularly attentive to this law concerning sins of ignorance. If the Reader wishes to see instances, I refer him to the case of *Hezekiah*; 2 Chron. xxix. 21—24. And of *Ezra*; viii. 35.

30 But the soul that doeth *ought* presumptu-

ously, *whether he be* born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

31 Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity *shall be upon him.*

There must have been somewhat particularly heinous in this sin. It is called *reproaching the Lord*. The Holy Ghost hath given the best comment upon it by the mouth of his servant David, when he prayed to be kept from presumptuous sin, so that he might be preserved from the *great transgression*. Psalm xix. 13. Perhaps it was similar to the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Be it what it may, it stands here in this place as an awful monument in the midst of mercy, for which there remaineth no sacrifice, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. Heb x. 26, 27.

32 ¶ And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

33 And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

We have here introduced into the body of this chapter of laws, a short but awful history of the sabbath-breaker and his dreadful punishment. Reader! if the Lord himself to whom the judgment was referred, thus commanded an infliction of punishment so awful, for the gathering of sticks on his holy day, do you not tremble for the troops of sabbath-breakers in our day, who set at defiance both the laws of God and man? Lord, have mercy upon our national guilt in this particular, and incline our hearts to keep thy law.

37 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders

of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them: and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye used to go a whoring:

40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

41 I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

As Israel was a peculiar people, so their dress was to be peculiar. The fringes of their garments were not intended for ornament, but for memorandums. Jesus we may suppose wore them, for we are told that the poor women in the gospel desired to touch the hem (or fringe) of his garment. I am led to think that even here, in the dress of Israel, I behold somewhat leading to Jesus. As the sacrifices appointed in this chapter pointed to the atonement in his blood, so the garment with its fringes referred to his robe of righteousness, with which the true Israel must be clothed in, in order to appear before God. Lord grant, that I may look upon this and remember how my God and Saviour hath fulfilled for me all the commandments of my God, that I may never go a whoring after the vanity of my own eyes, but be holy before my God in the holiness of Jesus my Redeemer.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! in the view of the many things appointed in this Chapter to the church of God, when they were to come to the promised land; let me contemplate the vast privileges of that better country, which theirs only typified; and by faith anticipate what offerings I shall have then to offer, what presentations there to make, and what heave offerings of acknowledgment, both for the stranger and the new born soul in Jesus redeemed by his blood, all the happy multitude will have continually to bring before the throne of God and the Lamb. Oh! the vast, the inconceivable glory which will then break in upon the soul when we come to receive the end of our faith. Neither sins of ignorance nor sins of presumption, neither a corrupt world, a deceiving heart, nor all the powers of darkness will any longer interrupt or defile the soul: but one continued day in one uninterrupted enjoyment of felicity, will then employ the mind to all eternity. Blessed God! in the full prospect of these unspeakable joys given to thy people by the Father's everlasting love, purchased by the Redeemer's grace, and made ours by the precious application of the Holy Ghost; may my soul live and my body die, until faith shall be swallowed up in fruition, and my God shall be openly revealed to all the sons of light. Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

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This is a most interesting Chapter, not merely as an historical relation of man's rebellion and God's awful judgments following, but principally as herein we behold as glorious a representation, typically considered, as perhaps the Old Testament scripture contains of Jesus, represented by Aaron exercising his priestly office of intercessor, and by his person and righteousness making atonement for the sins of his people. In the perusal of this Chapter throughout, let the Reader remember our motto, Moses wrote of Jesus. The Chapter contains the rebellion of Korah and his company, in contending for the priesthood: the awful inference of God: the dreadful visitation on the rebels, by the Lord's doing a new thing and causing the earth to open her mouth and swallow up the insurgents; and by fire at the same time consuming those that had dared to take upon them the priestly office of burning incense. The Chapter further relates, that these judgments having tended to harden the minds of the rebels, and their ill-conduct breaking out afresh, the Lord smote them by pestilence. Aaron is commanded by Moses to offer incense for the people until the plague was stayed.

NOW Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men* :

2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown :

Korah was head of a family as well as Dathan and Abiram; and as they were joined by no less than 250 princes of the assembly of the highest order of the people, the rebellion became of consequence the more formidable. Alas! in the rebellions of our nature against the Lord and his righteous government, how often do we discover or may discover, that our highest faculties are engaged on the side of sin. The prophet was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to sketch the character of the church, in this prostitution of divine gifts to the very reverse of what they ought to have been dedicated to, when she ascribed to the gift of her sinful lovers and not to the Lord her husband, her *water, and wool, and flax, and oil, and drink*. See the prophet's account of it: Hosea ii. 5—8.

3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, *Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?*

What an awful state must that mind be given up to, that in the very moment of daring sin fancies itself holy! Jesus describes the church of *Laodicea* in this dreadfully deluded state, as counting herself to be rich and needing nothing, when in reality she was wretchedly poor and miserable before God. Oh! how exceedingly is it to be feared, that many, very many professing churches of our day are in this awful state! Rev. iii. 14—17.

4 And when Moses heard *it*, he fell upon his face:

What a convincing view at once was this of Moses's mind! So Lord, let me fall before thy throne of grace, whenever Satan accuseth or the reproaches of the ungodly make me afraid. If the Reader would improve this subject, he may learn under the divine teachings, a sweet lesson suited in the 31st Psalm.

5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the LORD will shew who *are* his, and *who is* holy; and will cause *him* to come near unto him: even *him* whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

6 This do; Take you censers, Korah and all his company;

7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to-morrow: and it shall be *that* the man whom the LORD doth choose, he *shall be* holy: *ye take* too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.

It should seem that there is somewhat more of doctrine in this subject, than at first view might be supposed. If the congregation be every one of them holy they need no Mediator. And if they need no Mediator then might each approach in his own righteousness. Moses therefore refers this decision to the Lord, and calls upon Korah and his company to do the same. It is as if he had said, Make the experiment and do you take the censers of your own righteousness, instead of that appointed by the Lord your God. Pause, my soul, over this state of the case. Ask yourself whether *you* would venture to draw nigh in this manner. What a beautiful view doth the subject at once seem to open to us of the preciousness of Jesus, whom Aaron typified? For, let it never be once forgotten through the whole of the Levitical dispensation, Aaron, in all he did and all he represented, was called of God to the service; and it was this appointment which alone gave efficacy to his ministration. Heb. v. 4.

8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi:

9 *Seemeth it but* a small thing unto you, that

the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

10 And he hath brought thee near *to him*, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

11 For which cause *both* thou and all thy company *are* gathered together against the LORD: and what *is* Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

I humbly conceive in this expostulation of Moses, and his mention of Aaron in so humiliating a manner, *What is Aaron that you murmur against him?* that the man of God pointed thereby to the infirmity of the man, as if to convince them that the acceptance of Aaron could not be for any thing in himself, but must have arisen wholly from the Lord's own pleasure. I do not presume to say, that Moses saw so much of gospel in the appointment of Aaron to the priesthood, that he beheld Jesus as typified and represented in every rite and ceremony Aaron ministered in. But I do venture to believe that Moses saw enough in the dispensation, to discover that Aaron never was or could be accepted for himself and for the people, in consequence of any merit or righteousness of his own. What is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? As if he had said, is not this the same Aaron that transgressed, in the instance of the golden calf? Exod. xxxii. 1—6.

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up:

13 *Is it* a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

14 Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

It is astonishing to observe in the daring confidence of sinners, how they sacrifice truth to resentment. What a perversity must there have been in the minds of these men, to talk of being brought up out of the bondage of Egypt, as the being taken from a land flowing with milk and honey.—But pause, my soul, and consider whether there is not cause enough for thee to take shame to thyself, in the recollection how often thou hast preferred the slavery of sin to the freedom of salvation by

Jesus. Oh! for more of that spirit of faith which was in Moses, who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Heb. xi. 25, 26.

15 And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

Reader! Behold in the instance of Moses, and his meekness for the moment forsaking him, the weakness of poor human nature universally. It was thou only, dearest Jesus! that couldst exercise mercy unrestrained, when in that hour of unequalled suffering on the cross, thou didst pray for thine enemies! Luke xxiii. 34.

16 And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow:

17 And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of *you* his censer.

18 And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron.

It is really astonishing, considering the badness of their cause, that Korah and his party should have been willing to put things to such an issue. But, Reader! when our hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, what judgments of God do we not brave? How often hath my stubborn unsubdued nature gone about to establish my own righteousness, instead of seeking the righteousness of God my Saviour?

19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

What an awful moment was it when the *Shechinah*, the glory of the Lord appeared! God was come to judgment. But what an awful moment of the like nature will it be when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus? In the contemplation of this day, how trifling and unimportant do all earthly concerns appear? Paul's advice to the church under persecution on this subject is very interesting. 2 Thess. i. 7--10.

20 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

Though the Lord knoweth them that are his, and can and will hide them in the day of the visitation of the ungodly, yet the precept is, *come out from among them and separate yourselves.* See 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Rev. xviii. 4.

22 And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

From the precious comment upon the supplication of Moses by the Psalmist, not only upon this occasion, but another, (Exod. xxxii. 10.) we have authority to conclude, that in both Moses typified and represented that great and only intercessor, the Lord Jesus Christ. And very sweet is it to the soul of every true believer, to behold in those distant ages of the church, how the everlasting and eternal priesthood of the Lord Jesus was shadowed forth and proved to be effectual. See Isaiah lix. 16. Compared with Psalm cx. 4. Heb. v. 8, 9. Heb. vi. 20.

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

24 Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him.

26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

Reader! may we not without violence to the sacred text, picture to ourselves in this conduct of Moses an infinitely greater than Moses, calling, in all the sweet and persuasive language of the gospel to his people: *Come out my people from among the unclean, and be not partakers of their sins.* Rev. xviii. 4. Reader! do not forget, that grace to keep the believer from sin and its consequences is among the blessings Jesus hath purchased, and the Father hath given in the covenant. Jeremiah xxxii. 40. with John xvii. 11.

27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

Observe how sin hardens; one should have thought that the rebellious party when deserted by the people, would have taken alarm and humbled themselves before the Lord. I say one should have thought so, if the word of God did not teach us, that *evil men and seducers wax worse and worse.* 2 Tim. iii. 13.

28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for *I have not done them* of mine own mind.

29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; *then* the LORD hath not sent me.

30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that *appertain* unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

We cannot but be struck with the astonishing degree of faith which Moses manifested upon this occasion. What holy confidence! What a firm assurance did he here display in the faithfulness of God? Reader! Oh, may you and I learn from it the sweet and invaluable privilege of the faithful. See similar instances: Gen. xxii. 3—10. Joshua x. 12. 1 Sam. xvii. 32, 37.

31 ¶ And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that *was* under them:

32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all *their* goods.

33 They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

What a tremendous judgment is here! What an answer was it to the whole business! And what a decisive testimony did it afford of the Lord's approbation of his servants! But, my soul! pause over the review, and ask thyself whether to thy repeated acts of disobedience and rebellion, if the Lord had caused a similar visitation, thou couldst have justly complained. *Is it not of the Lord's mercies that thou art not consumed?* Lament. iii. 22.

34 And all Israel that *were* round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up *also*.

If all Israel fled at the cry of the sufferers, think, my soul, with what awakened earnestness wouldst thou flee from the wrath to come, didst thou but see with thine eyes the horrible pit of the damned; or with thine ears hear the doleful shrieks of the everlastingly wretched spirits, who dwell in those regions of misery. What an awful question is that of the prophet: Isaiah xxxiii. 14?

35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

While the Lord's judgments were manifesting to the rebellious in the camp, the Lord was manifesting himself as a consuming fire to the ring-leaders at the door of the tabernacle. See what an awful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God? But my soul! contemplate with all due reverence the cause. It was for daringly offering incense, assuming the office of the priesthood. The offence was not levelled against Aaron so much as God. And yet doth not every man now in the present hour do this, when he presumes to approach God in the incense of his own merits and righteousness, and hereby sets at nought the infinitely precious merits and incense of Jesus? Oh! what sparing mercy have you and I found, my brother in transgression, in the survivings we have had amidst multiplied presumptions of this nature. Dearest Lord! give me henceforth to see thee as the beloved apostle did, in this thy most endearing office and character; and cause me to esteem it my highest joy to come under thy blessed influence. Rev. viii. 3, 4.

36 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

37 Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed.

38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates *for* a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.

39 And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad *plates for* a covering of the altar:

40 *To be* a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which *is* not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

This may serve to teach us how jealous the Lord is of his honour. But chiefly no doubt, with an eye to the everlasting priesthood of Jesus, to point out its vast importance. Dearest Lord! be thou my high priest, and under the censer of thy merits and righteousness my soul will be safe. Heb. iv. 15, 16.

41 ¶ But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.

The man that hath not studied human nature very closely, and yet more especially hath not been taught by the Holy Ghost the great evil of sin, and the plague of his own heart, will be astonished that a mutiny after such a tremendous judgment as had but just taken place, should again break out. The earth was scarce closed. The fire of God was still, as it were, burning before them. The shrieks of the people buried alive were still sounding in their ears. Reader, I pray God that such a view of human nature, and the hardness and obduracy of the heart, may in the hand of the Lord teach us, that nothing short of God's Holy Spirit can soften and conquer the soul. Oh Lord! write upon my mind and enforce its observance, that precept of the apostles: Heb. iii. 12, 13.

42 And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

Observe, the Lord waits not for any longer appeal. Vengeance is mine, Jehovah saith, I will recompence. Rom. xii. 19. Compared with Deut. xxxii. 35.

43 And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.

44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

45 Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.

46 ¶ And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

The dying all around convinced Moses, that wrath was gone forth from the Lord.

47 And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.

48 And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

Here we see Aaron representing the Lord Jesus indeed! For surely there was nothing of holiness in Aaron, that could interpose between an offended God and perishing sinners. But beheld with an eye to Jesus, we see one of the most interesting views of the Redeemer in his priestly office putting on the incense of his merits, and running into this world from the tabernacle of glory to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

49 Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

50 And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

Behold the awful ravages of sin! Reader, contemplate yet more the awful ravages of the first sin, by which death passed upon all men, because all have sinned. It is now nearly six thousand years since Adam's original transgression, and yet the Lord's anger manifested to sin by death is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. Romans v. 12. Isaiah v. 25.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE stand, my soul, and contemplate the melancholy effects of a fallen nature, manifesting itself in such astonishing instances of rebellions, and murmurings, and disobedience, and ingratitude. And when thou hast duly pondered over the awful subject in the dreadful example of Korah and his company, turn thine attention inward to thyself. Alas! are not the same seeds of sin there, and do they not continually break forth and bud, and bring forth the same deadly fruit; and what is the world around thee but evidences of the same? And what the examples of suffering and sorrow, but proofs to the same amount? Full of misery because full of sin.

Precious, precious Jesus! relieve my soul in the view of those things, in turning mine eyes to thee and thy great salvation. Oh! thou almighty Aaron, thou great High Priest and Saviour of thy people, may my soul never cease looking unto and upon thee! Thou camest indeed from thy throne of glory, and didst leave the regions of the blessed to visit our miserable world. The plague of sin and the horrid ingratitude of thy people, even the wrath of thy Father issuing forth in fiery indignation in the destruction of sinners, did not stop thy love in prosecuting the wonderful deliverance of thy chosen; but thou didst run in among

the people, and didst put on the incense of thy merits, and both by thy blood and righteousness didst make an atonement for them. Thou stoodest then between the dead and the living, and now thou interposest still between dead sinners and the living God; and wilt continue in thine unceasing everlasting priesthood until the plague of sin, hell, death, and the grave is stayed, and thou hast rescued all thy redeemed from everlasting misery. Lord, grant by thy Spirit's work in my heart, my soul may be made willing to come under the preserving influence of thy censer; and as the dying Israelites were sheltered by the ascending offering of Aaron's incense, so I may take refuge under the covering of thy blood and righteousness, from all my sin and the sin of this ungodly wicked world, and be found in thee to the praise of the glory of that grace wherein I am made accepted in thee the beloved.

CHAP. XVII.

CONTENTS.

A further interference of divine authority is related in this Chapter, in which the Lord is pleased to manifest thereby, that Aaron was to be the high priest to minister in holy things. The Lord condescended, by way of testifying his pleasure in this business, to settle it by the budding of Aaron's rod, while the rods of all the other heads of families are dry and withered. The event is ordered to be recorded by laying up Aaron's rod as a testimony before the Lord.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of *their* fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.

It is sweet to remark how the Lord is pleased to work, sometimes in a way of judgment as in the foregoing chapter, to punish sin: and sometimes in a way of grace, as in this chapter, to restrain from sin. It should seem by the circumstances of this chapter, that though the Lord had manifested in so awful a manner his choice of Aaron to the priesthood, there were still some disposed to dispute it. Alas! are not the Lord's people now, under a gospel dispensation, too prone to the same presumption? and do they not forget that their offerings and prayers all need the interposition of Jesus as the only High Priest and Mediator, by whom they can alone draw nigh to God! John xiv. 6.

3 And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod *shall be* for the head of the house of their fathers.

Were I permitted to spiritualize this writing of the name of Aaron on the rod of Levi, I would suppose that what Jesus hath left on record in the revelations, of writing upon each of his people who are made priests and kings by him his new name, that it had its symbolic reference in

this place. When we consider what Paul saith; that the gospel was preached unto our fathers in the wilderness church as well as unto us now, the allusion will not, I think, be considered far fetched. See Rev. iii. 12.

4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you.

Before the testimony means before the ark, and that ark was an express type of Jesus. It is delightful to discover every thing referring to our Jesus. Hence David sings, *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest: thou, and the ark of thy strength.* Psm. cxxxii. 8.

5 And it shall come to pass, *that* the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.

Blessed promise! if God undertakes to make the murmurings of his people to cease it shall be done, but without this interference of grace, the most awful judgments lose their effect. Compare what passed in the former chapter where the Lord's choice was as plainly manifested, but man's stubborn unreclaimed nature still rebelled. Chap. xvi. 5.

6 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, *even* twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron *was* among their rods.

The rod was an apt signification of the head of a family, for the word signifies *tribes* as well as *rod*. It is used so: Numb. xxxiv. 13.

7 And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

There is somewhat particularly striking in what is said of laying them up before the Lord, meaning a presentation of them; as if to say, Lord, we wait thy determination! The tabernacle of witness is also as striking: for each person of the Godhead is the witness, and consequently to each the tabernacle belongs. The Father witnessed to the whole of redemption-work at Jesus's baptism. Jesus himself is expressly called *the faithful witness*. Rev. i. 5. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, *because the Spirit is truth*. These are the *three that bear record in Heaven: and these three are one*. 1 John v. 7.

8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

What could have been more decisive! A dry unpromising rod to bring forth at one and the same time, and in one night, buds, and blossoms, and fruit. But who doth not, or who will not, behold in all this Jesus, who is called in relation to one of his offices *the rod of the Lord's strength?* Psm. cx. 2. He was indeed a *root out of a dry ground.* Isaiah liii. 2. In him and his complete salvation he doth indeed bud, and blossom, and give fruit in the several measures of his grace, and according to their seasons of need he grants suited blessings to all his people. If the Reader would see a string of the sweetest promises concerning these things, in reference to the Redeemer, he will find them, Psalm cxxxii. 11—18.

9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.

Doth it not appear to the Reader by the manner of expression, that each man took his rod, as if it was a sullen and not a satisfied acquiescence in the divine appointment. Alas! how often may we detect our hearts in the same spirit.

10 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.

Paul hath recorded this circumstance in his epistle to the Hebrews. Chap. ix. 4. But certainly a great deal of gospel is veiled under it. It is Jesus and his perpetual presence, that takes away the greater as well as the less sins of his people. John saw Jesus many years after his ascension, and he then appeared as *a lamb which had been slain*: meaning, no doubt, that he exercised his priesthood still, and bore on his glorified body the marks of our redemption. Rev. v. 6.

11 And Moses did so: as the Lord commanded him, so did he.

12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish.

13 Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?

Whether the people expressed themselves in these words under a sense of fear or submission, or both, I will not determine. But as the Lord had graciously undertaken to take away their murmurings, it may serve to teach us how very effectual the Lord's means are when the Lord is pleased to work. And yet still more, how great our mercies are, that we are brought under a deeper and a better dispensation, established upon better promises; and have at all times our high priest who is

gone in before the mercy-seat for us that we die not, under whose advocacy and propitiation his people are secured from danger. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, in the perusal of this chapter, and behold in how sweet a manner thy God and Father manifested to the church of old the everlasting priesthood of thy glorious intercessor! None but the rod of Jesus, nothing but his Almighty righteousness and sin-offering atonement can bring forth the blessed fruits of salvation for his people. As all our righteousness are filthy rags, so all our rods of created strength, however laid up before the testimony, will be found unfruitful, dead, and withered. But in the various manifestations of thy grace, in the buddings and blossoms and fruit-bearing excellencies of thy mercies, as our souls respectively stand in need, how graciously doth my God and Saviour shew forth the rod of his strength, in convincing, converting, strengthening, refreshing, and establishing his people.

Dearest Jesus! may I find grace from thy Holy Spirit, to rejoice in thee, as the rod of all gospel mercies laid up for me in time and to all eternity. And though thy glory was veiled from many when on earth, and thy priesthood is unacknowledged and unknown by thousands now thou art above, yet to me in all thy precious offices and characters, be thou ever blooming forth, in every suited grace, and every seasoned mercy, in all my time of need. Let murmurers now, if they dare, dispute the sovereignty of thy Godhead, and despise, because they know not, the preciousness of thy great salvation and priesthood; Lord, be thou to me and all thy children the never-failing almond tree of righteousness and peace, which neither drought nor storm, nor all the wintry dispensations of my heart and the powers of darkness can destroy; but by the influences of thy Holy Spirit being enabled to abide in thee, may I bring forth fruit to the praise of thy holy name; and as thou hast said, *because thou livest I shall live also.*

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

This chapter contains some interesting particulars relating to the priesthood, and the service of the Levites: together with the appointed portion for both.

AND the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

Do I not see here in the appointment of the high priest, bearing the iniquity both of the sanctuary and priesthood, a strong type of the Lord Jesus, in his priestly office, bearing the iniquity both of his people and their most holy things? see Isaiah liii. 6.

2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee *shall minister* before the tabernacle of witness.

Let not the Reader overlook here the very striking distinction made between the high priest and the Levites. Though the Levites were to be joined in one and the same service, yet it was the high priest only who was to come in before the tabernacle of witness. It is Jesus our great high priest who alone goeth in before the mercy-seat: though his people are joined with him in the offerings of prayer and praise, yet all can only be accepted in the beloved. Ephes. i. 6.

3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die.

4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you.

5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

The tabernacle of witness was before the most holy place, in which was the ark. And as this represented the presence of Jehovah, no Levite, much less a stranger could venture to approach. What a delightful representation is all this of the infinite importance of the mediation and intercession of Jesus! John xiv. 6.

6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you *they are* given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the vail: and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office *unto you as* a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

It is well worthy of observation, that the office of the high priest, is called a service. Reader, do not forget, that Jesus is called Jehovah's

servant, and he most affectionately recommends himself to his disciples under this character. See Isaiah xlii. 1. Philip ii. 6, 7. Luke xxii. 27.

8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever.

9 ¶ This shall be thine of the most holy things, *reserved* from the fire: every oblation of their's, every meat offering of their's, and every sin offering of their's, and every trespass offering of their's, which they shall render unto me, *shall be* most holy for thee and for thy sons.

10 In the most holy *place* shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee.

11 And this *is* thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.

12 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee.

13 *And* whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it.

14 Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.

15 Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, *whether it be* of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem,

and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.

16 And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

17 But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they *are* holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat *for* an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

18 And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine.

19 All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it *is* a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: *I am* thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

21 ¶ And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, *even* the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

22 Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.

23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.

24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer *as* an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

I have thrown all these verses together, because one general remark will be found applicable to all. And the observation that seems to meet us, in the perusal of what is here said concerning the provision made by God for the priests and Levites in his service, will, by a parity of reasoning, be found applicable in all ages of the church to the Lord's servants. As they are not their own, but his whom they serve, so they are supposed to have neither time nor ability to provide for themselves in the common wants of life, and therefore the Lord himself appoints what their supplies should be. All their ministrations, their knowledge, time, gifts, graces, talents, were to be dedicated for the benefit of the people: yea, their very souls, (as the apostle Paul says,) faithful servants in the ministry are willing to impart for Jesus's sake, and the gospel's. 1 Thess. ii. 8. Hence, therefore, the Lord himself undertakes by this appointment to provide for them. "Thou shalt have none inheritance among thy brethren, I am thy part and thine inheritance, saith the Lord." See Cor. ix. 13, 14. Reader! detach this idea from the mere temporal provision of things, and apply it to the gospel ministry, as it concerns spirituals; and what an animated thought is it to every faithful servant of Jesus! Were I speaking to one of this description I would say, Remember the Lord is your portion. Your springs are all in Jesus. Your life is hid with Christ in God. Like your master you have meat to eat, which the world knoweth not of. What if all streams fail, if Jesus be your fountain! Oh! the ravishing thought when Jehovah saith to the soul, Fear not I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward! Gen. xv. 1.

25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, *even* a tenth *part* of the tithe.

27 And *this* your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though *it were* the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress.

28 Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive

of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof of the LORD's heave offering to Aaron the priest.

29 Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, *even* the hallowed part thereof out of it.

30 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshingfloor, and as the increase of the winepress.

31 And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it *is* your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation.

32 And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel lest ye die.

It is sweet to observe, that the Levites were expected to give as well as receive. The Lord hereby manifested his right and property in all things. But is there not a spiritual illustration in this heave-offering of the ministry? The apostle Paul hath made one general observation to this amount, in relation to our great High Priest, when he tells us, that the Levitical priesthood payed tithes to the unchangeable everlasting priesthood of Jesus, Heb. vii. 9, 10. A precious instruction this, to teach us that all things bend and give way to Him, who is not made a priest after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Heb. vii. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! thou Almighty Aaron of our Gospel profession, thou dearest Jesus! who hast indeed, in thine own precious body on the tree, borne the burden of the sins, and of the most holy things, of thy people! In what I read in this chapter of Aaron and his sons, I behold thine unequalled person represented. It is thou, and thou alone, who hast sustained the dreadful pressure of sin and transgression. It is thou alone to whom the Lord Jehovah could say, Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and the iniquity of the priesthood: for when neither the blood of bulls nor of goats could take away sin; then did the Saviour cry, Lo! I come. Oh! do thou still bear for me, and all thy ministering servants, both our sins and sorrows: do thou bear, Lord, the care of all thy churches; do thou bear our names upon thine arm, and upon thine heart, when going in before the mercy-seat; and when thou hast borne all thy people safely through every temptation, do thou bear them home to thy throne of glory, that where thou art there they may be also. Amen.

CHAP. XIX.

CONTENTS.

In this chapter is contained, the law concerning purification in the water of separation, made with great preparation from the ashes of a red heifer burnt with cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet wood. The best comment on which, we have in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. The method of use, and the office of the priest, in the performance of it, are here also appointed.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

In the entrance upon this chapter, I would call upon the Reader once more to bring to mind the motto, which I have so frequently before desired might be placed over every chapter of the *five* books of Moses; and which, in this chapter, I request the reader by no means to lose sight of: *Moses wrote of Christ*. For here I venture to believe, that in type and figure the Lord Jesus is wholly represented.

2 This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke:

Do not overlook several leading circumstances here in the appointment of the Lord, which we find sweetly pointing to Jesus. *First*, the heifer was to be red. It is well known that the colour is rare and not common. Such was Jesus, *one among a thousand*. Jesus is called the second Adam; and the name of Adam signifies red earth. Hence to the manhood of Jesus this redness is peculiarly applicable, for the children being partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same. The church sings, *my beloved is white and ruddy*; white in allusion to the spotless purity of his divine nature; and ruddy in allusion to the sufferings of his human nature; or in both, because of the innocence and immaculate holiness of his person. Heb. vii. 26. But, perhaps, the appointment of a red heifer, had a still further reference to the Lord Jesus, who, it is well known, was red in his apparel, when in his own blood he had stained all his raiment in redeeming his people and taking vengeance of his enemies. See Isaiah lxiii. 2—4. Rev. xix. 13, 15. Deut. xxxii. 42. *Secondly*. This heifer was to be without spot, and wherein there was no blemish. Oh! how clearly did this prefigure the spotless lamb of God. John i. 29. *Thirdly*, This heifer was never to have been yoked. See, Reader! how thy Redeemer was here again represented. In redemption work, none was yoked with Jesus. No arm but his could bring salvation; and of the people there was none with him. Isaiah lxiii. 5. Neither was Jesus yoked to the service, for nothing but his own free love constrained him. *I have power* (saith he) *to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again*. John x. 17, 18. Reader, do not hastily pass over those precious views of thy Jesus!

And before we quit the verse let us consider another beauty in it, namely, That the provision of this heifer was to be made from the united expence of all the congregation. The precept saith, Speak to the children of Israel, that *they* bring thee a red heifer. Yes! Jesus is provided for *all* his people, all his children: He is the gift of the Father to all his seed. And therefore John sweetly speaks of the Lord Jesus under this character, as not only our propitiation, but for the sins of the whole world. 1 John ii. 2.

3 And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and *one* shall slay her before his face :

Why is *Eleazar* chosen to this office and not Aaron? Is it not because that, as the ceremony to be performed in this service rendered the minister himself for a season ceremonially unclean, Aaron must not for a moment only, while acting officially in his high priest's department, be so. Our Jesus, though made sin for us, yet knew no sin: no shadow of uncleanness was in him. Reader! do not forget to remark, that this slaughter of the heifer was not at the sanctuary, but without the camp. And what saith an infallible expositor on this? "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate." Heb. xiii. 12.

4 And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times :

It is well worth the continual observation of every faithful believer, that the same authority which appoints the sacrifice, always accompanieth that appointment with the precept for sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice. And what doth this teach, but that the Holy Ghost must apply what the Son of God hath accomplished of redemption to render it effectual to every individual believer: and this must be done, as it is here said, directly before the tabernacle; meaning, before the presence of God. Here, Reader, take notice how all the persons of the God-head concur, and are engaged in the salvation of every poor sinner. The Father, before whom it is presented; the Son, who is the purchaser of the mercy; and the Holy Ghost, who is the almighty agent, to make the whole effectual to the heart and conscience of every true believer. Reader, before you dismiss this part of the subject, ask your own heart, whether *you* are come to the blood of sprinkling? Heb. xii. 22, 24.

5 And *one* shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn:

Who doth not see here the shadowy representation of those extreme sufferings of our Lord, when in the day of expiation he made an offering by fire; when the wrath of God, taking vengeance of our sins in his sacred person, scorched and burnt, until in his agony he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Matt. xxvii. 46.

6 And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast *it* into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Perhaps these things were shadowy representations of the incense of Jesus's merits. See Levit. xiv. 6, 7.

7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even,

8 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even.

Observe how uncleanness is attached to those who, even in religious services, were obeying the divine precepts. Yes, it must be so. Every thing, even our most holy things, carry with them an impurity. None but he who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, can be clean before God. Heb. vii. 26.

9 And a man *that is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay *them* up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

Was not this in the laying up the ashes a type of the everlasting efficacy of Jesus's salvation? Is he not laid up in the everlasting council of peace, and for the daily, hourly, unceasing application, by the Holy Ghost to the guilty consciences of his people. John i. 29.

10 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

Reader, do not forget to remark, how every one that officiated in this service is rendered thereby unclean. *Elcazar*, verse 7, the *Man* that burned the heifer, verse 8, and *he* that gathered the ashes. And what doth this testify, but that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; nothing but the blood of Jesus cleanseth from sin, 1 John i. 7.

11 ¶ He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean:

but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him.

14 This *is* the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that *is* in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, *is* unclean.

16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

We here behold in ~~striking~~ characters the awful effects sin hath wrought in our nature: the wages of sin *is*, and must be, death. And when at any time in our friends, and in our houses, that sentence is executed, uncleanness is attached to all. And this must have continued for ever, had not Jesus interposed and abolished death by his glorious undertaking, and brought life and immortality to light by his gospel. See, Reader! in this ceremonial uncleanness made by death, to what a miserable state out of Christ, our nature is universally reduced!

17 And for an unclean *person* they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

19 And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he *is* unclean.

21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even.

22 And whatsoever the unclean *person* toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth *it* shall be unclean until even.

See, Reader, in the typical representation of this law, what a gracious provision is made, for the removal of the uncleanness of our fallen nature. As the ashes of the heifer pointed to the atonement and righteousness of Jesus: so the running water represented the precious offices of the Holy Ghost, in the washing of regeneration, and a renewing of our souls by his grace; that by his gracious application of the person and offices of the Lord Jesus, souls might be made clean in the sight of God, and our Father. Reader! do not overlook in this scripture, the essential offices of both. The ashes not mixed with the running water were not used, nor could be efficacious. Neither do the merits of Jesus operate on your heart or mine, unless applied by the Holy Ghost. So vast and infinitely important is the work of God upon the soul, since it is he alone, which must take of the things of Jesus, and shew them unto us. See the Redeemer's own account of his important office and ministry, in what he hath said of his person, and offices, and character. John xvi. 7—14.

REFLECTIONS.

ONCE more, my soul, contemplate the gracious condescension of thy God, in thus manifesting the infinite work of thy divine Redeemer, by shadowing forth the outlines of his great salvation in continued type and figure! every thing I view in the Old Testament scripture, in relation to sacrifices and offerings, doth but the more point out the infinite love of the Father, in giving his Son; and the infinite love of the Son, in coming as a propitiation for the sin of his people. And oh! thou ever-blessed, ever-precious Jesus, thou, who like the red heifer, wert offered without spot or blemish to God, for the sins of thy people, and didst suffer without the gate, as the heifer was appointed; oh, enable me by the influences of thy blessed Spirit, to go forth unto thee without the camp, bearing thy reproach. Thanks be to God, that his people are now brought under that mild dispensation that though we are all in ourselves polluted, both by the death of our

friends, and the dying state of ourselves, yet in the Lord Jesus, we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified, by the Spirit of our God. Lead me to see, O Lord, in the consecrated ashes, the incorruptible and everlasting efficacy of the righteousness of God my Saviour; and in the running water, the preciousness of that all-cleansing grace of the Holy Ghost, the streams of which river makes glad the city of our God. May it be my portion, thus, to be cleansed daily from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that I may perfect holiness in the fear of God.

CHAP. XX.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter commenceth afresh the historical part of Israel's journey through the wilderness. From the end of the second year after the children of Israel's going forth from Egypt to the close of the thirty-ninth year, there is but little relation. But now, in the fortieth and last year which this chapter opens with, the history of the events which happened to them is more circumstantially related. Herein is contained the death of Miriam, and of Aaron: the people's murmurings for want of water: Moses's conduct on that occasion: the refusal of Edom to let Israel pass through his land: the succession of Eleazar to the priesthood after the death of Aaron, by the Lord's appointment.

THEN came the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

It is worthy remark what a way the Lord led Israel through the wilderness. The psalmist tells us it was a *right way*. And no doubt it was, for it was to prove them and to humble them. But it was not the direct way, for eleven days journey would have been enough, according to the present method of travelling, to have passed on from the borders of the Red Sea to the borders of Canaan. But Reader! what is the way of Israel now, but the same wandering life. Sweet is that prayer of Moses the man of God, which the Holy Ghost taught him, and which is recorded for the benefit of the church, and no doubt penned upon this occasion. Psm. xc. 1—12. The death of Miriam ought not to be passed over without due reflection. There can be no question but that she was a child of God, witness her conduct at the Red Sea: Exod. xv. 20, 21. And indeed the prophet makes honourable mention of her as such. Micah vi. 4. But Miriam, like all others taken from among men, manifested *the hole of the pit from whence she was digged*. See Numbers xii. 1—10. How precious ought Jesus to appear in every renewed view, of his expediency to others as well as to ourselves. Reader! do let me prevail upon you in this place, to read what Paul the apostle saith of the constraining love of Jesus, and the cause of it, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

2 And there was no water for the congrega-

tion: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

It is very awful to consider in our corrupt nature, (for Israel in all ages is the same), that neither past judgments for rebellions, nor past mercies when dispensed instead of punishments, have any effect in themselves. Nothing but preventing and restraining grace can bring the heart over to the side of God. Lord! I would pray for myself and for the Reader, in all thy providences, either in fulness or in need, in chastisement or forbearance, do thou sanctify every thing to our hearts, and let our hearts be sanctified in thy providences, and then all will be well.

6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

What a beautiful representation is here made of the conduct of the Lord's servants. How charming doth grace appear, when a soul lies in silent humbleness and self-abasement before God? See Ezra ix. 5, 6. But Reader! raise your thoughts from the contemplation of the priests of old, to the contemplation of Jesus, the great high priest going in before the mercy-seat for his people. Rev. viii. 3—5.

7 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

What is the glory of God but the goodness of God manifested in redemption! See Exod. xxxiii. 17—19.

9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

The conduct of Moses upon this occasion excited the Lord's displeasure, and the reason is assigned more particularly: Numb. xxvii. 12—14. If the Lord be not sanctified *by* his people, he will be sanctified *upon* them. If the Reader be at a loss to discover what was the offence of Moses in this instance, he will soon find it, when he looks at the Lord's precept and compares it a little more closely with Moses's conduct. The command of God stated that he should *speak* to the rock, he had no command to *strike* it: whereas he spake to the people and not to the rock, and contrary to the divine order he *smote* the rock twice. Both which manifested his impatience, his distrust, and unbelief. Neither was this all. His language to the people savored of great pride, self-sufficiency, and arrogance: *must we fetch you water out of this rock*. If Moses understood as well as Paul, that the rock which followed Israel was Christ, was not this forgetting God their Saviour, and looking to an arm of flesh? Alas! what is man, even the meekest man, in his own strength?

11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*.

I beg the Reader to remark with me the abounding grace of God. Though Moses had failed in his commission, God will not fail in his promise. Had the Lord restrained the water because Moses took the confidence to himself of implying that he fetched it, it would have been but a suitable rebuke to his presumption. But the Lord deals not with us after our sins, nor rewards us according to our iniquities. He will be gracious to the *persons* of his people while chastening their *sins*. The psalmist makes the best commentary upon this passage, and no doubt had this history in view when he saith: *Thou answerest them, O Lord our God. Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions*. Psalm xcix. 8. And probably he referred to the same when he said, that *the people provoked Moses to speak unadvisedly with his lips*. Psm. cvi. 35.

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Reader! do not fail to remark how the Lord deals in faithfulness.

God will not allow iniquity in his people to go unrebuked. The tenor of the covenant indeed is, *if the children* (of the Redeemer) *forsake his law, and walk not in his judgments, he will visit their transgression with the rod*, &c. though the everlasting virtue of the covenant is the same: there is a blessed *nevertheless* which will not suffer the smallest alteration here. Jesus hath purchased the salvation of his people, and both their persons and their mercies are the price of his blood. So that when God corrects his people it is not for the satisfaction of his justice; for that is and hath been fully satisfied by him, who hath borne their sins and made satisfaction for them; but it is for the display of his purity, and that *we might be made partakers of his holiness*. See Psalm lxxxix. 33. with Heb. xii. 6—10. Reader! I cannot, I dare not dismiss the observations which arise out of this event, without calling upon you to remark, that if the Lord will not overlook the provocations of his own people without giving those evidences of his displeasure, what must the sins of his enemies call for? If a father thus corrects his child, surely for the same offence he will turn the servant out of door. Pray read that scripture: Psm. ii. 11, 12.

13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

It should be observed, that there are two *Meribahs*. The one is mentioned, Exod. xvii. 7. The other is this Meribah-Kadish. Deut. xxxii. 51.

14 ¶ And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us:

15 How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers:

16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border:

17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's *high* way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.

18 And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me lest I come out against thee with the sword.

19 And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the highway: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without *doing* any thing *else*, go through on my feet.

20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand.

21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

The Reader will recollect the relationship by nature between Israel and Edom. Israel sprung from Jacob, and Edom from Esau. One might have thought (speaking after the manner of men), that such affinities would have induced grace. But no! there is and must be an everlasting war between nature and grace. Esau hated Jacob because of the birth-right, and so it is still. Distinguishing grace will always induce this. Mal. i. 2, 3, 4. Reader! to which class do you belong? Are you the descendant of Esau or Jacob? Are you among the children of the bond-woman or of the free? See Gal. iv. 22 to 31.

22 ¶ And the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor.

From Kadesh to Mount Hor was but a short stage.

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,

24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

The same observation meets us here as at the 11th verse. The Lord's people though chastened for sin are yet the Lord's people still. The covenant of redemption subsists, though clouds and darkness rest upon it. Aaron must not enter into the promised land, though Aaron's name is written in the Lamb's book of life, and he shall enter into heaven. But is there not somewhat typical here? Aaron as the great head and priest of the Levitical dispensation, cannot bring the people into Canaan. For the law made nothing perfect. It brings to the borders of life, but cannot bring into life. The law itself is but a schoolmaster un-

to Christ. Dearest and ever-blessed Jesus! it is thou alone that canst bring thy people in, and plant them in thy holy mountain! Aaron, and all the sons of Aaron, as priests must die, and give up their priesthood, but thou remainest for ever, and thy years shall not fail. Heb. i. 11, 12.

25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up into mount Hor:

26 And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered *unto his people*, and shall die there.

27 And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation.

28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account, short as it is, of the close of Aaron's ministry. He ascends the mount it should seem with much cheerfulness and holy resignation, though he knew that he should descend no more. Yes, every true believer dies as he hath lived, believing the promises. Reader! can you like Aaron do this? Can you adopt the language of the apostle, and not only look but long for the coming of the great day of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ? This is a sweet testimony of a readiness for death, Philip. iii. 20, 21. In the taking off the garments of Aaron and putting them on Eleazar, we behold a lively type of the everlasting priesthood of Jesus. Heb. vii. 23, 24.

29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, *even* all the house of Israel.

It must have been a very affecting circumstance to Moses, Eleazar, and the people, when he and Eleazar returned from the mount without Aaron. But surely it was that kind of mourning which the apostle speaks of, *in those whose sorrow is not without hope*. 1 Thess. iv. 13. Reader! God grant it may be your portion and mine to die in Jesus! for blessed are the dead, (a voice from heaven hath said it,) that die in the Lord. Rev. xiv. 13. And whether it be on mount Hor, or mount Nebo, or in the wilderness of Zin; in whatever time or place, or circumstances, yet dying in faith, we shall drop asleep in the arms of Jesus and be blessed. Psm. xxxi. 5.

REFLECTIONS.

AMIDST the dying scenes of a pilgrimage like Israel's, and amidst the dying circumstances of the present world around me, Lord let my soul be directed to thee, and to the contemplation and enjoyment of that

salvation and eternal life which is in thee, who liveth and abideth for ever!

Oh my soul! from the divine chastisements which this chapter exhibits, in the Lord's correcting his people, learn to consider thy sins and the many provocations of thy multiplied transgressions. Ah! how many *Meribahs* hast thou passed through, and yet thy life hath been spared to thee: for the Lord's mercy endureth for ever!

Farewell, Aaron! thou great high priest of the Levitical Priesthood! thy death adds one confirmation more to the numerous evidences on every side, of the total incompetency of all ministrations under the law to bring the soul to God. Dearest, and ever-blessed Jesus, to thee I turn: thou almighty Aaron, thou great high priest of a better dispensation, established upon better promises. Thou alone art able to carry thy people in, and lodge them and secure them safe in an everlasting Canaan. Oh! grant, blessed Jesus, that like another *Eleazar*, my soul may be clad with the priestly garments of thy salvation, for thou hast made all thy people spiritual kings, and priests to God and the Father. May my soul be clothed with thy robes of righteousness, and my whole person adorned with the vestments of thy salvation: that both here and hereafter it may form my glorious covering, and become my everlasting title before my God and Father, to all the blessings of eternity.

CHAP. XXI.

CONTENTS.

In this chapter, as Israel is now approaching the frontiers of the promised land, here is related an account of the first campaign in the contest with Arad at Hormach. Interspersed with this history, is the relation of the people's murmuring afresh, and the Lord's chastisement of them, by sending among them fiery flying serpents; the account of the brazen serpent appointed by God for their recovery; several journeys are recited; and the account of Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan; with Israel's conquest over them, and taking possession of their land.

AND when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners.

Reader! remark how every hand is against the Lord's people. What had Arad to do with Israel? It was thirty years before this, that Moses had sent out those spies, and what evil had they done to merit this cruelty. But Reader! remember the spiritual sense of this. God's people are not of the world, and therefore the world hateth them. Ye shall be hated of all men (saith Christ) for my sake. It hath been always so, and must be so. And it is a sweet testimony to the truth, when that hatred is not for our improper behaviour at any time, but for the truth's sake. Make this proper distinction, and consult those scriptures, which speak of it. Matt. v. 11. Luke xxi. 16, 17. John xv. 18, 19.

2 And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.

3 And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hor^{na}h.

Such should be our conduct, with all our spiritual foes. Nothing but the total destruction of them can bring us peace. Reader! let you and I long for that hour, when we shall sing that song; *Now is come salvation and strength, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down.* Rev. xii. 10.

4 ¶ And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

It was no doubt fatiguing to the people to go round Edom, when by going through it the way would have been shortened. But, as it was the Lord's way, was it not the right way? And, Reader, is it not so now? You and I are sometimes prompted to think, why not taken home to our God and Saviour at once, after we have tasted of his preciousness: and wherefore is it that we are thus kept in the wilderness, in the ups and downs of a spiritual warfare so long? No doubt, your soul like Israel's is sometimes discouraged by reason of the way. But it is happy for us, that we are under a wiser and better direction than our own. God doth by us as he did by Israel. Exod. xiii. 17, 18.

5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for *there is no bread, neither is there any water*; and our soul lotheth this light bread.

What perpetual proofs doth Israel's history afford of the corruption and deceitfulness of the human heart? Reader! do not overlook, in the instance of this people, the universal conduct of mankind. Alas! how often may we detect our hearts loathing a fulness of divine mercies.

6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

There is a striking connection between the sin and the punishment. The people murmured for want of water; and here the Lord sent them a thirst which no water could satisfy. It should be observed that those fiery flying serpents were nothing new; the wilderness was full of them. So Moses tells us: Deut. viii. 15. But it should seem, that by the divine interposition, never before this had they annoyed the Lord's Israel.

Reader, do not forget that it is sin which hath thrown down the sovereignty of man over the inferior creatures. Gen. i. 28, compared with Gen. iii. 17—19. But we must not stop here, in our view of this subject, the Lord Jesus hath given us so sweet and precious a comment upon this part of Israel's history, that I venture to persuade myself the Reader will not be disposed to pass it over too hastily. Reader! I would beg you to remark with me somewhat more particularly, the striking affinity in this case of Israel of old, to the Israel of God in all ages. The people were bitten with fiery serpents, of which many died. And what is sin in all its various shapes, but the venomous bite and poison of that old serpent the devil. So he is called, Rev. xii. 9. and xxi. 2. As a serpent he appeared to our first mother. Gen. iii. 1. And his darts are called fiery darts. Ephes. vi. 16. And what are the effects of his deceptions, but death, *temporal* death: for sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men because that all have sinned: Rom. v. 12. *Spiritual* death: for unless quickened by the Lord, all are by nature dead in trespasses and sins: Ephes. ii. 1. And *eternal* death; for the separation both of soul and body from God, which is the sure consequence to those who live and die unawakened and unregenerated in time, is the eternal death of the miserable for ever. And all these are the effects of the serpent's fiery darts, like the bite of the serpent in the wilderness.

7 ¶ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

In Moses praying for the people, observe a lively type of Jesus in his glorious mediatorial character. Job is another lively type of the same. Job xlii. 8.

8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

We cannot possibly err in considering this whole service, as wholly and altogether typical of the redemption by Jesus, since he himself hath so explained it. John iii. 14, 15. But Reader, it is sweet as well as profitable to analyze, and, like the bee, gather out of this precious flower of scripture, the several precious parts of it. As *first*, observe, the plan of it did not originate in Moses, for it was wholly God's appointment, *Make thee*, saith God, *a fiery serpent*, &c. Such is our redemption. God the Father, is all along in scripture represented as the founder and

contriver of our salvation by his dear son. Isaiah xlii. 1. 6. John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 14. *Secondly*, The Lord Jesus is the whole cause of our redemption. He was anointed, as the most holy, to finish transgression and to bear all the iniquity of his people. Dan. ix. 24. Isaiah liii. 6. Ephes. i. 7. *Thirdly*, It is God the Holy Ghost who lifteth up the Lord Jesus, both in his Gospel, and in the hearts of every true believer. John xvi. 14. John xii. 32. And *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*. 1 Cor. xii. 3. After this view of the subject, I only detain the Reader just to observe, that as the faith of the Israelite in the camp, when bitten by the serpent, carried with it an evident proof of the work of God in the heart; so, in the present hour, the faith of the true Israelite of God in the church of Jesus, when under the raging effects of sin, in looking alone to him for salvation, carries the same evidence with it, that it is not by human might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. For as naturalists tell us, that to a person labouring under the disease of the bite of a venomous reptile, the sight of any thing bright or shining appears more likely to aggravate than assuage their misery: so to the eye of human reason, untaught of God the Holy Ghost, how should the bare looking unto Jesus cure the soul of sin? Nothing, surely, but the power of God, and the wisdom of God, working in the mind, both to believe, and to do, of his good pleasure can be competent to such an act of faith. Reader! let you and I beg of God for this grace, to believe the record that God hath given of his dear son. And as the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness, would not be efficacious to any unbelieving Israelite, who refused to look unto it for healing, but had recourse to human art for a cure: so neither now, will the lifting up of the Lord Jesus on the cross, be effectual to those who, trusting in their own righteousness, despise or neglect this great salvation. Lord! give us to look unto thee, and be saved among the ends of the earth, for thou art God and there is none else, and beside thee, there is no Saviour. Isaiah xlv. 22.

10 ¶ And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth.

Oboth hath an allusion to bottles or vessels; probably the people carried water from it in their vessels.

11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-abarim, in the wilderness which *is* before Moab, toward the sunrising.

12 From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared.

13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnou, which *is* in the wilderness that cometh out of the coast of the Amorites: for Arnou *is* the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

These were several marches, and it should seem quickly made. Canaan was almost now in their view, and the people longed to be there.

Even waters in their progress when they approach the mouth of the sea will rush with greater velocity. And ought not true believers in Jesus, when they approach the borders of the grave, long more earnestly to pour their souls into the bosom of Jesus? See Philip iii. 20, 21.

14 Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon,

15 And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab.

It is probable, that Israel, upheld by the arm of Jehovah, accomplished some mighty acts here. But the record of them is not come down to us. See Exod. xvii. 14. But some have thought, and not without reason, that as the Red Sea is mentioned here, the children of Israel, in the view of the brooks of Arnon, were prompted to sing again the song of triumph, which they had sung near forty years before at the Red Sea. Exod. xv. 1, &c. Reader, It is sweet at every renewed instance of mercy, we meet with in our pilgrimage, to look back and rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord. You and I shall find enough, like Jacob, to sing of, in the recollection of every stage we have come. *The God which fed me all my life long unto this day; the angel (Jesus) which redeemed me from all evil.* Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.

16 And from thence *they went* to Beer: that is the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

If, as some suppose, the name of *Beer*, which means the fountain or well of life, was given in this place to intimate the well of life; we may learn a sweet lesson from this journey. All our pilgrimage here is but as from one *Oboth* to another; where the sweet enjoyments of creature comforts are but as in vessels. When we come to *Beer*, to the well of life, even to heaven itself, from thence will flow that river, the never ceasing streams whereof make glad the city of God. Rev. xxii. 1.

17 Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:

18 The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by *the direction* of the law-giver, with their staves. And from the wilderness *they went* to Mattanah:

Oh! how sweet are songs of praise to the highest! I hope the Reader will not need that I should point out to him in this place, the evident traces we have in it of God the Holy Ghost. It is well known, that through the whole of the Bible, God the Spirit is uniformly pointed out under this delightful emblem of water. One evidence above a thou-

sand, we have John vii. 37—39. And I hope the Reader will feel, what I desire both to feel and cherish in my soul, grateful thanks to the eternal Spirit, that he hath in one and the same chapter, and in a period of the church so distant as the one we are now reviewing, so graciously held up to our view a type of our dearest Jesus in the brazen serpent, and an emblem of himself in the well of *Bcer*. Reader, there are two lovely songs in God's word, very short but very sweet. This is one, the other you will find, Isaiah xxvii. 2. The first is of regenerating mercy. The other is of dying love.

19 And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth:

20 And from Bamoth *in* the valley, that *is* in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.

Here we are come to the end of Moses's journey: for from the heights of *Pisgah*, he was permitted to see, but not go over, to the promised land. Deut xxxiv. 1—5. It is somewhat singular, but worthy to be observed in this place, that although we have several chapters more to go through, in this book, as well as the whole book of Deuteronomy, concerning Moses; yet there was but a short space between the death of Miriam, Aaron, and Moses; they all died in one year.

21 ¶ And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

22 Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink *of* the waters of the well: *but* we will go along by the king's *high* way, until we be past thy borders.

23 And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel.

24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon *was* strong.

25 And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof.

If you consult Deut. ii. 9, you will find that *Moab* was not to be fought with, being descendants of Lot: and therefore, when Israel

passed before *Oboth*, they did not attack Moab; see verses 11, 12, 13. But the Amorites had no such privilege of exemption; and hence became a prey to Israel.

26 For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon.

Moab it should seem had heretofore those cities, but now being in the possession of the Amorite, they were to be conquered by Israel by the divine appointment. Gen. xv. 18—21. But, Reader, it is sweet to trace all mercies to their fountain head. Hence, therefore, if you consult another scripture on this occasion, you will discover that it was the Lord who gave Israel the victory. See Deut. ii. 30—37.

27 Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared:

28 For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, *and* the lords of the high places of Arnon.

29 Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites.

30 We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which *reacheth* unto Medeba.

It should seem that these words were a kind of saying, well understood, no doubt, in those days, like proverbial sayings with us now.

31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

32 And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that *were* there.

33 And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

34 And the Lord said unto Moses, Fear him

not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his lapd; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.

The same observation meets us, concerning the king of Bashan and his courts, as of the king of the Amorites and his. The victories of Israel were all of covenant engagements, and all accomplished by the Lord God of Israel, in confirmation of covenant promises. But what these things were in history, have been and will be spiritually accomplished for the Lord's people, in the conquest of that country for the redeemed of the Lord, of which Canaan was but a type. And as Israel of old sung their song of triumph for the same, so may Israel now. To him which led his people through the wilderness, who smote Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan; "*for his mercy endureth for ever.*" Psm. cxxxvi. 16—20.

REFLECTIONS.

IN the perusal of this chapter, I would charge it upon my soul, to fix her meditation more intensely, while paying due respect to all the other interesting circumstances of Israel's history, upon that beautiful and most gracious type of the Lord Jesus, as explained by himself, which I beheld in the brazen serpent. What a delightful view doth it afford of the complete salvation by Jesus? Who would have expected, in an age so remote from the days of Jesus's ministry, and so many generations before the Son of God became incarnate, who would have looked for such a striking display of his great redemption in a figure! But it was thou, Holy, and eternal Spirit of all truth, to whose office it peculiarly belongs, to take of the things of Jesus and shew unto the people! It was thou that thus wast pleased to instruct the church then, and to comfort thy people now, with such sacred and soul-comforting representations of Jesus! Blessed be God the Holy Ghost, for the mercy! And no less do thou, precious Jesus, who art still lifted up in thy gospel for the purposes of salvation, from the Father's love, and by the Spirit's application of thy merits and blood to the souls of thy people, do thou evenmore become the blessed object of my faith and hope, until faith is lost in the enjoyment of thee in glory. May my soul gaze on thee, and thee only, for all supplies of grace while here below, and for all the enjoyments of glory, when surrounding thy throne above. Yes, dearest Jesus, on thee would my soul fix her wondering eyes, amidst all the diseases of sin, and under all the venomous wounds of Satan, that great serpent, the devil. I would for ever look unto thee, as thou hast graciously enjoined me, and be saved; for thou alone canst heal the fiery darts of the wicked: it is thy blood which is the true balm of Gilead. Oh! grant by the sweet influences of thy Spirit, that my soul may be constrained to look stedfastly unto thee with the eye of

faith, now thou art lifted up on the pole of the everlasting gospel: and may I so look, that, beholding thee in thy person and righteousness, and in all thy covenant characters, my soul may be saved with an everlasting salvation, until I awake up, after thy likeness, to be fully satisfied with it.

CHAP. XXII.

CONTENTS.

This is a very remarkable chapter, and merits particular attention. It commenceth the wonderful history of Balaam and his ass. There is much to be discovered in it of the Lord's gracious dealings with his people. The contents of it are the fright and the consequent wicked and foolish attempts of Balak, king of the Moabites, to prevent Israel from invading his borders. The impious endeavours of the king to gain over to his interest, a noted sorcerer of Mesopotamia: the impious attempts of this sorcerer, who knew better, yet for the sake of gain hired himself out to curse a people whom he knew the Lord had blessed: the history of these characters, and their conduct upon this occasion, together with the miraculous interposition of God, in causing a dumb ass to speak with man's voice, to forbid the madness of the prophet, are related in this chapter.

AND the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan by Jericho.

It is precious to the believer, when drawing near the borders of death and the grave, like Israel in the place where they are now arrived, they are on the brink of Jordan, and have Canaan in full prospect. Reader! what are your thoughts of this? Heb. xi. 6.

2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they *were* many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.

4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all *that are* round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time.

Though Balak saw the destruction of the Amorites by Israel, yet had he consulted what was said concerning Moab, he might have learnt that Israel had no commission at that time to hurt Moab. On the contrary as Moab sprung from *Lot*, the Lord had given special command, concerning the preservation of Moab. See Deut. ii. 9.

5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam

the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me:

6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they *are* too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, *that* we may smite them, and *that* I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest *is* blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

See what a corrupt heart is ever disposed to do, to consult flesh and blood, and to look to an arm of flesh rather than the living God. Reader! is it not too often so with you and me? Jeremiah ii. 13.

7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.

Mediani was a neighbouring state to Moab; and therefore Balak, prudently as he thought, called in this state as an auxiliary equally concerned with Moab. Alas! though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished. What a strong confidence, ought that sweet scripture of God by the prophet to give to all his faithful people: *Who would set briars and thorns against the Lord in battle?* Isaiah xxvii. 4, 5.

8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

Who this Balaam was, or how he had acquired the *outward* knowledge of the God of Israel, is not said. *Peter* calls him a prophet, 2 Pet. ii. 16. Perhaps similar to *Simon Magus*, mentioned in the gospel account. Acts viii. 10. There can be no question but that he was a bad man, and longed to hire himself out to work iniquity for gain. But in the midst of this had so much knowledge of the true God, as in the moment he did wrong he knew what was right. *Devils believe*, (we are told) *and tremble*. James ii. 19. And there is very little doubt, but that the devils with respect to head knowledge, in consequence of their intellectual faculties, have a clearer and better knowledge of the doctrines of Jesus than his best informed people. But here is the line of distinction between them and the Lord's inheritance; they knew nothing of the Lord Jesus by the influence of his Holy Spirit. They are and ever must be eternal strangers to the love of Jesus. I conclude that Balaam's knowledge of the Lord was of the kind I have mentioned; and his use of sorcery seems to confirm it.

9 And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men *are* these with thee?

If the Reader be surprised that God should visit such a character as Balaam, let him recollect that the Lord will work by whom he will work. It was the evident intention of God, as the sequel of the history proves, to make this time-serving wretch, an instrument of mercy and comfort to his people: witness these scriptures, which the Lord by the ministry of this man, hath blessed his church with in all ages since that period. See Numbers xxiii. 18—24. xxiv. 4—9, 15—19.—If the Reader be at a loss to explain, wherefore God should make use of such instruments, he should be told, that it hath pleased the divine mind in all ages, to do the same. Rather than his children shall want bread, Jesus will feed them even from his enemies' table. Sweet thought to the believer! and especially to the humble and unlearned believer. Cherish it, Reader, in your heart. But it is an awful consideration, and enough to make the ears of the unawakened to tingle, that many who have cast out devils in Jesus's name, will have their portion with devils in the world to come. See what the Lord Jesus saith on this subject: Matt. vii. 22, 23.

10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, *saying*,

11 Behold, *there is* a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.

We must not suppose that the Lord asked Balaam, from an ignorance of which had passed, wherefore these men were come: but the subject of the discourse is thus carried on. Moreover, it should seem from what follows, that Balaam was temporizing, as it were, with God in order to gratify Balak! He longed, as all bad men like himself have always done, to curse the Lord's people. See David's account of this: Psalm cix. 28.

12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they *are* blessed.

What a precious scripture is here! Reader! do not confine it to the Israel then, or to the occasion on which the sweet words were spoken. But consider it as of an everlasting import: God's people are blessed. They ever have been, now are, and ever shall be. And if you would know why, turn to the word of God, and there discover that they are so wholly on the account of Jesus. *Men shall be blessed in him.* He is *the sure mercies of David.* Psalm lxxii. 17. Isaiah lv. 3.

13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your

land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you.

Observe! how this wretch trades in iniquity. Had he dealt honestly with the servants of Balak, he would have told them that the people whom their master wished him to curse, the Lord had determined to bless; and therefore, it would be the highest impiety in him to do what Balak wished him. But probably he hoped by this message to keep the embassy open, and that he might yet do what Balak wished him. See what Jude saith of him: Jude 11.

14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

We see those that were messengers of Balak, used deception as well as Balaam. They did not say that the Lord's hand was in it, and therefore he did not come. But that he refused to come. Probably, by what followed, they led their prince to believe he would yet come, if the offers of reward were made larger.

15 ¶ And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they.

16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:

17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.

Observe the gradations of sin. First, Balaam's heart was tempted with the offer of money; now there is added to it worldly honour. And the argument is strengthened with the consideration, let nothing hinder: no, neither God nor conscience; and like another impious monarch of antiquity, his heart challengeth compliance, for who is the Lord that his voice should be obeyed? Exod. v. 2.

18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.

19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more.

What a bubble is man to himself, and to his own heart! under all the seeming resolution, not to go beyond the word of the Lord, yet the Holy Ghost who knew his heart, tells us, that he *ran greedily into an*

error for reward. Jude 11. Certain it is, that all along he wished to hire himself out to curse the people of God, and consequently never could have been one of the Lord's people. Else wherefore wait to hear what the Lord would say to him upon another trial, when the Lord had decided so plainly before.

20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, *and* go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.

21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

I beg the Reader not to overlook in those verses, that Balaam's permission to go, was on condition that the man called upon him again. Whereas it doth not appear, that he was again invited, but that he hastened in the morning to depart with them.

22 ¶ And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants *were* with him.

God's displeasure, it should seem, was not for the journey of Balaam; for the Lord had determined that he should be the unwilling instrument of good to his people, and confusion to his enemies. But it was from the secret malice in his heart against Israel, that he might yet, somehow or other, make Balak his friend in cursing them.

23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

Was not this angel the same which had gone before Israel all the way through the wilderness? Exod. xxiii. 20. compared with Malachi ii. 1.

24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall *being* on this side, and a wall on that side.

25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where ~~was~~ no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

Were not all these providences intended as so many checks and calls upon Balaam? Lev. xxvi. 21—24.

28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

30 And the ass said unto Balaam, *Am not I* thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since *I was* thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

The circumstances of the fact itself is unquestionable, since the apostle tells us that the dumb ass spake with man's voice. 2 Pet. ii. 16. And why should the thing be thought incredible? Who hath made man's mouth? is a question of the Lord himself, to shew that all things are of him. Exod. iv. 11.

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

Until God speaks, and until he opens the blind eye, nothing is effectual: but when he takes up the cause, all the pride of man falls to the ground. Job xlii. 5, 6.

32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because *thy* way is perverse before me:

33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.

How striking and unanswerable are the divine remonstrances. See another instance: Gen. iv. 7. And depend upon it, in the end of the day, the wicked will be found speechless, and without excuse.

34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

Observe, here are no relentings, no sorrow of heart, no remorse of mind, that he had come out with an express intention to curse the people of God; but a fear of punishment, and therefore rather than that should take place he will go back. See another example in the case of Saul. 1 Sam. xv. 30.

35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

Observe, how the Lord determines that Balaam shall speak that word, which is the very reverse of what he intended. That is a striking scripture to the same effect, which shews that men shall be the instruments to accomplish the reverse of their own intentions, Psalm lxxvi. 10.

36 ¶ And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.

37 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth.

40 And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that *were* with him.

41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the

high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost *part* of the people.

The long wished for interview is now obtained, and Balak makes sure that he shall now accomplish his wishes against Israel. But Balaam had his fears about him, as conscious sinners sometimes have, that he should not be able to do what he wished as much as Balak did; namely, to curse the people of God. Nevertheless, they went both together, and did as the enemies of Jesus in after ages are described as doing; they took counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed. Psalm ii. 2—4.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, and with horror contemplate the character of the graceless, even in their highest attainments of knowledge, as instanced in the case of wretched Balaam! What a wretched service must be the service of sin, when in spite of better knowledge, a man will hire himself out to work iniquity with all greediness; and for the sake of a little honour of this dying world, or the sordid gain of it, will go forth in the cause of the devil, against the Lord and against his Christ. Dearest Jesus! what everlasting cause have I to praise thee, that when I was pursuing the wages of sin, thou hast granted me the gift of God; and by thy precious blood and righteousness, thou hast made me free from sin that I might become the servant of God. Lord, make me very jealous over my own heart, that seeing, in so awful an example, to what lengths men may arrive in the knowledge of thee, and of thy ways, and yet come short of the grace of God, my soul may take up with nothing short of this, that *Christ is formed in my heart the only hope of glory.*

CHAP. XXIII.

CONTENTS.

The subject through this chapter is a continuation of the former. The idolatrous prince, and the impious prophet, are both busily engaged, in seeking how to curse the Lord's Israel, whom God hath blessed.

AND Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.

2 And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

I would beg the Reader to observe, for it is well worth observation, what vast pains and expence bad men will put themselves to, under the cover of religion. Alas! what are seven altars, or seventy times seven sacrifices, offered from a wicked heart! But in all ages it is the same. If God would but compound with the ungodly, and indulge them in

their sins, they will pay him with any expensive sacrifices. Dearest Jesus! be thou my altar, my priest, my only sacrifice: and be it my noblest desire to be accepted in thee, the Beloved. Ephes. i. 6, 7.

3 And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.

4 And God met Balaam: and he said unto him I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.

I would beg the Reader to consult the first verse of the next chapter, and thus will throw a light upon the whole subject. For it is very plain, from what is there said, that Balaam's leaving Balak, under pretence to hear what the Lord would say to him, was to use enchantments. But how striking is that expression: *the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth*; that is, overruled the wretch to say, the very reverse of what he wished. So that in the very moment this awful character hired himself out to curse God's people, he is constrained to bless them. Oh! that the Lord's inheritance, had the grace always to consider this, and keep it in remembrance. How would they be convinced of the truth of that sweet scripture, that no weapon formed against them can prosper. For even the wrath of men shall praise God, the remainder of wrath he will restrain. Isaiah liv. 17. Psalm lxxvi. 10.

6 And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.

7 ¶ And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, *saying*, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

Aram was in Mesopotamia. Gen. xxiv. 10.

8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, *whom* the LORD hath not defied?

Observe what he saith: that he *could* not; not that he *would* not, for that he wished. But how precious an instruction doth this hold forth to the believer in Jesus: neither magicians, nor devils, can curse those whom God hath pronounced blessed. And if the poor man did but call this to remembrance, never would he be led to fear, much less to

put confidence in, the juggling arts of conjurers and fortune-tellers, who go about to impose on the unwary.

9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

What a delightful string of the most glorious prophecies doth the Lord constrain this man to deliver! Yes! the Lord doth send, by whom he will send, his blessed truths to his church and people. And let the Reader remark with me, that our God hath in all ages made use of the worst of instruments to promote the best of causes. For rather than his children shall want bread, he will feed them from their enemies' table. Reader! amidst the prophecies here delivered dwell a short period on the contemplation of that remarkable one, that *the people were to dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations*. Seek I pray you for this distinguishing character in your own experience. Lord! grant that I may find my name among those which are written in the book of life. Rev. xx. 15.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth *part* of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

Sweet thought! though the flock of Jesus be but a little flock when comparatively considered; yet it is in itself an innumerable company. Reader! if it be your portion to be of the number of the ransomed which shall return to Zion, you will find the house of God to be neither scanty nor small. Multitudes have already entered it, and multitudes are continually pouring into it from all the quarters of the earth. Rev. vii. 9. Matt. viii. 11. But how awful a thought is it, that any man, like Balaam, should know and confess the privilege of *dying* the death of the righteous, while confessedly *living* the life of the ungodly. Oh! for the apostle's blessed state! Philip. i. 20.

11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed *them* altogether.

Is it not highly probable, that as the Lord wrought so powerfully on the mind of Balaam, he did not leave Balak altogether unconscious of his overruling presence? If so how applicable doth the psalmist speak; Psalm cix. 10—20.

12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?

It appears very plain, that both the employer and the employed were mutually disappointed. How striking is the application of that scrip-

ture, in which it is said, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. Job v. 12, 13.

13 ¶ And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the uttermost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence.

14 And he brought him into the field of Zo-phim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

15 And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet *the* LORD yonder.

Observe, the folly as well as impiety of Balak. Common sense, one might have supposed, would have been enough to have convinced him, that if the Lord blessed Israel in one place, never would he suffer them to be cursed in another. I would wish the Reader to remark with me, the uniform custom of all nations, to worship on the tops of the mountains. Was not this an opinion gathered from tradition? And had it not originally a divine source, only corrupted, gathered perhaps from Abraham's mount Moriah, answering to that most sacred of all mounts, Calvary?

16 And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.

17 And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken?

The same or similar observations meet us here as were offered before. Enchantments were what Balaam used when he left Balak under pretence of enquiring of the Lord. See chap. xxiv. 1. There are several other scriptures which will help to throw a light upon this. See Ezek. xiv. 1—11. Job xii. 16. Isaiah xlv. 25—28.

18 ¶ And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:

19 God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

20 Behold, I have received *commandment* to

blest: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; the LORD his God *is* with him, and the shout of a king *is* among them.

22 God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

23 Surely *there is* no enchantment against Jacob, neither *is there* any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat *of* the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

These are very precious truths; and doubly so when read with an eye to the evidence they bring with them, as they are in Jesus. In the covenant relationship of God in Christ, the word, the oath, the promises of the Father: the blood, the righteousness, the grace, and mercy of the Son: and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost: all these confirm the unquestionable testimony of the unchangeableness and faithfulness of Jehovah. Reader, mark it down as an infallible truth; God is not a man that he should lie. He may, and he doth, change the *plan* of his providences, as they appear to us; but never will he alter the *purposes* of his grace. Beheld in Jesus, the Lord hath not seen iniquity in his people. See those precious Scriptures, 2 Cor. v. 21. Jeremiah l. 20. Song iv. 7. But while I beg the Reader to dwell much upon these very blessed truths, I must beg of him at the same time, not to lose sight of Balaam's confession: that there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel. No! blessed be God. Jesus hath told us indeed, (Rev. ii. 10.) that Satan will cast some of his people into prison, and they shall have tribulation ten days: yet we are to fear none of these things. Satan would not only cast *some*, if he could, but *all*: and instead of a *prison* he would cast them into *hell*: and instead of *ten days* he would have it to be *for ever*. But the Song of Salvation must be sung, for the accuser of our brethren shall be cast down. Rev. xii. 10, 11.

25 And Balak said unto Balam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.

26 But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do?

27 And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.

28 ¶ And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon.

29 And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams.

30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

Nothing can be more evident, I think, from the perusal of the whole conference between Balak and Balaam, than that Balak was satisfied of Balaam's wish to oblige him with cursing Israel, had he dared to have done it. And nothing can be more evident, than that the impious prophet endeavoured by all the arts of enchantment, to do the reverse of what the Lord constrained him to do. Reader! pause over such views, and ask your own heart, what greater testimony can be needed, in proof of the divine government watching over his people, and accomplishing the destruction of his enemies! See two striking instances of this, 2 Kings xix. 32—37. Isaiah x. 5—7, 24, 25.

REFLECTIONS.

Is it possible, my soul, in the perusal of this chapter in beholding the Lord's tender care over his church and people, in making their very enemies the unwilling instruments to testify his watchfulness over them, is it possible any more to call in question the faithfulness of our covenant God in Christ? And shall I any longer doubt, any longer suspend my implicit faith and confidence in his mercy? Shall I, like the timid disciple of old, expect the fleece to be moist, and then again to be dry, and through all my life be for ever demanding new tokens, new evidences, increasing miracles of my God and Saviour's faithfulness towards me, when my whole life is but one continued miracle of all that is gracious, kind and merciful! Oh! for faith to believe the record which the Lord, the Father, hath given of his dear Son! Precious Jesus! pity and forgive the weakness and unworthiness of thy poor servant! Do thou, gracious Saviour, by the sweet influences of thy Holy Spirit, incline my soul to depend more upon thee, and to trust thee, even where I cannot trace thee. Cause me to learn from what I read in this chapter, that as all hearts are in thy disposal, and like rivers of waters thou turnest them whithersoever thou pleasest, thou canst incline my heart if thou wilt, to believe in thee, and to depend upon thee, even as thou secretly didst constrain the mad prophet to bless, where he intended to curse. Lord! lead me to see, that thou usest even the foes of thy church and people as instruments for their good: that thou hast blessed thy people, and wilt bless them; and their very enemies shall be constrained to call them blessed. And do thou, dearest and ever-blessed

Jesus, do thou cause all the opposition which my soul may meet with in the path of grace, from the foes of my salvation, to be overruled for good. Let it minister to endear thee still more and more to my heart; that my necessity of thee, my confidence in thee, and my dependance upon thee, as the Lord my righteousness, may be increasingly precious every hour, until thou shalt have subdued all the enemies of my salvation, and finally bruised Satan under my feet.

CHAP. XXIV.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Chapter, the continuation and conclusion of the history of Balak and Balaam. And never surely was there afforded a more memorable evidence, than there is in it, of the Lord's over-ruling the minds of men to his own glory, his people's joy, and his enemies' destruction. Balaam and Balak part in anger, and the former is constrained by the same power, under whose influence he had through the whole conference been guided, to inform the latter, what events, from the Lord and his people should befall him and Moab in the end.

AND when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

This verse is the key to the whole history. Here it is explained to us by the Holy Ghost himself, that Balaam's pretended withdrawing from Balak at the time of his standing by his sacrifice, was not to consult the Lord, but to use enchantments. Compare this verse, with chap. xxi. 3, 15. But Reader, let me again and again, charge you to observe with me, how our gracious God over-rules the mind in compelling the magician to do the reverse of what he intended. So the Lord worketh upon another occasion by the magicians of Egypt: Exod. viii. 18, 19. What a beautiful light is thrown upon the whole history of Israel in Egypt, by that single verse of the Psalmist; "He turned their heart to hate his people." Psm. cv. 25. Reader, if you are a child of God, never any more be at a loss to explain the cause of all that enmity the world manifests against God's people. How sweet is that truth of the prophet, that *God will work, and who shall let it.* Isaiah xliii. 13. Well might Balaam determine to lay aside his enchantments, for to what purpose make a *third* experiment, when baffled *twice* before?

2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.

The Spirit of God came upon him; that is *upon him* by an over-ruling, constraining power, so as to prompt to a service his heart would gladly have been excused from; but not *in him*, in a way of renewing sanctifying grace. Many have felt the power and sovereignty of the Holy Ghost who have never known what his sweet and gracious influences in converting the soul from error to salvation mean. *Saul* is

among the prophets, Saul hath another heart given to him, but not a *renewed* heart. He had indeed *another* heart suited to the change of station the Lord in his Providence appointed him to; and this for the advantage of the Lord's people. He was before this seeking his father's asses, and now he is appointed to a kingdom. So that *another* heart in its bias and pursuits became needful. But here is not a word through all this to lead to the idea, that Saul was a converted and regenerated believer. 1 Sam. xix. 23. x. 9. Reader! learn to make this nice but most proper distinction, and it will help to explain many of the otherwise seeming difficulties you may meet with in life.

3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

Observe how the Holy Ghost hath caused the expressions of Balaam to be guarded. It is the man whose *eyes* are opened, not whose *heart*; whose knowledge of divine things is in the head, but who never felt the influence of them in his life and practice. Reader! how very awful is it to behold men who have their understanding enlightened, but their minds unrenewed. We are taught to believe that devils excel men in the knowledge of the doctrine of Jesus and his righteousness, but they are eternal strangers to the love or desire of Jesus, in practical, experimental feeling. For while many to whom the Son of God came in the days of his flesh, knew him not; the devils cried out, *we know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God*. Luke iv. 33, 34. Reader! think only what an aggravated state of misery in the other world must it be, both in men and devils, whose darkness becomes more horrible in proportion to the greater light they possess, of knowing without feeling what divine love is. This is what may be supposed intimated in our Lord's expression: *if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness*: Matt. vi. 23.

5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, *and thy* tabernacles, O Israel!

6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, *and* as cedar trees beside the waters.

7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he

shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce *them* through with his arrows.

9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed *is* he that blesseth thee, and cursed *is* he that curseth thee.

If those beautiful words be considered prophetically as undoubtedly they were intended, what a volume of rich mercies, both temporal and spiritual, is contained in them. The Israel of God shall prevail over all opposition. This is the burden of the prophecy. The Lord's people may be, and, no doubt must be a warlike people, for the whole world is against them. But they must conquer, for they shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb. But Reader! do not overlook the principal thing in the prophecy, namely, that it is not Israel's strength but the God of Israel, in whose name they are victorious. *God brought him forth out of Egypt.* And the same God is engaged to bring him into Canaan. Yes! Jesus hath assured his people of salvation, they shall be where he is to behold his glory. John xvii. 24. Rev. vii. 9—17.

10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed *them* these three times.

11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour: but, lo, the Lord hath kept the back from honour.

The anger of Balak would most probably have broken out in some act of violence upon Balaam's person, had he not been restrained by fear. And it is likely that, as the Lord had yet more prophecies to be delivered upon this occasion by Balaam, the Lord over-ruled the mind of the prince of Moab, that he should not.

12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying,

13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do *either* good or bad of mine own mind: *but* what the LORD saith, that will I speak?

Reader! observe the temporizing conduct of Balaam. He doth in effect say by this apology, that he would gladly have obliged Balak, had

he dared. But we have authority to make a larger comment upon Balaam's conduct on this occasion, and to observe, that this time-serving wretch actually taught Balak, that there was but one method by which he could ruin Israel in the favour of God, and thereby preserve his own people from ruin; and that was by tempting them to idolatry. If the Reader will consult, Rev. ii. 14, he will there learn this unquestionable truth from the word of the Lord Jesus himself. And if he will after this consult the 3 or 4 first verses of the 25th chapter of Numbers, he will there behold how sadly the poisonous advice of this impious character operated. Alas! what are even the Lord's Israel, except up-held by the God of Israel.

14 ¶ And now, behold, I go unto my people: come *therefore*, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

Observe how he endeavours to soften this message by referring the event foretold to the *latter* days. As much as to say, it will never happen in your time.

15 ¶ And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

16 He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most high, *which* saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

It is very awful to read again this man's acknowledgment, that his eyes were open, and that he had heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High. Oh, Reader! think, I charge you think, what a vast difference there is between an head full of the knowledge of God, and an heart full of the grace of God.

17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

How awful will be the sight of Jesus to the sinner! He will see him but not nigh; not as Job. for himself: but as the unhappy wretch mentioned in the gospel, who in hell lifted up his eyes in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. See those scriptures: Rev. i. 7. Job xix. 25, 27. Luke xvi. 23. The star, that is here prophesied to arise, very probably became the foundation of that tradition, which, among the heathen world, led the nations to expect a great prince about the time that Christ was born, to arise out of Judea. Matt. ii. 2. In a literal sense, this prophecy had its accomplishment, when David obtained a victory over the *Moabites*: see 2 Sam. viii. 2.

18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations; but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever.

21 And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

22 Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

I connect all that is here said respecting the destruction of the nations by Israel, for the sake of shortness. If the Reader be disposed to search out for the accomplishment of these prophecies, I refer him to Judges iii. viii. and xi. 2 Chron. xx. and xxvi. But when I refer the Reader to these scriptures in order that he may discover the literal accomplishment of the prophecy, I would call upon him to look yet further, even unto the days of the gospel, for their spiritual accomplishment in the person, character and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet Daniel points to his kingdom and conquests in a most beautiful and interesting manner, and by his unanswerable evidence gives us to see in whom the whole was accomplished. See Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27. Compared with Dan. ii. 34. And well may every true believer cry out in the contemplation of these events; *so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.* Judges v. 31.

24 And ships *shall come* from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

Here ends the account of the conference. It is proper to observe, that the Lord's judgments overtook Balaam before the death of Moses; as we read, Numb. xxxi. 8. And which is recorded again by Joshua. Joshua xiii. 22.

25 And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do not take a farewell review of the history of Balaam and Balak, without first imploring grace from God to take with you the several most interesting improvements which it holds forth. Learn first, what lengths bad men will proceed to, like Balak, in order to accomplish their devices against the righteous. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent are, and ever must be, hostile to each other. But oh! for grace to be as much alive in the cause of God and Christ, as the foes of Jesus are in their fruitless attempts to overcome the Israel of God. Learn next, Reader, from the character of Balaam, what a miserable state must those be in, who minister in divine things with a mere head knowledge, void of heart influence. It is precious indeed to see, that our gracious head of his church is always superintending the government of it. And he can and will arrange and order even the ministry of bad men, so as to promote, in defiance of their wishes and inclinations, his own glory, and his people's welfare. But what must be the end of those men, and what can the wages of unrighteousness be but death, even spiritual and eternal death. And lastly, and above all, let the history of Moab's vain attempt to crush Israel, and the wonderful interposition of their covenant God, as is here most delightfully related, teach the Reader, (and may the instruction be impressed upon the Writer's heart also), how eternally safe and secure the fold of Jesus is through all the eventful periods of this world's pilgrimage. Yes! thou precious God of thy people, who art the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever; thy promise is like thyself; *thy people shall never perish neither shall any pluck them out of thine hand.* Unworthy, undeserving, and ill and hell-deserving as they are in themselves, they are beloved for thy sake, and they are beloved for the Father's sake. Oh! may we ever remember on what account it is our mercies are secure; and begin now, ere we come to sing it louder in glory, the song of salvation to God and the Lamb.

CHAP. XXV.

CONTENTS.

A melancholy relation is contained in this Chapter. The children of Israel fall into idolatry. The Lord's visitation in a way of judgment follows. Phinehas distinguisheth himself amidst the general corruption in his zeal for the Lord's honor, and is solemnly blessed of God for it.

AND Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

Reader! pause over this verse and seriously reflect, what various foes the Lord's Israel in all ages have to contend with. Neither Balaam's curse nor Balak's sword could hurt Israel, but their own lusts did more injury than both. What hath not the sensual passions of the heart accomplished! It was a saying of one of the ancient fathers, *Lord, keep me from that evil man, myself.* Depend upon it we have more to fear

from our own corrupt passions, than from the malice of all our enemies. And more cause to suspect danger from a smiling, than from a frowning world. But let the Reader recollect what Scripture tells us concerning Balaam, it was from his advice that Balak sent his enticing women to seduce Israel, and cast the stumbling block of iniquity before them. Rev. ii. 14.

2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

Observe, the temptation is first to the body, and next to the soul. The *Moabites* first decoy Israel to bodily fornication, and then to spiritual. Alas! how speedily is the transition made, from bodily sins to spiritual. For if the mind be first defiled with uncleanness, the soul is soon given up to forgetfulness. So very important is that precept of the apostle, ever to be kept in view by the Lord's heritage. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Reader! I do not know what particular infirmity of the flesh, you may be most exposed to, but I would have you pause awhile over this view of the subject, and pray over it, that the Lord may keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

It is supposed, and with great appearance of truth, that commerce with the women formed a part of the idolatrous worship of the *Moabites*. So that while Israel was giving themselves up to their lust in the arms of the daughters of Moab; the bowing to the idols of Moab, was the sure consequence of it. Oh! what a state of sin is our nature reduced to by the fall. Is this Israel, whom the Lord hath so loved, so preserved, so taken care of, and so blessed and defended? And is this Israel now at *Shittim*, which was just over against the land of promise, and ready now to enter upon the possession of it. Hath the Lord indeed proved so faithful to Israel: and is Israel now manifesting himself so unfaithful to God. Reader! look into your own heart? Are you of the true Israel of God? And are you better than they? Remember the apostle's solemn admonition on this very passage: *let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* 1 Cor. x. 12.

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

What an awful visitation is implied in these verses! For I would have the Reader remark, that nothing more is said of it, than it is *the*

fierce anger of the Lord; and the dreadful effects are mentioned in the course of the chapter; that no less than four and twenty thousand of the people became the victims of it. Perhaps it was by the plague, or some other epidemical disease. Reader! behold in it the awful consequences of sin. You plainly perceive, that Israel's own sins did that, which all the machinations and enchantments of Balaam could not accomplish. God was turned (as the prophet speaks) to be their enemy, and fought against them, Isaiah lxiii. 10.

6 ¶ And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping *before* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

It is hardly possible to conceive any act so daring as this. But, alas! what is not the human heart capable of perpetrating, when given up to its own lusts! That is a most awful scripture which saith, *Let Ephraim alone he is joined to his idols.* Hosea iv. 17. Reader! put it down as a sure maxim: when the Lord ceases to correct, destruction is at hand. See those Scriptures, 1 Cor. xi. 32. Amos iii. 2. compared with Isaiah i. 5.

7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

What a lovely view is here afforded of Phinehas! How ought it to have endeared him to the congregation? How hath it endeared his name in the church! The psalmist recorded the memorable and holy zeal of this man many ages after, when it said of him, that it was accounted unto him for righteousness unto all generations. Psm. cvi. 30, 31. But above all, how did it procure the testimony and approbation of the Lord. But Reader, do not overlook in this view of Phinehas, him whom Phinehas represented, and whose zeal for his Father's house is said to have consumed him. See Psm. lxi. 9, with John ii. 17.

9 And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

The apostle to the Corinthians, counts three and twenty thousand. Probably the slaughter of the Judges made them both added together *four and twenty thousand.* Compare 1 Cor. x. 8, with this verse and the fourth verse; as also with Deut. iv. 3.

10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace :

13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood ; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

We here plainly behold the outlines of him, who hath indeed an everlasting priesthood, and in whom, no doubt, Phinehas's zeal was accepted. Heb. vii. 16, 17.

14 Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, *even* that was slain with the Midianitish woman, *was* Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites.

15 And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain *was* Cozbi, the daughter of Zur ; he *was* head over a people, *and* of a chief house in Midian.

The Holy Ghost is particular in mentioning the names of the delinquents. It is awful when great names are only recorded, in order to particularise their greater shame and infamy.

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

17 Vex the Midianites, and smite them :

18 For they vex you with their wives, where-with they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.

If we take this precept spiritually, it teaches that we are not to spare, nor suffer our eye to pity any, however dear or near to us in nature, who tempt us from our God. Deut. xiii. 6—11.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter now again in the close of it, and while taking a leisurely review of the sad consequences of a fallen state,

look up for grace to keep thee from the stratagems of Satan and all his agents, lest thou fall after the same example of unbelief. I would convert the apostle's account of this sad history into a prayer, and say, Lord grant that I may not lust after evil things as they lusted, neither commit fornication as some of them committed; but grant gracious God that amidst all the variety of temptations, which beset my soul in this wilderness, a way may be made for me to escape, that I may be able to bear it.

And while I behold the zeal of Phinehas, who amidst the general corruption was found faithful to his God, oh! may I never forget thee, thou great High Priest of a better dispensation established upon better promises. Dearest Jesus! it is thou, whose ardent love for thy Father's glory, and thy people's welfare, brought thee down from heaven; and in the destruction of sin, thou hast destroyed the works of the devil. Be thou my everlasting priest, thou great Meichisedec, and may I find in thee all the Father's grace, and mercy, and love, displayed in thine everlasting priesthood.

CHAP. XXVI.

CONTENTS.

The sacred historian records in this Chapter the number of the people previous to their going into Canaan. Particular notice is taken of the deaths of Dathan and Abiram; as also of the deaths of all that came out of Egypt, excepting Caleb and Joshua.

AND it came to pass after the plague that the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying,

2 Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their father's house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.

It should seem that the great design of the numbering of Israel was, with a view to impress upon the minds of the people the unalterable decrees of God. The Lord had sworn, that of all those men which had seen his glory, and his miracles, both in Egypt and in the wilderness, none of them should see the land of promise, because of their murmuring. And now, by the numbering the people, the vacancies found by death afforded proof of the divine veracity. See Numb. xiv. 21—24.

3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying,

4 *Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses*

and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

Eleazar is joined in commission with Moses in the service; and the method of enumerating them is, as was before appointed, on their coming forth from Egypt at Mount Sinai. Numb. i. 1—3.

5 Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben; Hanoch, *of whom cometh* the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites:

6 Of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites.

7 These *are* the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty.

8 And the sons of Pallu; Eliab.

9 And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This *is that* Dathan and Abiram, *which were* famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD:

10 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.

11 Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.

12 The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites:

13 Of Zerah, the families of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites.

14 These *are* the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.

15 The children of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites: of Haggi,

the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites:

16 Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites:

17 Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites.

18 These *are* the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred.

19 The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

20 And the sons of Judah after their families were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharezites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites.

21 And the sons of Pharez were; of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.

22 These *are* the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

23 *Of* the sons of Issachar after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites:

24 Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites: of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.

25 These *are* the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.

26 *Of* the sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.

27 These *are* the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred.

28 The sons of Joseph after their families *were* Manasseh and Ephraim.

29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir, begat Gilead: of Gilead *come* the family of the Gileadites.

30 These *are* the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites:

31 And of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites:

32 And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaïtes: and of Hepher, the family of the Hepherites.

33 And Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad *were* Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

34 These *are* the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred.

35 These are the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Becher, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites.

36 And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites.

37 These *are* the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These *are* the sons of Joseph after their families.

38 The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites:

39 Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites.

40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites: and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites.

41 *These are* the sons of Benjamin after their families: and they that were numbered of them *were* forty and five thousand and six hundred.

42 *These are* the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuam, the family of the Shuamites. *These are* the families of Dan after their families.

43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, *were* threescore and four thousand and four hundred.

44 *Of* the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Beriites.

45 *Of* the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites.

46 And the name of the daughter of Asher *was* Sarah.

47 *These are* the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them; *who were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

48 *Of* the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites:

49 *Of* Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites.

50 *These are* the families of Naphtali according to their families: and they that were numbered of them *were* forty and five thousand and four hundred.

51 *These were* the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

I detain not the Reader through this whole relation, but to remark to him, with what particular emphasis reference is again had to the sin of Dathan and Abiram. Surely the Holy Ghost intended by it to teach the Church, that the surest way to keep alive in the soul the precious

ness of the Lord Jesus, is to keep alive a sense of sin, from which alone his great salvation can deliver us. I only add another observation on all these verses, and that is to remark from the numbers altogether, that God's threatenings were minutely fulfilled. The people were not increased during the forty years; for the numbers are nearly the same as when taken at Mount Sinai. And the whole of that race which came out of Egypt, excepting those whom the Lord had promised to reserve, were dead. Compare Numbers i. 46, with the account here. I think it probable that Moses wrote the 90th Psalm upon this occasion. And what could be more suited to the purpose? See Psalm xc. throughout.

52 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

53 Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names.

54 To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him.

55 Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.

56 According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

Observe, how the Lord appoints the boundaries of his people's habitation. Yes! all our resting places, and all our movements, our tents in this life, and our mansions of glory in another, are all graciously marked, and appointed, by the great Giver. Reader! take notice what the Son of God hath said concerning these things, John xvii. 2. xiv. 2, 3. Matt. xx. 20—23.

57 And these *are* they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites.

58 These *are* the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begat Amram.

59 And the name of Amram's wife *was* Joche-

bed, the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister.

60 And unto Aaron was born Nabad, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

61 And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the LORD.

62 And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

The Reader should take notice in this place that the tribe of Levi is not numbered with the general return of the other tribes of Israel, because these Levites peculiarly belonged to the Lord. See Numb. iii. 11—13. And let the Reader again take notice how the sin of *Nadab* and *Abihu* is recorded. Levit. x. 2.

63 These *are* they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho.

64 But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai.

65 For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

The same observations meet us here in the close of the Chapter, as cannot but occupy our thoughts through the whole of it; God's unalterable word, the sure consequences of sin, and the certain issue of hardness and impenitence of heart. *Hath he said, and shall he not do it; hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Numb. xxiii. 19.

REFLECTIONS.

IN the contemplation of the events recorded in this Chapter, I feel my heart constrained to cry out, Lord! what is man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of! Think, my soul, while thou here reviewest the dreadful ravages of death during forty years

only, what destruction hath been made by death during nearly now six thousand years since sin first entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passeth upon all men, because all have sinned. But dearest Jesus! here again let me turn from the view of the desolations made by death, to behold thee in all the glories of thy redeeming character, as having by thy death overcome death, and opened the first view of the everlasting mansions of life, in thy triumph over the grave. Precious Jesus! thou art the Rock of ages. On thee may I be built, as a sure dwelling place. In thy book may my soul be found numbered! And when all the wilderness dispensations of a wilderness journey, and the wilderness itself, shall be destroyed, may an entrance into the Canaan of thy everlasting, unchanging love, be my portion among the numbered tribes of God.

CHAP. XXVII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the private history of the daughters of Zelophehad suing for an inheritance among the other tribes of Israel. The Lord's determination in their favour. Moses is admonished of his death: and Joshua nominated by the Lord, as his successor.

THEN came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these *are* the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

3 Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us *therefore* a possession among the brethren of our father.

The case of this family was very singular. And no doubt was ordered to be so by the Divine appointment. But it gave occasion to manifest the faith and piety of those *five* sisters; for it is very evident

they had faith in the promises of God, that Canaan should be divided to Israel: and they had grace to desire an inheritance among the people of God. While the Reader hath made these observations on the conduct of the daughters of Zelophehad, I would call upon him also, to attend to another instruction, arising out of their circumstances. Moses was commanded to number the people, and this he did in the foregoing Chapter; and God promised that those which were numbered should be the possessors of Canaan. Chap. xxvi. 53. But the daughters of Zelophehad were not numbered, and consequently had no claim in this promise. We shall see in the sequel, however, what the Lord's will concerning them was; though, from not being enrolled, they had no pretensions on this ground. What is said of their father's dying in his own sin, and not in the company of *Korah*, to whose tribe he belonged, means that he died, not for that rebellion, but from the general cause of death, which is from sin: for when sin first entered into the world, death came by sin, and so death passeth upon all men, because all have sinned. Rom. v. 12.

5 And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

What a sweet lesson we ought to draw from hence! Yes, my soul! do thou bring every cause before thy God, and never lean upon thine own understanding. See a string of the richest promises to this purpose, by way of encouraging every poor exercised soul. James i. 5. 1 Pet. v. 7. Psalm xxxv. 12. Isaiah xlii. 16.

6 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.

11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a sta-

tute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

What a gracious interposition of the Lord, in the case of Zelophehad's daughters; and what a merciful determination! But, Reader! connect with it what was remarked before, of these *five* sisters being not among the numbered; and then see whether there is not somewhat of a spiritual illustration in it respecting the Gospel church, and that everlasting inheritance purchased by the Lord Jesus, of which the earthly Canaan was a type. Doth it not say, that while all the numbered of Israel shall be inheritors of God's holy mountain, multitudes of the Gentile church, whom, as John saw in his vision, *no man could number*, shall be brought in and included in that rich salvation? Pray! Reader, consult those scriptures, and compare them together: Isaiah xlix. 18—23. Rev. vii. 4—10.

12 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel.

13 And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

Though it is appointed unto all men once to die, yet precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Observe, Moses is to have such a view of the promised land, as may strengthen his faith in the divine promises. But is there not in all this, strong assurances implied of an everlasting inheritance in the covenant-righteousness of Him, whom Moses beheld in the bush. Thus Abraham may die when he has seen Christ's day afar off. Jacob may die, when he could with holy confidence say, concerning God's Christ, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!* And Moses may die, though not suffered to enter upon an *earthly* Canaan, when assured of an *heavenly* one. Gen. xxv. 8. xlix. 18.

14 For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

Moses, though faithful as a servant in God's house, yet partook of the same infirmity as all the race of Adam, concerning whom it is said, "There is none righteous, no, not one." How sweet again, under this view, is the recollection of thy immaculate, spotless, holiness, dearest Jesus! who, though taking upon thee our sinless infirmities, didst not take any of our impurities, but wast holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Heb. vii. 26. Reader! do not overlook, in this place, the manifestation that is here made of the holiness of Jehovah: the Lord will not suffer the smallest taint of sin to go unnoticed in his servants. How often is this offence

of Moses mentioned: and how is it handed down through all ages of his church! Think, therefore, what a holy jealous God we have to do with, who will be sanctified in all who approach him; and in the death of his only begotten Son hath given such an awful demonstration of his holiness.

15 And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,

16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

Let us admire the character of Moses in this point of view, in his concern for the church of God: he seems to have more anxiety on this occasion than respecting his own death. But let us turn from Moses to look at Moses's God, who, it is said of him, was moved with compassion when he beheld the multitudes, in the days of his flesh, which were as sheep having no shepherd; and commanded his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Matt. ix. 36—38.

18 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

20 And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

Here we have the gracious answer of God to the supplication of Moses, in appointing a successor, and ordaining him to the arduous office. Joshua had, before this, been eminently distinguished in the battle with Amalek: see Exod. xvii. 9—14. and in the instance of espying out the promised land: see Numb. xiv. 6—10. and now the Lord calls him forth to a more eminent degree of usefulness.

22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation:

23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

The conduct of Moses, in so cheerfully obeying the Lord, is ever to be admired and applauded; and we should desire grace to imitate it. Moses had his relations; and *naturally*, no doubt, had it pleased the Lord, he might have been glad to have seen one of them taken for his successor. But *grace* enabled him to triumph over *nature*; and to prefer God's honour and glory to every worldly private interest. Reader! may the Lord give us grace to do so upon all the lesser occasions with which we may be exercised through life; and to say with those of old, that we prefer the interests of Jerusalem above our chief joy. Psalm cxxxvii. 6.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord! make me as anxious for an inheritance among all them that are sanctified, as those daughters of Israel were for an inheritance among their brethren: and may it be my noblest ambition to be among the people of God, rather than among all the enjoyments, this side the land of promise hath to offer. And oh! thou blessed Spirit, from whose gracious influence all wisdom is imparted to the mind of thy people, give to me suitable grace, upon every occasion of difficulty, how to act in doubtful cases; lead my soul to imitate thy servant's example, and, like Moses, the man of God, bring the matter before the throne: and may thy promise of strength as the day is, be my portion.

But chiefly, dearest Jesus, now thou hast led me as thou didst thy servant Moses, to view by faith the promised land, oh! may I be as ready as he was to resign my soul into thy arms with full assurance of faith. Yes! my gracious God and Saviour, from the hill of Calvary and the Mount of Olives, thou hast opened indeed my eyes to behold fair views of that blessed country whither thou art gone before, to take possession of it for thy people. Lord! strengthen my faith every day in this well-grounded assurance, and until thou shalt be pleased to give the signal for my dismissal, may I be hourly waiting and longing for thy coming; and when the moment shall arrive, oh! enable me to die, as I pray to live, believing the promises; and at the very last crying out with him of old, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

CHAP. XXVIII.

CONTENTS.

As the people are now approaching Canaan, they are once more numbered; the sacrifices and burnt offerings again enjoined; and the se-

veral services for every day, the Sabbath day, and the new moons, and the day of passover, particularly again appointed.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
 2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, *and* my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, *for* a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season.

It should seem by what the Prophet *Amos* saith (Chap. v. 25.) that the Israelites were forgetful of those sacrifices. And *Stephen*, who reproved the Jewish council when he was brought before them, for this neglect of their fathers, evidently explains the passage of the prophet *Amos* in this sense. See Acts vii. 42. Hence therefore, as all that generation was now dead, during their forty years sojourning in the wilderness, excepting *Joshua* and *Caleb*, the Lord saw fit to have these laws for the observance of his ordinances, repeated. The Lord's people need to be reminded both of their duties and their privileges. But there seems to have been another reason also for the repetition of these statutes; and that is, that as the possession of the promised land was to be by conquest, while the people were engaged in war with men, they were never to forget making and preserving peace with God. Doth not this teach us somewhat very sweet and interesting concerning our Jesus, and our peace with Him through the blood of his cross, in the very moment we are at war with all the enemies of our salvation? Nay it is said, in the book of the Psalms, that Canaan itself, in the peaceable possession of it, was given to the people that they might observe his statutes and keep his laws. Psm. cv. 45.

3 ¶ And thou shalt say unto them, This *is* the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, *for* a continual burnt offering.

4 The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even;

5 And a tenth *part* of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth *part* of an hin of beaten oil.

6 *It is* a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

Reader! do not overlook the Lamb of God, in this continual morning and evening service of the Israelite. Why, think you, was this perpetual morning and evening sacrifice, but to keep alive in the mind the sense of sin, and that without shedding of blood there is no remission? Oh! may you and I look daily, and hourly, unto Jesus; and behold

his precious fulness and all-sufficiency of salvation, who by the one offering of himself once offered, hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified. See that charming scripture to this point, Heb. x. 10—14.

7 And the drink offering thereof *shall be* the fourth *part* of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy *place* shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD *for* a drink offering.

8 And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer *it*, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Observe, the wine is to be strong, that is, of the best quality, *wine on the lees well refined*: meaning, no doubt, in a spiritual sense, the richness and strength of that complete salvation which is of God in Christ. Our best things, our strongest, richest gifts are the Lord's property, and therefore, justly the Lord's due: and all that we have, and all that we can offer, are of his own free grace to us; and when returned to him again, have no merit in them, to plead before God. See Malachi i. 7—14. Let the Reader further observe, on these two verses, that this strong wine was to be *poured* out unto the Lord. So was Jesus's blood poured out for the salvation of his church and people. And what is the service, even now, at the altar of Jesus, but the memorial of the same blood shedding? Oh! precious token of the Redeemer's love. Lord! may it be my portion with holy joy to take of this cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Psalm cxvi. 13.

9 ¶ And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof:

10 *This is* the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Reader! pause over these verses, to remark with me the peculiar honor and reverence appointed to the sabbath. The original institution of the sabbath was in honor of the works of creation: but in the gospel church do not the faithful commemorate both the old creation in nature, and the new creation in grace? I will not presume to say that the two lambs of the morning, and the two for the evening sacrifice had reference to the Father's love in creating us at first, and the Holy Spirit's love in re-creating the soul anew in Christ Jesus: but I must venture to say, that the *double* offering, on the Lord's day, of those sacrifices, both at the morning and evening, evidently bespeaks the vast and infinite importance of the thing signified. Precious salvation!

would I call it, when I behold it thus introduced and shadowed forth through so many intermediate ages, and by such perpetual remembrances.

11 ¶ And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot;

12 And three tenth deals of flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram;

13 And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil *for* a meat offering unto one lamb; *for* a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

14 And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third *part* of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth *part* of an hin unto a lamb: *this is* the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year.

15 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the LORD shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

The *new moons* were seasons of peculiar solemnity in the Jewish church, and seem to have been held in almost equal veneration with the sabbath. See 2 Kings iv. 23. But it hath not pleased the Holy Ghost to give his gospel church so particular an account of the cause of their institution. There can be but little question that they had an eye to Jesus, to whom all ordinances pointed. And by comparing the thing itself with what is said of the solemnity of the worship observed in the season of the new moon, by the prophet Isaiah, a light seems to be thrown upon the subject, as if the ceremonies in them had an eye to the spiritual worship in the church of the Lord Jesus. There it is said, *that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Jehovah.* See Isaiah lxvi. 23. And I venture to observe, upon this passage, that the Hebrew will admit of this translation of it, from new moon to *His* new moon, and from sabbath to *His* sabbath: as if Jesus, who is the well known and allowed Lord of the sabbath, was particularly referred to. Matt. xii. 8.

16 ¶ And in the fourteenth day of the first month *is* the passover of the LORD.

17 And in the fifteenth day of this month *is* the

feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.

Observe in those verses, the service of the passover, and the feast of unleavened bread succeed each other. Particular directions had been given concerning the service of the passover, and the great mercy intended by it: the remembrance of which was to be kept up in the church in their perpetual generations. See Exod. chap. xii. and if the Reader be pleased to read our Commentary on that Chapter, I pray the Lord to bless it to his perusal. But the sacred historian is directed to give particular directions concerning the feast of unleavened bread, which commenced the fifteenth day of the month, and lasted seven days.

18 In the first day *shall be* an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work *therein*:

19 But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire *for* a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish:

20 And their meat offering *shall be of* flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram;

21 A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs:

22 And one goat *for* a sin offering, to make an atonement for you.

23 Ye shall offer these beside the burnt offering in the morning, which *is* for a continual burnt offering.

24 After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

25 And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

I would request the Reader to peruse those several verses with becoming reverence and attention, in order to remark with me the infinite value our God hath put on the blood of that one great Sacrifice, which all these services represented. What a profusion of blood was here

continually shed! What an awful conviction of sin should it afford! and what a precious testimony doth it hold forth of the infinite importance of him and his one sacrifice, which hath for ever done away sin; and made the comers thereunto perfect. Lord! write upon my soul, in characters never to be effaced, that without shedding of (His) blood there is no remission. Heb. ix. 22.

26 ¶ Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks *be out*, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work:

27 But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year;

28 And their meat offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram,

29 A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs;

30 And one kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you.

31 Ye shall offer *them* beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink offerings.

The feast of unleavened bread was a day of great solemnity among the people; and the feast of first fruits, which followed in seven weeks after, was no less so; and it was intended as a season of testifying thankfulness to the Lord for the gathering in the blessings of the earth, and of festivity among the people. There was an offering made to the priest upon this occasion. See Levit. xxiii. 10. This was the memorable feast which the Holy Ghost was pleased to distinguish for the season of his first descent on the apostles; and by which indeed there were great offerings of the first fruits of the conversion of souls to God; and there can be no doubt, but that every one of the great festivals in the Jewish Church was intended as typical of the glorious events of redemption in the Christian Church. The law was a shadow of good things to come; but the body is Christ. Heb. x. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! may all these ordinances, statutes, and appointments of a shadowy dispensation, be made the means in thy hands, of leading me to thee, in whom I behold, through the Spirit's teaching, all ordinances, statutes, and sacrifices, having their fullness and completion. Thou art indeed, the morning Lamb, and the evening sacrifice. Thou

art Christ, my Passover, sacrificed for me: therefore give me grace to keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. May I esteem thy person, thy favor, thy sweet communications of love, better than all new moons and feasts of the richest earthly enjoyments. Thou art thyself the very sabbath of my soul, and the only rest wherewith thou dost cause the weary to rest, and to become their refreshment. And Lord, grant that by thee I may be enabled to offer to God continually, the first fruits of my heart and of my lips, giving thanks in thy name.

CHAP. XXIX.

CONTENTS.

The same subject is carried on, through this Chapter, which formed a part of the former, namely, the repeating the laws to be observed on the solemn seasons. Here are directions given concerning the festivals of the seventh month; the feast of trumpets; the feast of expiation; and the feast of tabernacles.

AND in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work; it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

2 And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish:

3 And their meat offering *shall be of flour mingled with oil*, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram,

4 And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs:

5 And one kid of the goats *for* a sin offering, to make an atonement for you:

6 Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

Concerning this feast of trumpets, which had so much in it of a gospel signification, when the great trumpet of salvation should be blown, and they should come which were ready to perish; I do not think it necessary to swell this Commentary, by repeating observa-

tion, which have been already offered in it, I only refer the Reader to what was said on the xxiii. Chapter of Leviticus, from the 23d verse, and to the Chapter itself, that by comparing scripture with scripture, the instructions conveyed under both may be the better understood.

7 ¶ And ye shall have on the tenth *day* of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work *therein*:

8 But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD *for* a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, *and* seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish:

9 And their meat offering *shall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, *and* two tenth deals to one ram,

10 A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs:

11 One kid of the goats *for* a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings.

Here also, I refer the Reader to Leviticus xvi. 29—31. And also, Leviticus xxiii. 27.

12 ¶ And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days:

13 And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish:

14 And their meat offering *shall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams,

15 And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs:

16 And one kid of the goats *for* a sin offering;

beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

17 And on the second day *ye shall offer* twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:

18 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner:

19 And one kid of the goats *for* a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering thereof, and their drink offerings.

20 And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish;

21 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner:

22 And one goat *for* a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

23 And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

24 Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner:

25 And one kid of the goats *for* a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

26 And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:

27 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the

lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner:

28 And one goat *for* a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

29 And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

30 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner:

31 And one goat *for* a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

32 And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

33 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner:

34 And one goat *for* a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

35 On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work *therein*:

36 But ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish:

37 Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner:

38 And one goat *for* a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

This feast of tabernacles immediately followed the day of atonement; and no doubt in the appointment, a precious doctrine was contained. There is, indeed, cause of joy, even holy joy and rapture of heart, when through the blood of atonement we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. See God's command to this effect, Isaiah xl. 1, 2. I again refer the Reader to what was before said on this solemnity, Lev. xxiii. 34—44. But, as the Reader will find in comparing that scripture with this, that here are added directions about the offerings made by fire, it will be proper to observe that the fire of grace, that holy flame in the heart, is the only thing to make every offering acceptable. Jesus is, and must be the sum and substance of the whole. Without me, saith Christ, ye can do nothing, John xv. 5. How much of gospel, also, was in that service, that during the people's dwelling in booths, which carried with it an idea of a tabernacle-state, having no certain dwelling-place, but to be put up and taken down as occasion required; I say, how much of gospel was in it, that the daily sacrifice, notwithstanding the inconveniency of it, was by no means to be omitted? Reader! whoever you are, however you are circumstanced, Jesus is, and must be the morning and evening Lamb of your sacrifice and oblation! Yes, dearest Lord! do thou remind my poor forgetful heart, both morning, evening, and throughout the whole day, that thou alone art the High Priest, altar, and sacrifice of my soul: and, Lord, grant that I may be accepted in the beloved! Ephes. i. 6. Was not this daily decrease of the number of the bullocks during the feast of tabernacles, an expressive type of the gradual decline of the Levitical dispensation, in proportion as the gospel was coming forward? The Apostle to the Hebrews seems to have had this idea when comparing the old covenant, as he calls it, with the new: for he saith, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. Heb. viii. 13. I would have the Reader notice one thing very particularly in the feast of tabernacles, and that is the *sin offering enjoined*, ver. 19. And what is offered under this appointment, but this: that, in our highest enjoyments and under all our highest privileges in the covenant mercies of God in Christ, we derive all from him, and his gracious interposition, who was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. It may not be amiss to observe, that it was at this memorable feast of tabernacles, when Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink;" sweetly teaching, that if any poor awakened Jew felt, under the Holy Ghost's influences, the burden of sin, and the insufficiency of all those legal ordinances to bring comfort to the soul, and therefore thirsted after a better righteousness to commend his soul to God; Jesus stood ready to receive all that came to God by him, and would satisfy his desires. John vii. 37.

39 These *things* ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, beside your vows, and your free-will offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings.

40 And Moses told the children of Israel ac-

cording to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

With these verses we have the conclusion of the appointment of ordinances, respecting the services of the temple. And Moses, as a faithful servant in the Lord's house executed his commission accordingly.

REFLECTIONS.

LET neither the Writer nor Reader for a moment be led to suppose that the frequent repetition of these laws concerning the religious services of the Lord's heritage, are superfluous or unnecessary: but rather let both therefrom be led to remark, how infinitely important must be that glorious liberty of the gospel to which they all ministered; and how ineffectual all other services are in themselves to bring the heart to God. If the Reader and the Writer should, under the blessed teachings of the Holy Ghost, be directed to this improvement from the whole, every repeated precept and ordinance will be indeed made precious to the soul.

Do thou, my soul, seek grace from above to learn yet more and more, however slightly and inconsiderately viewed by others, the vast, the infinite importance of the full, free, and rich salvation by Jesus, as it must appear in the divine eye, to cause it to be ushered in through so many ages with such a wonderful profusion of sacrifices and offerings. Who indeed, can go through the perusal of so many Chapters concerning sacrifices, and behold them again and again repeated and insisted upon, in such awful terms, for obedience, without being wonderfully struck with the conviction of the infinite importance of the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Oh! thou precious, precious Lamb of God! who hast by the one all-sufficient, all-effectual offering of thyself once offered, for ever perfected them that are sanctified. Oh! may I feel my heart more powerfully constrained to the love of thee, in every renewed perusal of these sacrifices of the law! Dearest Jesus! in every service, under every ordinance, in the feast days of holy rejoicing, or the fast days of humiliation; both when the gospel trumpet is sounded, of pardon, mercy, and peace, in the blood of thy cross; or when the laws of a broken commandment are read, to shew my soul that by a covenant of works no flesh can be justified before God: in any and in all be thou my hope, my joy, my confidence, my righteousness, my all in all, to bring my heart to God. And do thou, blessed Spirit! whose work alone it is, to shed abroad a Saviour's love within me; so incline my every affection into the love of Jesus, that I may henceforth no longer live to myself, but to him that died for me and rose again.

CHAP. XXX.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter is devoted to the prescribing of laws concerning vows. Here are general rules, as well as particular cases, considered: such as the vows of daughters, and those of wives.

AND Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded.

2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

In the first ages of the church, and even in later periods, some pious persons, out of an holy zeal for the Lord's honor and glory, have obliged themselves to certain acts, either in doing or suffering, concluding thereby, that they did God service. In general it may be observed, that unless they are founded in divine grace, and conditionally promised in the aid of divine strength, they are unsuitable, and unbecoming poor, fallen, and sinful creatures; who in their best moments can assure themselves of nothing. See the case of Jephthah, Judges xi. 30, 31, with 34, 35. Hence that advice of Solomon, Eccles. v. 1, 2, 4, 5. But there is a case where holy vows, formed in the grace of Jesus, and arising from a deep sense of his love in the heart, renders them sacred things. See the case of the Psalmist, Psalm lxvi. 13, 14.

3 ¶ If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind *herself* by a bond, *being* in her father's house in her youth;

4 And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.

6 ¶ And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul;

7 And her husband heard *it*, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard *it*: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

8 But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard *it*: then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the LORD shall forgive her.

The particular case of an unmarried woman's vow, being still under age, and under subjection to her father, is here set forth. It serves to shew the spiritual, as well as natural authority of the parent, as pointed out by the Lord himself; and may, by the way, indirectly teach what sentiments the Lord would have entertained of parental power. That precept of the apostle's is founded upon this ground: Ephes. vi. 1—3.

9 ¶ But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.

The special case of the widow, respecting vows, serves to shew the personal responsibility of each character. It is the language of the scripture that every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. 1 Cor. iii. 8.

10 And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath;

11 And her husband heard *it*, and held his peace at her, *and* disallowed her not; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard *them*; *then* whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her.

13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.

14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which *are* upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard *them*.

15 But if he shall any ways make them void

after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity.

16 These *are* the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her father's house.

The special case of a married woman, in the obligations upon her soul by reason of her vows, is also particularly noticed; and it should seem, from the great attention which the law of God was pleased to pay to this subject, in devoting a whole chapter to the express purpose of marking out the boundaries and extent of the several obligations, that vows were common things among the children of Israel. We have an awful example to shew to what a desperate degree of wickedness, in the after ages of the church, the people proceeded, in making vows to offer incense to the queen of heaven, and the Lord's solemn determination concerning it. See Jer. xlv. 25, 26. But there is such a thing as the gracious vows of God in a covenant way, resting in blessings upon his people: here they are sweet and refreshing indeed. See Psalm lvi. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! do thou undertake for me, in all my earnest desires and strongest resolutions, to love and serve the God of my salvation, for otherwise I am well assured, that all my strength in the hour of trial will prove to be perfect weakness. I can do nothing, dearest Lord, nothing in myself but sin; but I can do all things if thou art my strength and confidence; and therefore, never can I trust myself too little, or my Saviour too much.

But may I not see, in this merciful exemption from rash vows ill undertaken and unfaithfully performed, a gracious exemption for the infirmities of thy people? Surely Jesus is the everlasting Father of his people: and surely thou art no less their husband also. Do thou then, blessed Lord! confirm and strengthen my soul by thy grace, to perform all I vow in thy strength, and enable me to accomplish it. And do thou rescind and do away the obligation to perform every thing unprofitable to be done, by thy sovereign power, and right of dominion over me. For I trust, that by thy Holy Spirit thou hast begotten me again to a new life; by which I am thine as thy child by adoption and grace: and that thou hast betrothed me to thyself for ever, by which my Maker is mine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name. And for the dedicating myself to thy service for ever, Lord enable me so to vow, and so to perform, that I may say with one of old, I will pay my vows unto the Lord, in the presence of all his people; even in the courts of the Lord's house.

CHAP. XXXI.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter we have the relation of Israel's war with Midian. The number of the army appointed by the Lord himself; the success o

God's host; the event of the battle in the spoils brought with them: the purifying the people after the war; and the division of the booty.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

Here we see the fulfilment of that sacred Scripture, which assures us that the judgment of the ungodly lingereth not; for however the Lord may seem slack, as some men count slackness, yet the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which God will recompense his enemies, and the enemies of his people, which are a part of himself, to their face. See 2 Pet. ii. 3. Malachii iv. 1. Eccles. viii. 11. The Reader will enter into a proper apprehension of this history, by consulting the 22d, 23d, 24th, and 25th chapters of Numbers. But while I beg the Reader to consult those chapters, in order to see the equity and justice of the divine proceeding, in ordering Israel to destroy Midian, which had first tried to curse Israel, and afterwards did tempt and seduce Israel to rebel against the Lord God by idolatry; I must request the Reader not to overlook the tenderness of the Lord to Moses. Though the time was arrived, when Moses was to be gathered to his people, yet the Lord will grant his servant to see with his eyes the destruction of Midian before his departure. This victory was a pledge of the conquest of Canaan. And Moses has assurance before he dies. Blessed Jesus! Is it not thus thou dealest with all thy people in the precious confirmation of thy promises. See Psm. xci. 8—18.

3 And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.

I beg the Reader to observe the words of Moses in this verse. In the former verse the Lord had said that the children of Israel should avenge *themselves* of the Midianites. But Moses varies the precept, and here saith, that the *Lord* is to be avenged of them. And what doth this teach us but this, that the interests of God and his people are one and the same. I remember in the moment I am looking over this scripture thy sweet words, blessed Jesus, in which thou hast left upon record, that whatsoever is done in a way of kindness to one of the least of thy brethren, thou takest as done to thyself. Matt. xxv. 40. John xvii. 21—23.

4 Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war.

5 So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of *every* tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

6 And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand

of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments; and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

There is a special mercy in appointing *Phineas* to this service. He it was whose zeal for God's honour broke forth in a day of affliction to the deliverance of Israel. See chap. xxv. 7—13.

7 And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

The Reader will not forget to observe that Midian, and not Moab, was first the seat of war; though it is probable, from what we read before, of Midian and Moab acting in conjunction, to get Balaam, the pretended conjuror, to curse Israel, that both nations were in colleague. See chap. xxii. 7.

8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

Reader! pause over the death of this wretched character, and remark the sure destruction of the ungodly. The man whose eyes he confessed were open, but whose heart never was influenced by grace. Devils are of this stamp. They cannot but believe, because they know who Christ is; but never love, and therefore tremble. James ii. 19.

9 And the children of Israel took *all* the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

10 And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire.

11 And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, *both* of men and of beasts.

12 And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which *are* by Jordan *near* Jericho.

The destruction of all the men of Midian means, no doubt, all that were then in Midian; for probably some of the subjects of Midian might be from home, or in Moab. And the wars which Israel had with Midian afterwards, confirm this. See Judges vi. 3. But Reader, do not overlook in this relation the corruption of our nature, in the soldiers

sparing the women. Had they remembered themselves, or had they felt conscious shame in the remembrance of their transgressions against God, they would have known that the daughters of Moab and Midian had caused their idolatry. But alas! we spare our corruptions in the day of inquisition, under the cover of infirmities, and the like; so deceitful is the heart of man! Rom. iii. 9.

13 And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp.

14 And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, *with* the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle.

15 And Moses said unto them, Have you saved all the women alive?

16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

17 Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.

18 But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.

It is truly interesting to see the zeal of the faithful. How jealous for the honour of God was Moses? In regarding the Lord's glory, he passeth by all lesser considerations. Angels burn with an holy flame in this particular. We have a striking instance of one of the heavenly host manifesting his warmth of zeal for the glory of God, in the instance of the death of Herod. Acts xii. 23. And if the Reader would behold the account of one infinitely greater than the angels, he may read how the prophet described him under this feature, as clad with zeal as a cloke; and how the evangelist interpreted this when he appeared in substance of our flesh. See Isaiah lix. 17. Psalm lxix. 9. John ii. 15—17.

19 ¶ And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify *both* yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

20 And purify all *your* raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats's *hair*, and all things made of wood.

21 And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses ;

22 Only the gold and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

23 Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make *it* go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water.

24 And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.

The law respecting uncleanness had so much in it of allusion to the gospel, that it is not to be wondered at we meet with it upon every occasion. But Reader! how delightful is it to see our privileges in Jesus. Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. Heb. xiii. 13.

25 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

26 Take the sum of the prey that was taken, *both* of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation:

27 And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation:

28 And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, *both* of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep:

29 Take *it* of their half, and give *it* unto Eleazar the priest, *for* an heave offering of the LORD.

30 And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of

the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD.

31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 And the booty, *being* the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep.

33 And threescore and twelve thousand beeves,

34 And threescore and one thousand asses,

35 And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him.

36 And the half, *which was* the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep:

37 And the LORD's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen.

38 And the beeves *were* thirty and six thousand; of which the LORD's tribute *was* threescore and twelve.

39 And the asses *were* thirty thousand and five hundred; of which the LORD's tribute *was* threescore and one.

40 And the persons *were* sixteen thousand; of which the LORD's tribute *was* thirty and two persons.

41 And Moses gave the tribute, *which was* the LORD's heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

42 And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred,

43 (Now the half *that pertained unto* the congregation was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep,

44 And thirty and six thousand beeves,

45 And thirty thousand asses and five hundred,

46 And sixteen thousand persons ;)

47 Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, *both* of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

I think it not necessary to break the chain of those verses, when one general observation may be properly made from the whole taken together. It is worthy of remark, how graciously the Lord, by taking a portion to himself, hath taught us to consider from whom all blessings flow, and therefore to whom tribute should return, in a perpetual thanksgiving. It is suitable in all our alms to the poor, to keep in view that they are the Lord's poor, and therefore the gift is first and principally on his account. Reader! I would recommend you to be very jealous over your own heart in this particular. Search the motives of your alms-giving to the bottom; and always ask yourself, Is it on the Lord's account this charity is exercised? The apostle's argument is founded on this. 1 John iii. 16, 17.

48 And the officers which *were* over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses:

49 And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which *are* under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us.

50 We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD.

51 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, *even* all wrought jewels.

52 And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels.

53 (*For* the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.)

54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, *for* a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

I class all these verses together, because they are connected in the history, and because the improvements they suggest are all united. We have in them the pious reflections of the officers in Israel's army, on the event of their victory over their enemies; and the grateful acknowledgement they offered in consequence thereof to the Lord. Reader! do observe; they did not ascribe the victory to their own sword, but they saw the hand of the Lord in it; and therefore to him gave all the glory. There is a similar example of this, Psalm xlv. 1—8. But this was not all. They beheld the preservation of themselves and their people from all danger, in the accomplishing this victory, as the peculiar interposition and mercy of God. And to be sure, nothing could be more decisive in confirmation of it, for when they came to muster up the people, there was not a single man wanting. Never perhaps, in the annals of the world, was there ever known such an instance. They saw, therefore, as a saint of God did upon another occasion, that this was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in their eyes. Psm. cxviii. 23. But when the Reader hath duly pondered over the natural and religious sense of this event, I would beg him to consider again the spiritual meaning, whether this first battle in the conquest of the promised land, in which not a soul was lost, was not typical of Jesus's conquest of the eternal Canaan, concerning which he himself remarked, Of them which thou hast given me have I lost none. John xviii. 9. The offering of the officers to the Lord is a delightful testimony from whom they consider the blessing of victory came, and to whom therefore ought to be returned the tribute of praise. What a sweet and precious example is this for all military characters.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over the perusal of this whole Chapter, and duly contemplate in the case of Balak and Balaam's confederacy against Israel, and the event which here so soon after followed, in the destruction of Midian, the truth of that Scripture, *The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.* And again: *Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*

In the contemplation of the holy war of Israel, behold, my soul, the figure and similitude of that war in which thou art engaged. Lord, help me to go forth to every conflict in thy strength, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. Let not mine eye spare any of those lusts, in my corrupt members, which war against my soul; but do thou, blessed Jesus, as the great captain of my salvation, go before, and by the precious influences of thine Holy Spirit, drive them out before me, until they are utterly consumed. And grant, gracious God, that when returning from the slaughter, I may have so fully learnt the song of sal-

vation to God and the Lamb, that the blood of Jesus may be my oblation for the atonement of the sin of my soul. Of my soul may it be said, as it is and shall ever be of all the redeemed in the holy army of the Lord, *They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

CHAP. XXXII.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter the history of Israel is pursued. Here is an account of the desire of the Reubenites, and Gadites, to settle on this side Jordan: Moses reproves the thought; as if they wished to withdraw from the conquest of Canaan. They explain their intention, with which Moses is satisfied: and the lands of the kingdom of Sihon and Og, are conditionally appointed to them and their descendants.

NOW the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place *was* a place for cattle;

2 The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

3 Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon.

4 *Even* the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:

5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and* bring us not over Jordan.

There can be no question but that those plains of Moab were most fruitful and desirable situations. But alas! what are the plains of Moab to the land of Judah, which is the glory of all lands. In like manner, in a spiritual sense, what are the pleasant things brought forth by the sun, or the pleasant things put forth by the moon, to the good-will of him that dwelleth in the bush. Deut. xxxiii. 14. 16. Reader! is not every man by nature a Reubenite, who desires to set up his resting place on this side the land of promise?

6 And Moses said unto the children of Gad and

to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?

7 And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

8 Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land.

9 For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcal, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them.

10 And the LORD's anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying,

11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob: because they have not wholly followed me:

12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenzite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

13 And the LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

14 And, behold, ye are risen up in your father's stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel.

15 For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.

We may in some measure account for the feelings of the man of God. He had earnestly requested that he might see the good land, and that the Lord would give him to enjoy it. And the Reubenites, and the Gadites, were indifferent about. Deut. iii. 23—25.

16 And they came near unto him, and said, We

will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:

17 But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

18 We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

19 For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward.

20 And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

21 And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

22 And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

24 Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

25 And the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth.

26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead:

27 But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith.

I include the whole of these verses in one view, because they include the terms of agreement between Moses and the Reubenites and Gadites. The representation, which is here given of them, serves to raise the people somewhat higher in our view; but certainly their choice of setting up their rest on this side Jordan, had in it much of a worldly, carnal spirit. Reader! never forget what the Holy Ghost hath said, by the mouth of the Prophet: *Arise ye and depart for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.* Micah ii. 10.

28 So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel:

29 And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession:

30 But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.

Observe, Moses having foreknowledge from the word of the Lord, that he himself should not live to see the event, leaves the business in charge with his successors. So faithful ministers commit the concerns of the church to faithful men. 2 Tim. ii. 2.

31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.

32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan *may be* our's.

The terms are again, as it were, ratified and confirmed on both sides, and the Lord himself is considered as looking on. It is well when all church concerns are thus arranged and settled under the great Head of his church. Matt. xxviii. 20.

33 And Moses gave unto them, *even* to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan,

the land, with the cities thereof, in the coasts, *even* the cities of the country round about.

34 And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

Observe, the children of half the tribe of Manasseh are here included in this grant.

35 And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,

36 And Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities: and folds for sheep.

37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh and Kirjathaim,

38 And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.

39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which *was* in it.

40 And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.

41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-jair.

42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

The reason of the change of names was most probably to observe that precept, that the children of Israel should not make mention of the names of the gods of the heathen about them; and their cities were called in honour of their gods: see Exod. xxiii. 13. And hence, in after ages, the Lord promised to take away the names of Baalim out of the mouths of his people. Hosea ii. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

REMARK, my soul, in the case of those Reubenites and Gadites, how injurious to the pilgrimage state in thy pursuit of Canaan, is a love of worldly ease and settlement. Alas! what have we, who profess ourselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and are supposed to be seeking a better country, that is an heavenly, what have we to do with the things of time and sense? But how true is that saying of the apostle's; All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. Precious

Redeemer! do thou so endear thyself to my view, that I may esteem it my chief happiness to endure affliction, if need be, with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and like thy servant of old, esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures on this side Jordan.

CHAP. XXXIII.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the account of the journeying of Israel from Egypt to Canaan; and once more the Lord's command is repeated, that the people be sure to drive out the Canaanites from the land.

THESE are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.

2 And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the LORD: and these *are* their journeys according to their goings out.

As Moses wrote the goings of Israel, by the express appointment of the Lord, we may venture to pronounce this Chapter to be a very interesting Chapter. And as no event in history, in the annals of any one nation, is or can ever be so truly worthy notice, from the constant succession of miracles, which accompanied the Lord's Israel through every stage of their eventful journey: it certainly merits the Reader's attention the more. And was it not, on this account that the Holy Ghost was pleased to give it in charge to Moses particularly, to mark down the several stages of the way, that the people in perusing over the same, might call to mind the wonderful mercies of the Lord, who had fed, and sustained, and led, so great an army forty years together, through an inhospitable, barren wilderness. But, my soul, while looking at Israel's journey, call to mind thine own. How hath a gracious God led thee through the several spiritual as well as temporal stages of thy pilgrimage! And how hath Jesus, and his Holy Spirit, marked thy way all the stages through. Surely with little less than a series of miracles from beginning to end. Reader! compare these things with your own experience, and then say whether mercy and goodness hath not been following of you all the days of your life. Psm. xxiii. 6.

3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

If the Reader will count the number of the different routes and stages

of Israel, he will find the number amount to *two and forty*. It began from the borders of Egypt, and extended as far as the plains of Moab. Reader! nothing can be more improving than for the truly pious believer to mark down the memorandums in his own experience of the Lord's gracious dealings all the way that he hath led him through the wilderness, to shew him what is in his heart. Deut. viii. 2.

4 For the Egyptians buried all *their* firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

It is worthy observation, that while the Lord is taking such especial care of Israel, his first-born, the Lord is compelling the Egyptians to attend the funerals of their first-born. Reader! never forget distinguishing grace. Psalm lxxxix. 27.

5 And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth.

6 And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which *is* in the edge of the wilderness.

7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which *is* before Baal-zephon: and they pitched before Migdol.

8 And they departed from before Pi-hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

9 And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim *were* twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there.

10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.

11 And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin.

12 And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah.

13 And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush.

14 And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

15 And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.

16 And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah.

17 And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.

18 And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah.

19 And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez.

20 And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah.

21 And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah.

22 And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah.

23 And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher.

24 And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah.

25 And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth.

26 And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath.

27 And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah.

28 And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah.

29 And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah.

30 And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.

31 And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan.

32 And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad.

33 And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched at Jotbathah.

34 And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah.

35 And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber.

36 And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which *is* Kadesh.

37 And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first *day* of the fifth month.

39 And Aaron *was* an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor.

40 And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

41 And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah.

42 And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon.

43 And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth.

44 And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab.

45 And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad.

46 And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim.

47 And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo.

48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho.

49 And they pitched by Jordan, from Bêth-

jesimoth *even* unto Abel-shittim, in the plains of Moab.

I connect into one and the same point of view, the whole forty-two stages of Israel, because that one and the same general observations meet us through every one of them. Let the Reader, however, remark with me the shortness of their stages; their continual movements; their still removing, however, wherever they went, in a wilderness state; their retrograde motions backward and forward; and yet all the while under the direction of the pillar of cloud, and protected by the pillar of fire: and when the Reader hath made his own observations on the history of Israel, let him beg grace from the Lord to discover how much the stages of Israel resemble the present stages of the Lord's Israel, in all their spiritual journeyings. Are not the movements of the faithful continually in this present life, from one state to another; and sweet the streams of that river they meet with by the way, which makes glad the city of our God? And yet whenever they move, is it not like Israel of old, from one part of the wilderness to another? The best is but a wilderness state, and full of wilderness dispensations. But, blessed be a covenant God in Jesus, amidst all the ups and downs, the backward and forward goings of his people, God the Holy Ghost is still, as the pillar of cloud, guiding them on; and the Lord Jesus, as the pillar of fire, protecting and surrounding them with his love. Yes, dearest Lord, wherever, or however, the path of thy people may be, in the way thou leadest them, it is still the *right* way to the city of habitation. Psalm cvii. 7.

50 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

51 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

52 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:

53 And ye shall dispossess *the inhabitants of* the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

54 And ye shall divide ~~the~~ land by lot for an inheritance among your families: *and* to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's *inheritance* shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit.

55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them *shall be* pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

56 Moreover it shall come to pass, *that* I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

It is worthy our closest observation, how frequently in the sacred word, those precepts of totally destroying every vestige of the enemy, is mentioned. And the reason is told us; God is jealous of his honour—jealous of the affections of his people. And when we call to mind that an everlasting and irreconcilable opposition subsists between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the whole is explained. Deut. vii. 25, 26.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! pause here, and behold the wonderful love of God to his people. Behold, what a series of hazardous journeys, as they must have appeared to human nature, and impossible ever to have been accomplished by flesh and blood, unprotected by the Lord, were God's Israel brought through. Call to mind, in rehearsing these two and forty stages of their pilgrimage, what a train of miracles accompanied them, more or less, at every stage. Traverse, in idea, the inhospitable regions of uninhabited desolate places the Lord led them through, for forty years together, during the whole of which space their garments waxed not old, neither were their feet swollen, and surrounded as they were with beasts of prey, and fiery flying serpents, and scorpions. And behold the people at the close of their journey, as many in number at least, and as healthy, as when they first set out; and will not every beholder be prompted to exclaim, *what hath God wrought!* But while beholding Israel of old, forget not, my soul, to contemplate the true Israel of God now. Is not our Jesus carrying home his church through the wilderness? Are not his people in continued movements? Are they not exercised with the same wilderness dispensations? And is not Jesus himself always with them, driving out every enemy before them, and continually manifesting himself to them otherwise than he doth to the world? Oh! my soul, search diligently for thine own personal interest and part in this history; and do thou be continually inquiring for the evidences of thy journey in the spiritual warfare of Jesus, until the Lord shall have accomplished thy wilderness state, and shall bring thee home to Canaan, to behold his glory, and dwell with him for ever.

CHAP. XXXIV.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter contains the relation of the boundaries of the land of Canaan according to the Lord's appointment of it: and the persons whom the Lord commissioned to fix the boundaries.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
This is not the least interesting Chapter we meet with, if we read it with a spiritual eye of discernment; for much of the Gospel is contained in it. Let the Reader, in the opening of it, observe, that God pointed out the bounds of his people's inheritance upon earth, even before they were called upon to take possession of them. And can the Reader suppose that the heavenly inheritance of his people is not already ascertained and known? And is not Jesus gone before to take possession of it in their name? Sweet thought to a troubled soul, is the assurance that in this life all our bounds are fixed; and a sure mansion is prepared in that which is to come. Compare Deut xxxii. 8, with John xiv. 1. 23.

2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (*this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof*.)

3 Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward:

4 And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-adar, and pass on to Azmon:

5 And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea.

6 And *as for* the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border.

7 And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor:

8 From mount Hor ye shall point out *your border* unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad:

9 And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and

the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border.

10 And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham:

11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward:

12 And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about.

I have not interrupted the Reader by dividing these verses, because I would have him first read over attentively the whole account of the extent of the promised land; and then look over it again, to remark with me the striking observations which arise out of it, considered altogether. If the Reader considers the extent of it, he will discover that it was not in length above 160 miles; and the breadth of it not more than 50. But this little spot, compared to the whole earth, was what the Lord was pleased peculiarly to mark for his people; and to make it the glory of all lands; and consider that such at this hour is the gospel church of Jesus. It is of small extent, and bounded around, as Canaan was, by the idolatrous and profane world. And is there not a striking memorial arising out of this view of Canaan to the spiritual Reader, from the several boundaries of it? The south quarter, bounded by the wilderness of *Zin*, that memorable wilderness, where the Lord's mercies, and Israel's ingratitude and rebellion, had been so often marked. The salt sea eastward, did it not remind the people of God's judgments on *Sodom and Gomorrah*, when Lot was sent out of the overthrow? And was it possible for Israel to look towards *Kadesh-barnea*, and Mount *Keir*, to the river of Egypt, to the river of Jordan, and to the great sea westward, without having all the memorials of the Lord's mercies in these histories again and again brought fresh unto them? Pause, Reader, while beholding these things as the memorials of Israel, and see whether there are not, in your own life, similar tokens, as so many monuments, all the way along, in which the Lord thy God hath brought thee these many years through the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee! Oh! it is sweet and precious thus to look back, and look around, and view the tokens of Jesus' love. Look at Jacob's conduct, and the prophets, in these instances, and see my soul whether thou canst not find grace to follow their examples. Gen. xxviii. 18. 1 Sam. vii. 12.

13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the Lord commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:

14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers; and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received *their inheritance*; and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance:

15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan *near Jericho* eastward, toward the sunrising.

It is worthy remark, that the whole division is of God's appointing. Yes! he appoints now, to the whole tribes, and to the half tribes of his people, their habitations here. And frequently, like Canaan, it is but of small extent,—very scanty and limited. But what saith Jesus! Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. My poor Brother! if you are to have a kingdom hereafter, do not regard the humbleness of your accommodations now. Luke xii. 32.

16 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

17 These *are* the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Is not *Eleazar* a type of the priestly office, and *Joshua* of the kingly office, of Jesus, in this instance?

18 And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance.

19 And the names of the men *are* these: of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

20 And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud.

21 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon.

22 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli.

23 The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod.

24 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan.

25 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach.

26 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan.

27 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Abihud the son of Shelomi.

28 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud.

29 *These are they* whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

Jesus is surrounded with his witnesses, and attended by his saints. Rev. xiv. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE, my soul, pause, and meditate on the love of God in Christ Jesus! God had promised Abraham that his seed should inherit Canaan, and behold the assurance of God's promises. Oh! for the faith of Abraham, to trust God in the certainty of an immortal Canaan, and like him, to go forth if needful, through the wilderness of this world, in the sure expectation of it, not knowing whither he went. Blessed Jesus! be thou the Canaan of my soul; and through every journey of the pilgrimage state towards it, do thou fix the bounds of my habitation, that in thee my whole desires may centre. Thou art the Priest, like Eleazar, and the Captain of my salvation, like Joshua, to go on before me to the promised land. Lord! give me grace to eye thee in every step; to live upon thee in every movement; and finally, to dwell with thee where thou art, to behold thy glory.

CHAP. XXXV.

CONTENTS.

This Chapter may be properly considered as a continuation of the former. As the sons of Levi had no portion with their brethren, because the Lord was their portion; in this Chapter we have the part which the Lord assigned in Canaan for the possession of his priests. Forty-eight cities, with their suburbs, are marked out for them. Beside these, six cities are appointed as cities of refuge for the manslayer, which this Chapter takes notice of; and other laws for regulation concerning murder, to which those cities of refuge were not to reach.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying,

Observe, those memorable plains of Moab were sanctified to this blessed purpose, that here the final instructions concerning Canaan were given.

2 Command the children of Israel that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give *also* unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them.

3 And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts.

4 And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, *shall reach* from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about.

5 And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city *shall be* in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities.

Observe the care of God over his ministry. Here, as in the gospel state, the Lord hath provided that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 1 Cor. ix. 14.

6 ¶ And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites *there shall be* six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities.

Observe the cities of refuge were in the priests' lot. Was not this altogether typical of Jesus, who is the only refuge from the storm of divine wrath, and the only covert from the tempest of his just judgment? Isaiah xxxii. 2.

7 So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites *shall be* forty and eight cities: them *shall ye give* with their suburbs.

8 And the cities which ye shall give *shall be* of the possession of the children of Israel: from *them that have many* ye shall give many; but from *them that have few* ye shall give few: every one shall give

of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.

Though the Lord made so plentiful a provision for his priests, yet it should be observed, and carefully observed too, that the Lord set bounds to it. Ministers were never intended to lord it over God's heritage, or to abound in carnal things, while supposed to be principally engaged in spiritual. See Paul's beautiful example on this point, Acts xx. 33—35. Philip. iv. 11—13.

9 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

11 Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.

12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.

13 And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge.

14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, *which* shall be cities of refuge.

15 These six cities shall be a refuge, *both* for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.

16 And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he *is* a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

17 And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he *is* a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

18 Or *if* he smite him with an hand-weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he *is* a

murderer: the murderer shall surely be put together.

19 The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him.

20 But if he thrust of him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die:

21 Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote *him* shall surely be put to death; *for* he *is* a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.

22 But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait.

23 Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing *him* not, and cast *it* upon him, that he die, and *was* not his enemy, neither sought his harm:

24 Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments:

25 And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil.

26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled;

27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:

28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest:

but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.

29 So these *things* shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person *to cause him* to die.

31 Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which *is* guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.

32 And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.

33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

As one and the same subject is continued through these verses, I have not interrupted the Reader in its perusal, until he hath arrived at the close of it, in the end of the chapter. But it will be now proper to make a pause, and to take a serious and leisurely survey of the whole. And first, how sweet and refreshing is it to behold in those cities of refuge, the lively type of our Almighty Refuge, the Lord Jesus Christ. What murder have not you and I committed against our own souls, by sin; against God's laws, against Jesus himself by crucifying him again and again, and putting him to an open shame! If death, judgment, and the law, which act as the avenger of blood, had overtaken us before we gained Jesus, the city of refuge, where would have been our remedy? Precious Jesus! in thee, and thy righteousness, we find a city of refuge, and are fully and everlastingly delivered from the avenger.

REFLECTIONS.

Blessed be that Holy Spirit, the Teacher of my soul, from whose influence I am enabled to look beyond the Levitical dispensation, in those cities of refuge, and behold in them the evident emblems of him, and

his complete security, who shelters all that flee to him from the avenger of poor guilty sinners. Oh! thou dear Redeemer, may I be led by thy Spirit's ministry continually to thee, and not stop short of the security thou hast afforded, in thy opened wounds, for the salvation of my soul. Neither shall I be in the danger which the people under the Levitical dispensation were exposed to, by the death of the High Priest; for thou blessed Jesus ever livest, and the efficacy of thy atonement is always the same.

CHAP. XXXVI.

CONTENTS.

The subject, relative to Zelophehad's daughters, is resumed. To prevent the inconvenience which might result from the inheritance of daughters, the Lord appoints a remedy in determining that the daughters of such tribes as possessed the inheritance of their fathers, should marry, in the elder branches of their own tribes.

AND the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel:

2 And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters.

3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the *other* tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.

This family was more immediately interested in the decision of the point they came to question Moses upon; because it was this tribe which had at present no father, or elder of the house; and the inheritance was now in the person of Zelophehad's daughters. See chap. xxvii.

4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken

away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

The Jubilee year was the year of release, when every man's inheritance of land was to be restored to its original owner. See Levit. xxv. 10.

5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.

6 This *is* the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

8 And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

9 Neither shall the inheritance remove from *one* tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

10 ¶ Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad:

11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons;

12 *And* they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

13 These *are* the commandments and the judgments, which the LORD commanded by the hand

of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho.

Although in every point of view, politically and nationally considered, this law seems good, yet certainly it had a much higher significance, in the prospect of gospel mercies. Jesus is the Head of the tribe of his people. With him must all alliance be made, and with his people in him. The spiritual law of the gospel is now to this purpose: let the people marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of Jesus. Or, as the apostle says, *be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.* 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

REFLECTIONS.

BEHOLD! my soul, in the perusal of this Chapter, how graciously the Lord watches over his people, in all their concerns. And is he less attentive now? Is his arm shortened, or his ear grown heavy? Must not the people of God be very dear to God, and doth he not watch over them for good, to guide them in all their ways, and to keep them, lest any hurt them, night and day.

Let the people of God learn from this Chapter how suitable and proper it must be, like the daughters of Israel, to be united only to their own tribes. And ought not every true believer in Jesus to be very attentive in the near and tender relations of life, to be united only to such as are united to the Lord? If Jesus cements the union between souls, certainly those united to him will form the truest union with each other, *for they that are joined to the Lord are one spirit.*

END OF VOL. I.