
THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THIS inestimable book of God folds within its sacred bosom so much of his mind and will, of his covenant-grace and mercy, as revealed to us in the person and work of his dear Son, that it may be well considered as forming an epitome of the whole gospel. And when the great Author of it, even God the Holy Ghost, vouchsafeth to open the saving knowledge of it to the Reader's heart, and the Reader's heart to receive it, and enjoy its blessedness; then the gracious design for which it was written is answered, and *God in all things is glorified by Jesus Christ.*

The general title of this book is taken from the original word *Tehillim*, which signifies Psalms, and particularly Psalms, or Songs of praise. But there are two other words in the Hebrew by which the Psalms are distinguished, namely, *Zemer* and *Sher*. The *former* is derived from a root which signifies *pruning*; and is used, perhaps, in allusion to the man whose name is the Branch, because he was pruned, or cut off, for his people. And the latter, *Sher*, relates to *power*, or rule and government: and this also, most probably, in reference to Jesus, whose government and kingdom shall have no end. And if both these titles were given to the Psalms on account of Christ being so much the subject of them, there is an uncommon degree of beauty as well as propriety, in the measure. For as the *former* refers to his humiliation, in being pruned or cut off; so the *latter* to his exaltation, when *he had by himself purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* And both confirm what the Scriptures record, that the whole scope and subject of prophecy, which holy men of old delivered by the Spirit of Christ which was in them, was meant to signify, *the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow.*

Several were the penmen whom the Holy Ghost was pleased to commission to be the writers, under his gracious inspiration, of the Psalms. The greater part of the book (which altogether contains 150 Psalms in number) was written by the patriarch *David*. But, beside him, there were a few others, such as *Heman*, and *Ethan*, and *Asaph*, and even *Moses*, to whom they are ascribed. So that it is not possible, in these general observations, to state the precise period in which the whole were written. Concerning the greater part of them, as written by *David*, we may safely set down the

time, he himself living about 1000 years before the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But it will be much more to the Reader's purpose to enquire diligently concerning the great object for which the Psalms were written, and of their importance, in reference to the Church in all ages, than of the very period in which they were first given. The Holy Ghost in this precious part of Scripture, had most blessed designs in view, when he caused it to be given to the Church; and this, it will be our highest wisdom, in reading this book of God, to search after.

And it is hardly possible to enter upon the very threshold of this divine treasury, without having our minds strikingly arrested, in viewing the solemn and sacred contents, every where abounding. The very first word opens with Blessed: and the last closes with Hallelujah. And although in the first reading of the Psalms much apparently seems to be said of the several writers, as if referring to themselves; and we meet with much concerning David and Solomon; yet when the eye is enlightened to *compare spiritual things with spiritual*, we are frequently constrained to cry out, as we prosecute the perusal, *a greater than Solomon is here*. For not only here and there, in certain passages, many things are said, which never could with truth be said of any but the Lord Jesus Christ, but there are also other expressions which would be little short of blasphemy, to be spoken of any other. And, as if the church in all ages should be on the look out, whenever the book of Psalms was brought before the people, the beautiful illustration which God the Holy Ghost put into the mouth of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, seems to have been intended for this express purpose. The apostle decidedly asserts, that what David had said in the 16th Psalm, of *his flesh resting in hope*, wholly referred to the Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore, upon numberless other occasions of a similar nature, the blessed Spirit teacheth the mind to transfer our thoughts from David to Christ in the reading of the Psalms; by which means we may truly say, as one of the Psalms records, *My meditation of him shall be sweet*.

If we admit the Psalms in this point of view, as referring, for the most part, in their fulness and doctrine, to the person and work of Emmanuel, nothing can more illustriously set forth his glories; nor, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, more contribute to awaken and call forth into exercise, all the devout desires of our hearts. That the Lord Jesus himself so used the Psalms, seems most evident; for he not only took part of his discourse from the Psalms, when in his way to Emmaus, with the two disciples, he made their hearts burn within them, while he spoke to them of the things concerning himself; but it should seem that the hymn sung at the table of his passover, the night before his sufferings and death, was taken from the Psalms. Some indeed have gone so far

as to assert that this hymn was what is called the grand Hallelujah, beginning with the 113th Psalm, and ending with the 118th, as they regularly follow each other. But whether this be so or not, certain it is, that the Lord Jesus referred to this precious book of God, as pointing to him. Here, therefore, as often as I open the book of the Psalms, would I pray for the illuminating grace of God the Holy Ghost, that I might make discoveries of Jesus. Here I would say, (as I turned over the several pages of it), here it was from whence Jesus expounded to his disciples, and proved the truth of his mission; that the words which he spake, while he was with them, and all things which were fulfilled in him, were written not only in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, but in the Psalms also, concerning him. And under the blessed conviction that here Jesus is to be found, as the most precious treasure in this part of the field of his Scripture, I would search for him as the pearl of great price, and look up to him as having the key of David, and say, *Lord! open mine understanding, that I may understand thy law.* And surely under his gracious teaching, by the influences of his holy Spirit, I shall enter into the most heartfelt enjoyment of all that concerns him. I shall discover somewhat of the wonders of his person, and the wonders of his work. I shall trace the outlines of his advent, incarnation, life, sufferings, conflicts, victories, death, resurrection, ascension, sovereignty, power; and all the great events connected with his promised return to judgment. I shall behold the sweet sketches of his blessed offices here, as fulfilled when upon earth, and now still carrying on and executing in heaven. And my soul will be delighted and ravished as I go along, when I behold Jesus, as described by the Holy Ghost, through the medium of these inspired writings, in all his lovely offices, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church. Yes, indeed, thou blessed Jesus, if thou wilt open mine eyes that I may see the wondrous things of thy law, I shall gladly trace thy footsteps, and mark the tendencies of thy grace towards thy people, as sweetly set forth in this book of God. And oh! Lord, I do again beseech thee, that thou wouldst

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Reader, you do not forget who it was that said, *I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart; or, as the margin of the Bible more strongly expresses it, in the midst of my bowels,* meaning in his very nature, being that Holy Thing the angel described to Mary. See Psalm xl. 8. Luke i. 35. Sweet view of Jesus this! And in him sweet also to all his people; for, when they are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and quickened in Christ Jesus, God hath put his law in their inward minds, and written it in their hearts: so that they can

substance of our flesh! Let us never forget that it was *for us this Child was born, for us this Son was given*. Do we read that, when neither sacrifice, nor offering, nor burnt offering, would atone for sin, and that Jesus therefore cried, 'Lo! I come,' let us sweetly connect with this view of Jesus, that, *by that one offering of himself, once offered, he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified*. And when David, under the spirit of prophecy, celebrates the triumphs of God's Holy One over the grave, oh! may we by faith realize the assured interest that all his redeemed have in it, in that he thereby became *the first fruits of them that sleep*. In a word, in all and every thing belonging to Jesus in the book of Psalms, let us be seeking for grace to mix faith with all we discover, that what he was, and is, and ever will be, is for his people; for by this we make him our own, and find our love to him, faith in him, and dependance on him, will grow exceedingly. Blessed Lord! I would say, both for myself and Reader, grant to us this vast privilege, of knowing that we are thine, and that, by virtue of it, we have a right of appropriation in all that belongs to thee; for then we shall discover, as we read these precious things which are written of thee in this book, the truth of what thy servant John said, upon another similar occasion, that *these things were written, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, we might have life through his name. Amen.*

PSALM I.

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This Psalm is supposed by some to have been written by Ezra, but upon what authority is not said. It is a short, but beautiful description, of the different features which mark the godly man from the sinner.

BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

This can be fully said of no one among the fallen sons of men, with strictness of truth! and therefore we must of necessity suppose, that it treats of the Lord Jesus Christ. That his people, as his people, have an interest in the blessedness here spoken of, is as true, because they are part of himself. But here, as in every other instance, this ariseth only from their union *with* him, and their interest *in* him. I detain the Reader to remark, what a gradation is made use of in the description of the blessed man. He doth not *walk* in the counsel of bad men; much less *stand* still in their way, and never *sits* down by choice in their company. Precious Jesus! who but must be immediately directed to contemplate thee in this description, for thou wast *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens!*

2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Reader, you do not forget who it was that said, *I delight to do thy will, O my God*; yea, thy law is within my heart; or, as the margin of the Bible more strongly expresses it, *in the midst of my bowels*, meaning in his very nature, being that Holy Thing the angel described to Mary. See Psalm xl. 8. Luke i. 55. Sweet view of Jesus this! And in him sweet also to all his people; for, when they are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and quickened in Christ Jesus, God hath put his law in their inward minds, and written it in their hearts: so that they can and do say, *Oh! how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.* Psalm cxix. 97.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither: and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Had we no other clue to lead to the discovery of the Lord Jesus, as set forth in this Psalm, than what is here said of him, even this would plainly unfold it. For who but Jesus is the tree of life! Who flourisheth but him! Yes, blessed Redeemer, thy people planted in thee, and made branches in thee, will thrive in thee, and bring forth fruit in thee, for thou hast said, *because I live ye shall live also.* But though in thee, and by thee, and from thee, thy people live and derive all life, and nourishment, and moisture, and fruitfulness, in due season, yet it is because thou art the self-existing, life-imparting tree, in the midst of the garden of Jehovah; and being the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, thou art liable to no fading, nor falling, but art always blooming, both in blossom and fruit, towards thy people.

4 The ungodly *are* not so; but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Here is a sad contrast! All that are not ingrafted in Jesus, the heavenly vine, their blossom shall go up as the dust, and their destruction cometh speedily! Every plant, saith Jesus himself, which my Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Matt. xv. 13. This is a strong figure to shew the emptiness of the ungodly, the chaff; for what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Jerem. xxiii. 28.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

What an awful decision that day of judgment will be when God shall winnow his floor, and while he gathers the wheat into his garner, burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matt. iii. 12. Reader, do not forget: *here*, the Lord saith, let both grow together unto the harvest. But *there*, tares will be bound up in bundles, and burnt. Matt. xiii. 30.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous : but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The Lord knoweth them that are his, saith an Apostle. And as Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life; so in Jesus the Lord approveth of all that are in Him; and not only approveth and accepteth them in Jesus, but while the way of seducers waxeth worse and worse, the way of every poor justified believer in the Lord Jesus is known and approved by him, and all such are accepted in the beloved. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I, while reading this precious Psalm, in the very opening of the book, look at, and study, and meditate upon it, as an introductory subject, concerning the Lord Jesus, to what we shall meet with concerning him and his work, through the whole of the sacred contents of the Psalms, as Jesus is represented in them. Let us, in that part of it which thus beautifully speaks of the perfection of our nature, never lose sight of Christ. And while we thus look up to him in this holiness of character, let it be our delight and our joy to tell God our Father, what a perfection of beauty, glory, and holiness, was in him, who is our divine head. Yes, thou dear Redeemer! I would so read of thee, and of thy holiness, as to have my whole soul rejoicing in the contemplation. For do I not know that thy righteousness is for thy people? thy obedience and delight in the Father's law, becomes the justification of all thy redeemed. And in thy holiness, all thy people are accounted holy before God, because our God and Father hath an eye to thee as our glorious head, and beholds thy saints complete in thee. Hail, then, thou Holy One of God! Thou art the Lord, our righteousness! And thou art made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And do thou, blessed Lord, grant us faith to know, and to consider ourselves as perfectly secured in thee. Give us to flourish in thee, and from thee, as the tree planted near the river's side, even from the streams of that river of life which cometh forth from the throne of God and the Lamb. Then, when the faithless and unbelieving shall die away as the heath of the desert, which knoweth not when good cometh, our souls may be as the well-watered garden, whose waters fail not, but deriving all from thee, thou wilt be in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

PSALM. II.

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This glorious Psalm is all over gospel, and speaks of nothing but of God, and his Christ, from beginning to end. The Holy Ghost, by his servants Peter and John, in one Scripture, and by his servant Paul in another, hath not left the Church to any uncertain reasonings and conjectures respecting this, but decidedly shewn to whom the whole belongs. Here is the kingdom of Christ set forth under the type of David's kingdom, and all kings of the earth exhorted to bend to it.

WHY do the heathen rage, and the people
imagine a vain thing?

Observe how triumphantly it opens, in contemplating the Redeemer's kingdom, speaking of it as of a thing already granted and done, although the Psalm was written under the spirit of prophecy, at least a thousand years before Christ became incarnate. Yea, the Psalm looks back to the annals of eternity. I said, the Holy Ghost hath decided the point by his servants Peter and John. In proof, read Acts iv. 25, 26.

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

Not only the rabble, and the common people, join in the confederacy against God and his Christ, but the kings and potentates. 'Herod and Pontius Pilate, of a truth,' said the apostle. And how many since their days? Acts iv. 27. But Reader, is there not a yet more violent opposition made against Jesus? Is not hell up in arms against the kingdom of Jesus? Nay, my soul, was not all thy powers, when in a state of unrenewed nature, as rebellious as any? And even now, are not the breakings out of the remaining indwelling corruptions of thy sinful body, too often rising up against thy lawful Sovereign? Hear Paul's complaint: see whether it is not thine own, and lie low in the dust before God. Rom. vii. 21 to the end.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

What is here said of the sovereignty of Jehovah, of *sitting* in the heavens, of *speaking* in his wrath, of *laughing*, and the like, is intended to convey, by expressions of this nature, as best adapted to our comprehension, how impossible it is for the wicked opposers of God's holy will, either to escape his knowledge, to counteract his designs, or to avert his judgments. Sweet consideration to the humble believer, both to support him under his fears, as if he was overlooked and forgotten, when the enemy seems to triumph; and to give him the firmest confidence, that as Jesus knows all his path, so he beholds all his conflicts with the enemies of his salvation, and will assuredly in his own time, which is always the best time, deliver him out of all his troubles.

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Although in the first sense these words may be said of David as a type of Christ, when the Lord set David upon the throne of Zion, (which was also typical of the Church of Christ, which is called Zion), yet we must look beyond David, and all earthly kings, to behold Jesus as God's king; for it is the peculiar character of Christ, that he did not, uncalled, assume the spiritual kingdom in this world, nor the eternal kingdom in the world above, but was called of God as was

Aaron. Heb. v. 4, 5. And it is the peculiar joy of God's people, that their King is their lawful Sovereign, Redeemer, and Mediator, being so appointed and constituted by Jehovah. Reader, always keep this view of Jesus, as the head and king of his Church and people, in remembrance; for it will give confidence in all your approaches to God in Christ. How sweet is it when we come to God to tell him, that what we plead, and what we seek, is in the name of him, whom God hath set up as his King in Zion. Oh! what unknown, and innumerable arguments are comprehended in that one prayer of the Church: *Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.* Psalm lxxxiv. 9.

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Is not this Jesus speaking in answer to what Jehovah the Father had said before? As soon as God had declared that he had set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, the Son of God comes forward to declare the decree. What decree? Certainly no other than what was from everlasting decreed upon, in the council of peace which was between them both. Zech. vi. 13. And is not this the same decree which the Lamb was alone found worthy to make known, whom John saw by vision, as opening the book, and unloosing the seals thereof? Rev. v. 1—10. Oh! precious Lord Jesus! thou hast indeed declared the decree! Thou hast proclaimed salvation in thy blood and righteousness! Thou hast declared that it is the decree of Jehovah, that whosoever believeth in thee shall never perish, but have everlasting life! Hail, thou Son of God, declared to be the Son of God with power, by thy resurrection from the dead! Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Reader, do not overlook the chief scope of this beautiful Psalm, in God's setting his King upon his holy hill in Zion, namely, that it is to shew his Mediatorial Kingdom. As the Son of God, the kingdom is his by right, being one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever, Amen. As such, therefore, Jesus could not be said to be set upon the holy hill, or to receive a kingdom: but, as Mediator, the glorious Head of his Church, this kingdom is given to him as the reward of his sufferings, obedience, and death: and therefore he is represented here, as exercising his priestly office, as well as his kingly; and asking the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. I hope the Reader will not fail to remark with me, how peculiarly all this belongs to the Lord Jesus, and to him only. Never did God say to David king of Israel, nor to any other potentate of the earth, "Thou art my Son;" or, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance."

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;

thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

How precious again is this promise, both as it concerns the haters of our God and Saviour, whose knees are never brought to bend to the sovereignty of his grace, and which must be broken before him: and as it concerns those whose stubborn hearts shall be conquered, and made willing in the day of his power, and are brought over to the interests of his kingdom. Lord! I would say for myself and reader, conquer all that would rise up in rebellion against thee! I would be led the willing captive of my Redeemer!

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

Who can complain after so gracious, so kind, and tender an entreaty, if neglecting so great salvation, they should lose it? Gracious Lord, I would approach thee with reverence and godly fear. I would desire the kiss of reconciliation, of affection, of homage, of adoration! I would say with the Church, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.' Song i. 2.

O Lord, avert from me the wrath of the Lamb; for if He, who is the only mediator, be angry, while God my Father is justly angry for my sins, who shall be my intercessor? Witness for me ye angels of light, that my whole trust is in Jesus, the rock of my salvation. Psalm xciv. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE, Reader, let you and I pause over this sweet gospel Psalm, and contemplate in the person and victories of Jesus, the glorious Mediator, and head of his church and people, and the sure events of that salvation, which Jehovah, in his threefold character of person, hath appointed for the final happiness of his redeemed. Hell may, and will oppose; the world, with all its powers, will join the confederacy; and poor fallen man, while continuing in the unrenewed state of nature, will be as outrageous as either. But the opposition is in vain. Jehovah with his own right arm hath gotten himself the victory; and all the enemies of the cross, and of the crown, shall be broken in pieces, as the vessel of the potter. And oh, how blessed the thought! behold we already see Jesus the King on his throne. All power is his in heaven and earth. The decree is gone forth, and he himself hath declared it. Precious Lamb of God! let my eyes, by faith, gaze upon thee with unceasing rapture! Let me behold thee, not only exercising all authority in heaven, but in earth, with a plenitude of

power, bending the nations to the sceptre of thy dominion, until every knee is brought to bow before thee, and every tongue constrained to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And oh! grant thou Universal Almighty Monarch, grant me the blessedness of acknowledging thee to be my rightful Sovereign, by the Father's gift, by the purchase of thy blood, and by the conquests of thy grace; and may every thought be brought into captivity, to the obedience of Christ!

Reader, let us seek grace while meditating on all the great things recorded of our adorable Lord, and the Father's appointment of him, as in this Psalm, that we may exercise such faith upon his glorious person, whose praise is here celebrated, so as to feel our own personal interest in him, and in all that is here said of him. Is he the Father's king in Zion? Then is he also our God and King. Is he set upon the holy hill of Zion? Then let him be King in our hearts also. Hath he subdued all his enemies? Then hath he subdued our enemies also. And is he set down upon his throne, remember his blessed promise to all his people that overcome in his name, that they shall sit down with him in his throne, even as he hath overcome, and is set down with his Father in his throne. Even so, Lord Jesus! Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God and our Father, and we shall reign with thee for ever. Amen and Amen.

PSALM III

CONTENTS.

The title of this Psalm best leads to the contents of it. The first and literal sense of this Psalm should seem to refer wholly to David; but, to an enlightened eye, there is much to be seen in it of Christ. Amidst the afflictions here complained of, there is much of the consolations of Jesus, and his great salvation.

LORD, how are they increased that trouble me?
 Many are they that rise up against me.

By turning to the 15th chapter of the 2d Book of Samuel, which I recommend the Reader to do, we shall there find the part of David's life which refers to this history; and, as an history only, it forms a very interesting one. David was now under the chastening hand of God. And what tended greatly to aggravate it, was the consciousness which he could not but have in his own mind, that it was for sin. God had said concerning his transgression in the case of the murder of Uriah, that the sword should not depart from his house; so that David could not but eye God's hand, in the unnatural usurpation of his son Absalom. 2 Sam. xii. 10, 11, 12. But Reader, though in the first and general sense of the Psalm, we find David and his trials respecting his son, the subject of it, yet, if we look beyond the King of Israel's history, we shall discern a subject infinitely more important and interesting, in the reference this Psalm hath to the persecutions and afflictions of Jesus. Did not Jesus in the days of his flesh sustain a contradiction of sinners against himself? And was not the Lord of life and glory constrained to the deepest acknowledgments of sorrow, with strong crying and tears,

when all his disciples forsook him and fled? Did David at this season, when his life was sought for by his son Absalom go up the hill of the Mount of Olives weeping: and will not the Reader recollect how Jesus went forth to the very same spot in the night of his unequalled sorrow, when his life was sought for by his unnatural children, whom he came to seek and redeem? Precious Jesus! how blessed is it to eye thee pre-eminent in sorrow as also in glory. 2 Sam. xv. 30. Heb. v. 7.

2 Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is* no help for him in God. *Selah.*

Most probably David referred to the curses of Shimei in what he here saith. See 2 Sam. xvi. 8. But still yet more striking are these words if considered, as referring to the persecutions of the Lord Jesus. Indeed our adored Lord might well be supposed to speak of the increase of them that troubled him, and which arose up against him. And never surely were taunts so cruelly thrown out as those upon Jesus while hanging on the cross, when they cried out: 'he trusted in God let him deliver him now if he will have him.' Matt. xxvii. 43. Reader! of all soul distresses that certainly is the greatest, when the enemy and our own unbelieving hearts would tempt us to suppose God hath forsaken us. Here the child of God is sadly put to it, when the enemies of our salvation thus reproach. Oh! Lord, suffer not my soul to fall under this heaviest of all sorrows. While Jesus looks on my affliction, and speaks peace, all is well. Let Jesus but smile, I care not who frowns. But if I begin to despond of his favor; if it could be so, that there was really no help for me in my God, then I should be ruined indeed. I detain the Reader one moment longer on this verse, to take notice of the little word that is placed at the end of it, *Selah.* And as the same word is found very many times in the book of the Psalms, I would here, once for all, offer a short observation upon it. Various have been the opinions of the learned concerning the precise meaning of it. But the most general sentiment determines it to be a note of observation: that where the word *Selah* occurs, it means, take particular notice of what is said before it. Now supposing this to be the case, how very appropriate are both those verses, if considered as referring to Jesus. Such a thought is sweet, in eyeing Christ in his unequalled troubles? And such a thought in beholding Jesus as our example, for our lesser troubles, is blessed also. It is as much as to say, did the ungodly taunt Jesus himself with being without help in his God; well then may they be supposed to say so concerning his household!

3 But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. *Selah.*

Reader! see what grace can do! And depend upon it, when grace and faith are in lively exercise the more the opposition is made from without, the stronger the comforts will be within. Oh! how blessed is it thus to look to God. Jehovah in Jesus is a shield to defend, a glory to shine upon, and a lifter to bear up. Christ is all and in all. Safety, honor, support, and holy joy! How fully were all these proved in the

case of David after the rebellion of Absalom. See 2 Sam. xix. 14. And Reader! think how infinitely more so in the instance of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his triumph over death, hell, and the grave. Acts ii. 36. Let not the Reader overlook what is said of the Lord's hearing prayer out of his holy hill. The hill of Zion was a type of the gospel church. It is in Jesus that prayer is heard, and from Jesus answers come down. Christ is king of Zion.

5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

Some have thought that what David saith in this verse of laying down and taking rest, hath a much higher meaning than the common sleep of the bed. They have supposed that the words are typical of Jesus laying in the grave, and his glorious resurrection that followed. And certainly it is a beautiful idea, well deserving to be kept in view in this Psalm. For with confidence it had been spoken of the Lord Jesus by the spirit of prophecy, that Jehovah would not leave Christ's soul in hell neither suffer his Holy One to see corruption. Psm. xvi. 10.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.

7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

How charming both these verses! Ten thousands opposed to one poor man become a mighty army! But millions against us, when God is on our side, are as nothing. Oh! for faith in the Lord, and in the power of his might. See a beautiful illustration of this doctrine, 2 Kings vi. 15—17.

8 Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD; thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

See Reader what a blessed joyful conclusion! What could open more gloomy and discouraging than this Psalm did! What can end more triumphant and joyful! But do not fail to trace the whole to its source. Salvation is of God. Yes! Jesus saith, Mine own arm brought salvation, and of the people there was none with me. Isaiah lxiii. 3—5. Oh! Lord! suffer me never to rob my God of his glory, by mingling any thing of my wretchedness with the finished redemption of my Saviour. Lord Jesus do thou have all the praise, for thou alone art able to bear the glory. Zech. vi. 12, 13.

REFLECTIONS.

CAN I, my soul, read this Psalm of David's distresses in his flight from Absalom, and not behold David's Lord in his agonies and conflicts, in the very same spot of the Mount of Olives? Must I not suppose that the Holy Ghost was shadowing forth in the instance of David, as in numberless other cases, in the trials and afflictions of the faithful, in the Old Testament scripture, the outlines of the Lord of his church, to be brought

forward in the after ages of the New? And shall not such scenes, which the Lord of life and glory passed through in the days of his flesh, when enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself, endear the Lamb of God to my heart, and animate me in all my exercises, that I may never be weary nor faint in my mind?

Learn, my soul, from what is said of David in this Psalm, what a holy composure, faith in God's love, and dependance upon God's grace, is capable of inducing under the most afflicting circumstances. It should seem that David meditated this Psalm, if he did not immediately write it down, when he was in such a situation of hurry and confusion, as was enough to have discomposed the stoutest mind. And so it would, had not the Lord been his shield, his glory, and the lifter up of his head, Oh! precious Jesus! do I not learn from hence, that the only security and defence against all danger is the leaning upon thee and thy great salvation. Oh! Lord, let the arm of thy strength be under me, and the light of thy countenance shining upon me, and then will I not fear though ten thousands set themselves against me round about.

Reader! behold from the perusal of this sweet and blessed Psalm, what must be your confidence now in your nightly slumbers, and what alone will be your confidence then, when laying down in the long slumber of the grave; even sleeping in Jesus. You need not be afraid in the recurrence of every night to drop asleep, if so be your soul is sustained by its union with Jesus. And a consciousness of the same interest in all that belongs to Jesus, will be the well grounded security, when the body falls asleep in Jesus unto the day of the resurrection. Every thing speaks in the language of a covenant God, as the Lord did to the Patriarch: fear not to go down into Egypt, even the Egypt of the grave, for I am with thee. Blessed Jesus! it is thou, that by thy death hast overcome death, and made the grave a sweet chamber of repose, until thou shalt call upon thy members to arise at the great day of everlasting joy. *Then thou shalt call and I will answer thee, for thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*

PSALM IV.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm opens with prayer, then an address shewing the folly, as well as danger, of pursuing vanity; the close of the Psalm determines that the happiness of man must be alone found in the favor of God.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm of David.

Before I enter upon the Psalm itself I would beg the Reader's attention to the title of it. Some have thought that this Psalm was used in the temple service, and sung there. And they that have drawn this conclusion suppose also, that *Neginoth* meant stringed instruments, similar to what is said Habak. iii. 19. But while I do not presume to say otherwise, I venture to throw out a conjecture, that this Psalm was addressed to an infinitely greater person, than any among the sons of men. The Septuagint read the word which we have rendered in our translation 'chief Musician' *Lamenet*, instead of *Lamenetzoth*; the meaning of which is *unto the end*. From whence the Greek and Latin Fathers imagined, that all the Psalms which bear this inscription refer to the Messiah, *the great end*. If so, is not this Psalm, and indeed all the

Psalms that are so addressed to the chief Musician, directed to Jesus? I ask the question, let the Reader remember; I do not determine it. But if there be any foundation for the idea, surely it is an interesting one, to take with us in our searching for him through the whole book of Psalms, from whence we know, as well as other parts of scripture, the Lord Jesus spake to his disciples concerning himself. Luke xxiv. 44.

HEAR me when I call, O God of my righteousness; thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

Is not this holy cry to God founded on the plea of him and his merit, who is truly called the Lord our righteousness; and who is made of God to his people, both wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption? If the prayer be thus read with an eye to Jesus, it becomes a blessed argument indeed. And the other part of the motive for redress is also very sweet and important. We take the most effectual method to obtain new mercies, when we remind God of his past favors. What indeed can be more grateful to the Lord, than, by thus acting faith upon what the Lord will give, to tell him what he hath before bestowed upon us? But is there not even a higher sense to be put upon this verse? May we not without violence consider the prayer as the supplication of the God-man Christ Jesus? Heb. v. 7, 8.

2 O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn* my glory into shame? *how long* will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

We have here an address, and it is a very affectionate one, to the children of men, for despising Jesus and his salvation. Is not this of all sins the grossest, to think slightly of that which occupied the mind of Jehovah from all eternity?

3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

What a beautiful view have we in this verse in reference to the person of Jesus, the Father's beloved, the Father's holy one, the Father's only one, in whom his soul delighteth. Yes! God the Father will hear the cry of every poor sinner, that gives honour to God's own appointment in looking unto him, on whom the Father is always looking.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still: Selah.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

Nothing can be more gracious than what is here recommended. It is as if the Holy Ghost commanded the sinner to pause over the view of his own nothingness, and then to come by faith, with Jesus and his

righteousness in his arms, and to say, Lord, here is my sole trust and dependence.

6 *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

Is not this exhibited in the world every day? While some are sending out their thoughts, and wishes, and expectations, to invite any vanity, any folly; the people of God are looking up to Jesus, and asking for a view of him who is the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. Precious Jesus! be thou my light, my life, my portion, and I shall need no other.

7 *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*

Is not this an immediate answer to prayer? And doth it not prove the truth of that sweet promise, Isaiah lxxv. 24?

8 *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.*

Happy and gracious conclusion of every truly regenerate soul, convinced of an interest in Christ, and a personal union with him. *The beloved of the Lord shall dwell safely.* Isaiah xxxii. 18.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I never lose sight of the Lord Jesus while reading this Psalm. He is the Lord our righteousness. And, therefore, in all our approaches to the mercy-seat, let us go there in a language corresponding to this, which calls Jesus the God of our righteousness. And while men of the world from the world are seeking their chief good, let us desire his favor which infinitely transcends corn and wine, and all the good things which perish in using. Yes! Lord, thy favor is better than life itself. Thou causest them that love thee to inherit substance, and fillest all their treasure, yea thou thyself art their treasure.

And oh! thou gracious God and Father, hast thou in such a wonderful manner set apart one in our nature for thyself? Hast thou indeed chosen one out of thy people? Hast thou beheld him in the purity of his nature, as one in every point godly? Hast thou given him as the covenant of the people? And hast thou declared thyself well pleased in him? Oh! then, well may my soul be well pleased in him also. Now do I know that my God and Father will hear me when I call upon him in Jesus' name, and when I look up to him for acceptance for Jesus' sake. Yes! my heart is fixed, O Lord, my heart is fixed; Jesus is my hope and righteousness: the Lord will hear me when I call. And henceforth will I both lay me down in peace, and sleep securely in Jesus, accepted in the beloved: *for this is the rest wherewith the Lord causeth the weary to rest, and this is their refreshment.*

PSALM V.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here at his devotions. If David in the first instance of the petitions had an eye to his own personal persecutions, yet, there can be no doubt but that the Holy Ghost designed to instruct the church, through David, as a type of the Lord Jesus, that what is here said had a more immediate reference to Christ, and God the Father's gracious attention to him.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth. A Psalm of David.

GIVE ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

2 Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

If we consider the Lord Jesus in these addresses as the representative of his church and people, we not only heighten the several expressions made use of, but raise also our confidence, when coming to the mercy-seat with similar petitions in him and through him. The covenant relations Christ here adverts to, by way of strengthening his claims, are very precious when adopted by his people also. And what an unquestionable authority we go upon, when we look up to Jehovah in his name, who said himself, *I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* John xx. 17.

3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and will look up.

What a blessed view is here again given of Jesus! The apostle saith he was heard in that he feared. Heb. v. 7. And what an assurance have all the faithful of being heard, when they are led by his Spirit, act faith upon his person and mediation, and thus direct their prayer with the first dawn of the morning, unto him that proves himself the hearer of the prayer of the poor and destitute, and despiseth not their desire. Reader! do put it down as a sure unerring mark, that wherever the Spirit gives grace to pray, the Lord is already come forth to answer prayer. Isaiah lxxv. 24.

4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee.

5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

How beautiful and appropriate are all the things here said, if read with an eye to the great Redeemer, as putting up the several pleas, because of those evils he came to destroy. He came to destroy the works

of the devil, and therefore he was very sure of a glorious issue to his own righteous cause. Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of thy glorious Surety, the certain interest that his church hath in all that is said of him. If Jehovah hath no pleasure in iniquity, what pleasure must he have in him that hath taken it away? And if Jesus be so precious as the head, must not the church which is his body be also precious in him? Oh! thou Holy One of God! cause me to be for ever fixing my eyes, my whole soul with unceasing rapture upon thee, as the Lord our righteousness.

7 But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: *and* in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

Of whom but Jesus doth the prophet here speak? Of all the sons of fallen Adam we may humbly adopt the words of the Lord himself, and say, *for who is this that hath engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.* Jerem. xxx. 21. None but he who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, could come into the house of Jehovah, or draw nigh unto him. But, Reader! how blessed is it for us to draw nigh to Jesus, who hath come, and who is both the mercy-seat, the sacrifice, and the temple; the way, the truth, and the life!

8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

The Spirit was given without measure to Jesus, and it is our happiness that from him and in him, the holy unction, poured out on the head of our glorious High Priest, our Aaron, runs down to the skirts of his clothing, even to the humblest and poorest of his people. Reader! looking up to Jesus, shall we not say, Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, even thine only, that thy way may be straight before me?

9 For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part *is* very wickedness; their throat *is* an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

What an awful view doth this unfold of the lurkings of wickedness. The apostle was struck with it, and gave the same picture to the church. Rom. iii. 13.

10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels: cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

This is a prayer delivered in the spirit of prophecy. And let the Reader, once for all, observe, that whenever we meet with imprecations of this nature, they are all in reference to the sworn enemies of God and his Christ. There can be no concord between Christ and Belial. The

seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent are sworn foes from generation to generation, through time and to all eternity. Exodus xvii. 14—16.

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous: with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield.

Let the Reader observe in the close, as in the opening of the Psalm, that the sacred writer speaks of one identical person. It is the righteous one Jehovah will bless: it is him that is to be compassed as with a shield. And who is this righteous person, but the Lord Jesus, the glorious righteous Mediator? In whom are the people to put their trust, and in whom are they to shout for joy, but in Jesus, who is their salvation? Yes! Lord, thou art righteous, and the Lord our righteousness! Everlasting praises to him, who, though he knew no sin, was made sin for us, that *we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Jesus! how blessed to thy people art thou in every view; and in those views most eminently in which we behold thee going before thy church, as our great High Priest and Representative in the service of the sanctuary! Here would our souls unceasingly contemplate thee, as engaging thine heart to approach for us before Jehovah, in the vast undertakings of our Mediator. Thou didst draw nigh to God, as an absolute God. Thou didst personally engage to approach to the throne of infinite holiness and infinite power. Thou wert found worthy, from the holiness of thy nature, to draw nigh without a Mediator, for thou neededst none, and God declared himself well pleased for thy righteousness sake. And now, Lord, we can and do approach and draw nigh in and through thee. Yes! blessed, for ever blessed be thy name, we have access by one Spirit to the Father through thee; and, having such an High Priest over the house of God, we may come boldly to the mercy-seat, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in all time of need. Holy Father! I would now say, my voice shalt thou hear betimes in the morning; I will look up in that dear and ever precious name, in whom I can never look up in vain. I will make mention of Jesus. I shall find boldness in his blood and righteousness; for thou, Lord, wilt bless him, and bless his people in him, and defend all his redeemed here, and crown them with endless joy hereafter, for his name and righteousness sake. Amen.

PSALM VI.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here under affliction. He crieth to God. In the conclusion, he takes comfort in the consciousness that his prayer had been heard, and he shall triumph over all his enemies.

To the chief musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I *am* weak: O LORD, heal me, for my bones are vexed.

We may, without the smallest injury to the grand point this Psalm hath in view, I mean, its pointed reference to Christ, look at David as speaking also of his own personal afflictions. David had a large portion of sorrow in himself, in his family and kingdom. But the beauty of the Psalm is as it beholds Christ in his strong crying and tears, when taking upon him our nature, and becoming sin for the church, that the church might be made the righteousness of God in him. If we eye the Redeemer as the sinner's surety, we shall then enter into a right apprehension of what he saith under the divine chastisement for sin. All the cries of Jesus are expressive of this. Hence it is said by him to the Father, *reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness.* Psalm lxi. 20.

3 My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?

The Reader will not fail to discover Christ in this supplication, when he recollects how Jesus complained in the garden, when he said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* Matt. xxvi. 38. Reader! think how blessed and accommodating this view of Jesus is to the lesser sorrows of his people! And think also how sure the cries of his people are to be heard by him, when we call to mind that in all things Jesus was made like to his people, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest; and in that he hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Heb. ii. 17, 18.

4 Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercies' sake.

When we read this petition as the words of Christ in the flesh, how much strength do we derive from the thought that, if in the long waiting of our souls for the Lord's manifestation, we find Jesus exercised in the same before us, and therefore are in this way also made in conformity to our glorious Head; so by those exercises of the Son of God, we cannot but know that he takes interest in all that we encounter.

5 For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

Hezekiah made use of this very argument, and a sweet one it is, and proved most successful. Isaiah xxxviii. 18.

6 I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears.

7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

We need only to compare scripture with scripture, to discover that it is Jesus of whom the prophet here speaks. Psalm xxii. 1, 2. But, Reader! do not hastily pass over this review. Did Jesus cry and groan, and was he weary of it? Whence all this? The answer is at hand: In all this Jesus acted as the sinner's surety. Hence terror beset him on every side: his holy soul was full of horrors and the darkness of death. He sustained all that was the sinner's due, that he might expiate sin by the sacrifice of himself. Hence the surety bleeds, and groans, and dies, that the principal, for whom he suffered, might go free. Hence Jesus trembles, and complains of being forsaken, that his people, his redeemed, might have the *oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*. Isaiah lxi. 3. And was this the cause for which Jesus groaned and died? Oh! love unequalled! Oh! matchless grace! Shall my soul ever lose sight of thee, and of thy love? Shall I ever, by unbelief and disobedience, doubt thy love any more, thou blessed Jesus?

8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.

9 The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.

10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.

Reader, do not fail to remark the holy triumph here expressed, and with which the Psalm concludes, as the sure result of covenant love, both as it belongs to our glorious Head, and, in him, to all his members. Who that reads this can overlook the scripture in which the prophetic language of this Psalm, as referring to the person of Jesus, is brought forward as then to be finally fulfilled, in which the very words the master of the house shall say are already recorded, and are exactly the same as here? See Luke xiii. 27. And who that compares both scriptures, but must immediately be convinced that it is principally with an eye to Jesus this Psalm was written, whatever personal afflictions David himself, the writer of it, might be exercised with.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! see, I charge it upon thee this day, see that thy perusal of these precious portions of scripture be all directed to the discovery of

him, to whom all the prophets gave witness; that wheresoever in the blessed book of God thy meditations are directed, thou dost search for Jesus as for hidden treasure. He will be found of them that seek him. He will never say (for he hath never said) to any of the praying seed of David, seek ye my face in vain. And oh! thou blessed Holy One of God! wilt thou not now, as in the days that are past, wilt thou not draw nigh to those who desire to draw nigh unto thee, and, by the sweet teachings and influences of thy blessed Spirit, make precious discoveries of all things which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning thyself?

My soul! pause one moment longer over this divine Psalm, that contains in its bosom so much of Jesus! Did thy Lord thus groan, thus cry out, and was his precious soul thus deeply exercised, when he stood forth as thy Surety? Did Jehovah thus bruise him, and put him to grief? And in the seasons of these chastisements, did the Father love him with a love that passeth knowledge? Nay, did the Father therefore love him because he laid down his life, and made his soul an offering for sin? Oh! then, learn henceforth how rightly to estimate afflictions. *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* Nay, my soul, recollect, if we endure chastening, *God dealeth with us as with sons.* Oh Lamb of God! cause me to forget my afflictions in the view of thine. Thou draukest the very dregs of the cup of trembling, that thy redeemed might drink of the cup of salvation. Thou, the glorious Head of thy church, didst take out all the sting of sorrow in the sting of death, which is sin, that thy members might feel no sting in their sorrows, from their interest and union in thee. Hail! thou now risen, exalted, and triumphant Saviour; thou hast now conquered all thine enemies, and our victory is secured in thine! Even now, in thy strength and righteousness, we bid all workers of iniquity to depart from us; for our persons and prayers are accepted in thee, and ere long we shall sit down with thee in thy throne, even as thou hast overcome, and art sat down with thy Father in his throne. Amen.

PSALM VII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here appealing unto God, against the false accusations of his enemies. He expresseth a well-grounded confidence that he shall be heard and justified.

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.

O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.

Some have supposed that *Shiggaion* means a song or psalm. And if so, we may learn from it, that the writer was not discomposed in spirit to sing unto the Lord, because he was unjustly accused. And sure it ought not at any time, nor upon any occasion, to take off our devout frame towards God, because we are persecuted by man. But, as

the chief scope of this beautiful Psalm looks far beyond the private circumstances of David, and evidently is directed to speak of David's Lord, we shall do well to seek the teachings of God the Holy Ghost, as we pass through the several verses of it, to be on the look out for Jesus. In the very opening of the Psalm, we may observe how the Lord Jesus hath an eye to the covenant engagements of the Father; for while he calleth Jehovah his God, he reminds him of his promised help, which in the charter of heaven, concerning the redemption Jesus engaged for, Jehovah pledged himself, on his part, that the enemy should not exact upon him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him; for God said, *I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.* Psm. lxxxix. 22, 23.

2 Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending *it* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.

That Satan is here meant, and that it is Christ to whom the chief scope of the Psalm is directed, see Psalm xxii. 12—21. Song iv. 8.

3 O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;

4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)

5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take *it*; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.

While we keep our eye stedfastly on Christ, as the person here specially treated of, we may secondarily, and subordinately, look at David, king of Israel. We by no means lessen the importance of the *former*, by having respect also to the *latter*. Nay, from considering David king of Israel as one of Christ's mystical members, and, as such, partaking in the sufferings and reproaches of Christ, we give greater glory to the suffering Head. Of David it might be said, in his kindness for the ill-treatment from *Cush*, the *Benjamite*, which no doubt means *Saul*, that he requited good for evil, and delivered him, who without any cause, was his enemy. 1 Sam. xxiv. 4—7. and again, 1 Sam. xxvi. 8 to the end. But if these things make this scripture suitable to David, how much more to Jesus? He, and he alone, could truly say, There is no iniquity in my hands. And he, and he alone, did say, then *I restored that which I took not away*, and thereby delivered our poor nature which, without any cause, was at enmity with him. Yes! thou glorious Restorer of our forfeited life, and all our mercies, and the Restorer of God's injured honor and glory. It was thou that didst restore all, and bring back man to the divine image, which he had lost, and to the favor of God, which by sin he had been robbed of. Psalm lxxxix. 4.

6 Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and

awake for me *to* the judgment *that* thou hast commanded.

7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.

8 The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that is* in me.

9 O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

Is there not in these words, concerning the judgment Jehovah hath commanded, a reference to the very judgment seat of Christ, to which the Lord our Mediator is appointed supreme judge, *because he is the Son of man?* John v. 27. It is there, finally and fully, the congregating of the people shall be. But whether this be so or not, one thing is certain, none but Jesus can make an appeal to it, from this distinguishing feature of character, which belongs wholly to him, the righteousness and the integrity that is in him. Precious view of the Lamb of God! Thou, and thou only, art holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

10 My defence *is* of God, which saveth the upright in heart:

11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.

16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

If we read these verses with reference to David's history, how were

these truths confirmed in the instance of the Benjamite Saul? And if we read them with reference to a greater than David, even David's Lord, what an awful example doth the history of Judas afford in confirmation. Acts i. 18.

17 I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

Sweet and blessed conclusion to a Psalm of trials and persecutions! Such was it in the instance of Jesus, and such will it be among all the followers of Jesus: as the glorious Head, so the members all join in the praises of God's salvation; and this, which is now the song of grace, will be the everlasting hallelujah of heaven, when Jesus and his church will be crowned in glory, and every enemy put under their feet.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord! how refreshing is it, in every view the Holy Ghost is pleased to give of thee, to behold thee as our glorious Head. In persecutions, as well as in sufferings, in reproaches, as well as unjust judgment, thou shalt have the pre-eminence. Oh! for grace to eye thee in the path of tribulation going before thy church and people, and marking the way by thine own spotless example. But oh! for larger portions of that meekness of spirit by which thy walk was distinguished. Of Jesus only could it be fully said, that when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously!

Reader! in our improvements of the divine subject which this Psalm holds forth, under all the persecutions which in our lesser trials we meet with in the way, let an eye to Jesus animate our minds and comfort our hearts, that finally and fully, we shall find cause to sing the same song as is here sung, in praising the Lord according to his righteousness, and singing praises to the name of the Lord most high. This will be our everlasting song; neither should the oppositions of the ungodly put our minds out of tune for singing it with grace in our hearts now. In Jesus and his great salvation, we are already led to anticipate the triumphs which must ere long be our own over all the enemies of our faith; and the promise is absolute in him, and the power of his might, which saith, *that the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.*

PSALM VIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is pure gospel from beginning to end, for it celebrates the glories of Jesus, as the Monarch of his people, and of heaven and earth. Under the spirit of prophecy, and with an eye to Christ, the sacred writer of it expresseth his astonishment at the incarnation of Jesus, and then soars in the loftiest strains of adoration and joy at his wonderful glory.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of David.

Some have conjectured that *Gittith* means the tune to which this Psalm was sung. Others have supposed that *Gittith* is the same as *Gittite*, meaning Goliath the Gittite, in allusion to David's victory over Goliath of Gath, to whom David, in comparison of size, was but as one of those whom the Psalm celebrates, as giving forth praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. But if the dedication of it be (as hath been before observed, Psm. iv.) to one infinitely higher than the chief musician in the temple service, it should seem that this would be more in correspondence to the divine truths of the gospel expressed through every part of it. Let these things, however, be as they may, the several scriptures which refer to this Psalm so decidedly explain it upon the principles of the gospel, that the most ordinary reader cannot but be led to observe how much it treats of Jesus and his glories. The apostle to the Hebrews, in the second chapter, fully shews that not man in general, but the man Christ Jesus in particular, and him only, is the person to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth. Heb. ii. 6—10. And, as if this was not enough, our Lord Jesus himself made a complete application of this Psalm to his own person and glory, in his conversation with the chief Priests and Scribes. Matt. xxi. 15, 16. These are sufficient considerations to interest our hearts, as we enter upon the perusal of this most blessed Psalm. Reader! may you and I, as we go over it, have our souls led out in divine contemplation of the surpassing glory of our Lord Jesus, who is here so sweetly celebrated as the King and Head of his church and people. Oh! for such a portion of his blessed Spirit to be upon the mind both of writer and reader, that while we behold what he did for us, when he was made a little lower than the angels, we may find faith in his finished salvation, and trust in him that he is and will be our Jesus still, now that he is exalted above all height; *angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him!*

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

If we read this verse according to the authority we have to read it, where the word Lord, when translated in capitals, means Jehovah, and where the same word Lord, in smaller letters, means Adonai, then it will be beautiful indeed: for then the expression carries with it the Lord Jehovah as beheld in a covenant way in Christ. Oh! how excellent is this. Oh! how truly hath Jehovah exalted his glory, even in the person of the Lord of glory, Christ Jesus, far above all heavens. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

The best of all comments on this blessed verse is what Jesus himself hath given, Matt. xxi. 15, 16. And as in the person of our glorious Head, so in the instance of all his redeemed, how is the praise of Jehovah

perfected, when babes in Christ are brought out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son? How is the accursed enemy and the avenger overthrown and discomfited in the instance of every poor sinner made willing in the day of God's power. Here surely the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered. Isaiah xlix. 24, 25.

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained:

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

The Psalmist is here lost in admiration. He contemplates the heavenly bodies, those bright luminaries the moon and the stars. He doth not notice the sun; probably it was night when this meditation on the starry sky was taken. And while he considered these vast powers of God's creation, he is lost in wonder in recollecting the mercies of redemption. And it should seem particularly with an eye to the great Maker condescending to become man. It is not that he who made so magnificent a world condescended to look upon man, for man, as the work of his hands, was an object for the great Creator to regard, as much and as highly, had it pleased his infinite mind, as any other work of his power. They who would interpret the passage in this sense, certainly overlook the great beauty of it. But the wonder of all wonders, and which the sacred writer is here contemplating, is, that God himself, in one person of the Godhead, should pass by the nature of angels, and take upon him the seed of Abraham. Heb. ii. 16. Most evidently it is this one, this identical Man, whose nature, united to the Godhead, forms the glorious Mediator, which the Psalmist is here contemplating, and concerning whom he thus breaks out in wonder, love, and praise.

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet:

These verses come in with greater fulness, to explain and to confirm what went before: how the Son of God was made a little, or for a little space, lower than the angels, during his incarnation and ministry upon earth. For, as the Covenant-head of his church and people, he was before all things, and by him all things did consist, consequently he was above angels. His goings forth were of old, from everlasting. He was the first born of every creature, saith the apostle, the image of the invisible God, the appointed heir of all things, and by whom God made the worlds. Now all these can only refer to Christ as Mediator, both God and man in one Person. His name, Mediator, is suited to both his natures, and not separate from either, but in the union of both forming one Christ. Hence the Psalmist, in contemplating the wonders of redemption, and

by such a wonderful way, thus exclaims, *What is man, that thou art mindful of him!*

7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and *whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas.

It is worthy of remark, that when, at the original creation, the first man was invested with sovereignty in his state of innocency, the grant of dominion ran in those words, Gen. i. 28. How delightful it is to see that sovereignty regained in the person of him who, by his wonderful undertaking, hath restored all things, and to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!

The Psalmist, after reciting the wonders of redemption in the person of him by whom all things are restored, makes a beautiful response to his own first exclamation of wonder and praise, and again extols Jehovah in the covenant mercies of redemption, as the object of adoration through all the earth. Hail, Lord of all! blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to him that was slain and now liveth for ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! pause over the wonders contained in this hymn of praise. Let him have all thy praise, and to him be all the glory offered, whom Jehovah delighted to honor. Contemplate Jesus the Mediator. Behold him set up from everlasting. See his goings forth for the salvation of his people. Trace the footsteps of his mercy in all that long train of revelations concerning him, when his name was secret, and when he stood forth in covenant engagements, but yet not having tabernacled in substance of our flesh, the Mediator of his people. Behold how he longed for the fulness of time to come, when he should become sin for his people, that his people might be made the righteousness of God in him. Wherefore, precious Jesus, (suffer me to ask thee) wherefore didst thou so often assume a visible appearance, when all the while to us thy name was secret; and wherefore didst thou present thyself before thy redeemed sometimes as a man, and sometimes as an angel? Was it not that, by such palpable testimonies, thou mightest shew how much thou didst love thy church, thy spouse, the poor ruined nature of man? And wherefore was it, O thou Holy One of God! that thou didst thus manifest thyself otherwise than thou dost to the world, but to testify what a longing desire thou hadst to the work of redemption, which the Father gave thee to do, and which thou didst voluntarily undertake for the salvation of thy chosen? Oh! well may every redeemed soul cry out with the Prophet, *What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?* And wherefore is it now, dearest Lord, that since all power is thine in heaven and in earth, that thou still conde-

scendest to regard the humblest, the poorest of thy people, but to shew, equally so, that no change of place hath made any change in thine heart and thy love towards them. *Having loved thine own which are in the world, thou lovest them unto the end.* Oh! for grace, that this love, this favor, this mercy, this good will, may be carried in the rich streams of it from thy heart into mine. Oh! for grace to bow the knee, the whole soul, and body, and spirit, before thee, and to praise Jesus, who is the supreme Monarch of all creation. Oh! for grace to join this hymn of praise, and to sing aloud, with all the redeemed both in heaven and in earth, *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name throughout the world, and whose glory is above the heavens!*

PSALM IX.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here again at the throne of grace, praising God for past mercies, and preferring petitions for future favors. In singing or reading this Psalm, it will be profitable to have an eye to Christ.

To the chief Musician on Muth-labben. A Psalm of David.

The title of this Psalm "upon Muth-labben" is very obscure. Some have thought it refers to the death of a particular enemy. And others have concluded it means a certain tune or instrument. But the sweet spiritual sense of the Psalm, blessed be God, is not obscured by the title.

I WILL praise *thee*, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

We shall enter into a full and clear apprehension of the scope and design of this Psalm, if we first consider how it is to be read with an eye to Christ, and then how it may be accommodated to those, who, through faith in Christ, have an interest in all that concerns him as Mediator. The Psalm opens with the Mediator praising Jehovah for delivering him from all his enemies, and the joy he finds in consequence thereof, as that deliverance concerns himself and the Church in him. Hence, Reader, if you and I have a right conception and knowledge of our own personal deliverance in Jesus, and by Jesus from all our enemies, we shall by faith take part in what is here said, and praise Jehovah with our whole heart and soul for the same. Oh! how precious is it, when we can see and feel our deliverance from the fear of sin, death, and hell, and all our foes, and all our sorrows, through him and his glorious victory, who is the Lord our righteousness!

3 When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

Was there ever a prophecy more pointed than this, or ever an event more strikingly fulfilled, than when Christ's enemies came to apprehend him in the garden, and Jesus, by a word speaking, caused them to go backward, and fall upon their faces to the earth? Was there ever an

instance, in the annals of the world, of such an event taking place by the breath of the mouth? Reader, I pray you, turn to the account of this in the gospel: John xviii. 5, 6. Mark the miracle well, and then pause in contemplating how the glory of the Godhead must have burst through the manhood of Christ to testify who Jesus was in such a memorable moment. And although it brought no conviction to their minds, yet what a blessed and overpowering testimony doth it give, and hath all along given to the Church, whom it was designed to instruct in so precious a doctrine, who Jesus is and was, and in whom we believe. Oh! thou condescending God! how gracious was this discovery of thyself.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou sittest in the throne judging right.

5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

Were ever words plainer than these, to teach us that it is Jesus thus addressing the Father, acknowledging the Father's fulfilment of all covenant engagements, in supporting the manhood of Christ in all the seasons of his encountering with his enemies? And, Reader, may not all the people of Jesus in their deliverances, and from their victories in him, look up and bless God for the same mercy?

6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.

Is not this spoken of one particular foe more than others? And of whom so probably as Satan? And how beautiful is it, in the victories of our Jesus, by his blood and righteousness, to behold Satan and sin, and death and hell, and the grave, with all that empire of destruction, brought to a final end. *He shall swallow up death in victory.* Hail! thou glorious Deliverer of mankind! It is thou which hast destroyed principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Coloss. ii. 15.

7 But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.

8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

Here, by a change of person in the speaker, we find a beautiful transition made to Christ himself, in which the sacred writer is celebrating the glories of his person, and the greatness, and extensiveness, and

everlasting duration of his kingdom, and by contrasting his monarchy to that of all created power, the glories of his mediatorial reign is set forth most blessedly. Reader, do not hastily pass over the several precious things here said of our almighty Sovereign. He, thy Brother, as well as thy God, will be thy Judge! He who hath died for thy sins, as thy Surety, will one day come to see of the travail of his soul in the redemption of his people, and be satisfied. He who now looks on, and is the refuge of his oppressed, will judge their cause, and in due time deliver them out of all their trouble. Surely, Reader, if you know this Jesus, if you believe in his power, if you depend upon his salvation, you will trust every thing, for time and for eternity, in his Almighty hands. But, my brother, mark, I beseech you, the certain truth,—if you know him not, you cannot trust him. None ever confided in an unknown God. Oh, precious Lord Jesus! now I see the beauty and the excellency of that blessed scripture, in which thou hast said, *And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* John xvii. 3.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

Here is a call to the whole Church to join in praises to Jehovah, and that particularly, for that he resides in the person of the Mediator, in the midst of his people. *The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.* Rev. xxi. 3. Sweet thought! what can destroy, what can hurt, or even afflict the Church, while her Beloved is in the midst of her. Read and commit to memory, for a daily, hourly song, that sweet scripture, Zeph. iii. 14—17.

12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

How blessed and consolatory the thought to the martyrs of Jesus, and to all his persecuted little ones, is this consideration. Hence they are represented, under the altar of heaven, as making a response to this and the like promises. Rev. vi. 9, 10.

13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:

It should seem as if this formed a second part of the Psalm, or rather a new one. Here we behold Christ again, as before represented in the days of his flesh, with strong crying and tears. God the Father had promised that he should not fail nor be discouraged, until that he had set judgment in the earth; and therefore all along we find, in the strong cries of Christ, to this covenant engagement he had recourse. Hence, as in other places; *I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.* Be not far from me, for trouble is near. Psm. xxii. 10, 11. Oh! how blessed it is to trace Christ in all these scriptures. *Thanks be God,* we may truly say here, as in a thousand

other instances, *for his unspeakable gift*, in thus teaching us by his blessed Spirit the things concerning Jesus. 2 Cor. ix. 15.

14 That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.

Is not this one of the well-known offices of the Mediator? Was it not said of him, under the spirit of prophecy, the king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Psm. xxi. 1. Hence, therefore, it is one of the blessed offices of our great Head and Saviour, having accomplished redemption by his obedience and death, to proclaim by his Spirit Jehovah's salvation in the Church and through the earth. Isa. xlix. 6.

15 The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made: in the net which they hid, is their own foot taken.

16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsaion. Selah.

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.

What a sure destruction must overtake all the enemies of God and of his Christ. In this life misery, and the evils they intend for others, falling upon themselves; and in that which is to come, everlasting destruction. It should seem that the word *Higgsaion* joined to *Selah*, was intended as if to make a double pause of entreaty on the Reader, to mark and consider the awfulness of such conduct, as opposing God and his Christ. Similar to that solemn call: *Now consider this; ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* Psalm l. 22.

18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.

This is a sweet promise for a thousand occasions, and when pleaded before the throne in his name who comprehends in himself every promise, and is indeed himself the great Promise of the Bible, it will be found, like all others, yea and amen.

19 Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear, O LORD: *that* the nations may know themselves *to be but* men. Selah.

These are blessed prayers, when put up in faith, by which we invite Jesus to hasten his coming, and bring on both the latter day glory, and that kingdom of his everlasting reign, which shall have no end. Reader, what say you to that holy longing of the Church, which, when Jesus

speaks of his return, echoes to the blessed voice of her Redeemer, and desires with rapture that he would hasten his approach? *Behold, I come quickly*, saith he: can you and I say, *Amen*. *Even so, come, Lord Jesus!* Rev. xxii. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Redeemer! let me, as often as I peruse this Psalm, learn to celebrate thy triumphs, and to keep my eye and heart stedfastly fixed on thee, that I may hear with the ear of faith, and catch an holy flame from the devout song, while thou art praising Jehovah, for all the blessings of the salvation wrought by thee for his Church and people.

Yes! thou holy Lord, I would desire to shout in the sacred joy, from a conviction, that in thy victories all thy people partake. And while, by faith in thee and thy salvation, I behold all the enemies which now impede our progress in the wilderness state of thy Church, put to a perpetual end, I shall even now sing, though so often feeling the effects of their malice, sure and certain deliverance, through thee, from all my sins, sorrows, and trials, being more than conqueror through thy grace helping me.

And oh! come Lord, by the influence of thy sweet Spirit, come and dwell in the midst of Zion, and shew forth all the praises of Jehovah; that thy redeemed may echo to thy praises, and their hearts rejoice in thy salvation. Yes, precious Jesus! thou wilt be, thou hast been, thou now art, a refuge for the oppressed. Thou art my hiding place, and my strong tower, against all my foes. And in the consciousness of my interest in thee, my union *with* thee, and my unceasing dependence *upon* thee, I will go forth, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. And until thou shalt call me home to see thy face, and dwell with thee for ever, the sense of thy love shall keep my soul in tune, to praise thee here below, in the every-day song of faith, and by and by faith shall be swallowed up in sight, and grace consummated in everlasting glory.

PSALM X.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is still before the mercy seat at his devotions, The subject is that general one, of the oppression of the wicked, and their triumphs. Deliverance is humbly sought for, and due confidence in divine mercy professed.

WHY standest thou afar off, O LORD? *why*
hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?

From the authority given to us in other parts of Scripture, to interpret, in numberless instances, the Psalms as referring primarily, and in their most important sense, to the person and offices of the Mediator, we may very safely, in places less clear, be upon the look-out for discoveries to the same blessed and profitable purpose. In this Psalm, which is without a title, (and probably, therefore, in the Septuagint translation is joined with the foregoing), we may exercise this inquiry for Jesus to no

small advantage. When we hear Jesus on the cross complaining of his Father's desertion, we may be assured that he takes interest in what concerns the Divine withdrawals from his people. And it is both sweet and consolatory to a soul under the Lord's hidings, to recollect, that the great Head, like the members, was so exercised. Mark xv. 34.

2 The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth.

Here is an awful description in part of the ungodly, as it concerns God's people, how his hatred against God is manifested. There is, there must be, an everlasting and irreconcilable enmity in the seed of the serpent to the seed of the woman. 'I will put,' saith God, 'enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.' Gen. iii. 15. Hence the Redeemer saith, Marvel not if the world hate you. John xv. 18, 19.

4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after* God: God *is* not in all his thoughts.

5 His ways are always grievous; thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: *as for* all his enemies he puffeth at them.

6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I *shall* never *be* in adversity.

7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity.

8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

10 He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

Here the picture of the ungodly is finished, and an awful finishing it is. Hatred to God, despising his laws, his ways, his judgments; and, more especially, a bitterness towards that plan of salvation by his Son, which is the wisdom of God, in a mystery: here the malignity of the ungodly most violently manifests itself. And what I would more particularly desire the Reader to remark with me in these observations is, that all this is directed against the person and offices of the Lord Jesus. Here it was the malignity of the serpent first broke out; and here it is that his seed most pointedly shew the bitterness of their hatred. So that in the reading of this Psalm, we cannot overlook the interest that Christ hath in it, in what so eminently belongs to the hatred his seed suffer from their connection with him. Precious Jesus! if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, well may they so call them of his household.

12 Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.

13 Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.

14 Thou hast seen *it*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite *it* with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

15 Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*: seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.

Having taken a view of the enemies of God and of his Christ, and of their hatred to him and his people, in these verses a cry is put up, that God would, agreeably to his promise, for the oppression of the poor and the sighing of the needy, arise. Psalm xii. 5. Why should the proud thus break down the helpless? Wherefore should the wicked thus blaspheme God? These are strong arguments, and the petitioner finds the comfort of faith in the exercise of them; for in the following verses, with which the Psalmist closeth, he rejoiceth as if the thing was done. The Lord had shewn his sovereignty, had heard the prayers of his people, redressed their wrongs, and put their foes to silence.

16 The LORD *is* King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

Nothing can be more beautiful than this close. By strong faith in the divine goodness, though the Psalm began under the deepest sorrow, in the apprehension of God's withdrawing, yet now, taking confidence in the faithfulness of Jehovah, here is full triumph. The cause of Christ, his Church, his redeemed, is God's own cause; and while the Lord Jehovah is preparing mercy for his redeemed, and deliverance from all their enemies, he is preparing their hearts to receive it. And the deliverance shall be so great, their triumphs so complete, and their salvation so finished, that the man of sin shall no more be permitted to oppress them. Hallelujah. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I pause over this divine Psalm. Whether it be the blessed Mediator, as man's surety, thus pleading concerning his own afflictions, and the afflictions of his people, under the hidings of the Father's countenance; or whether it be the cries of his church, or any individual of the church, thus pleading before the throne; in either sense, we may feelingly remark how heavy, and how grievous the burthen, when exercised saints are under the double distress of the persecutions of the ungodly, and the frowns or hidings of the Lord. "How long, O Lord, how long?" is the cry of his poor, needy, and sorrowful ones, when the enemy triumphs, and our God conceals his face.

But reader, even here, and under the deepest soul-sorrow, let us take comfort, that their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. We cannot run with them to the same excess of riot; we cannot think, much less speak, lightly of our God. They are, as the Apostle speaks, covetous, proud, boasters, implacable, unmerciful. Their wine is the wine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall; their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. Precious Lord Jesus! we thank thee for thy distinguishing tokens of grace, even when our souls are most afflicted, and when the enemy triumphs.

Lastly, Reader, under all your exercises, look to Jesus, and never, never forget that the Lord is King for ever and ever; and the Heathen are perished out of his land. Yet a little while, and the ungodly shall be cut down as the grass, and be withered even as the green herb; while the righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree, and spread abroad as the cedar in Lebanon. Blessed Jesus! in thy light we shall see light. There is a rest that remaineth for the people of God. Into that rest, which is thyself, thou wilt ere long bring all thy people, and thy ransomed shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and they shall obtain joy and gladness; *and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

PSALM XI.

CONTENTS.

In the circumstances of evil, from the persecutions of ungodly men, the Psalmist is here represented as reposing in the sure protection of

God. Much consolation is found in this security, and the firm reliance of a happy termination to all sorrow.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

IN the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?

A poor timid bird, in times of danger, taketh her flight to the covert; and the Lord's people flee as a cloud, and as doves to the windows, when they take shelter in Jesus. The Lord is a strong tower, the righteous fleeth into it, and is safe. My people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord. And they who are satisfied with Jesus and his righteousness, never seek any other to recommend them.

2 For, lo, the wicked bend *their* bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.

3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

There will be, there must be, persecutions. But Jesus is the foundation of his Church, and that standeth sure.

4 The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD's throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

Reader, it is very true that Jehovah, in his threefold character of person, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, seeth, and knoweth all the concerns of his redeemed, and his eyes are upon them for good. But is there not here a special reference to the eyes of the Mediator? Is it not Jesus as the God-man, who is here spoken of as beholding his people? For here, with a double sweetness of consolation, the people of God may find encouragement in the blessed thought, that the eyes of Jesus, as God in our nature, are always beholding and taking part in all the interests of his redeemed.

5 The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

This is a verse of no small importance. Though the Lord is not dealing with his redeemed now under the covenant of grace, as he did with Adam in his original state of innocency, to see what improvement his poor fallen creature can make under ordinances or providences; yet is the Lord trying his people, by the graces he imparts to them in the various processes of afflictions and temptations. And this becomes truly profitable, when a child of God is enabled to gather from it more striking evidences of divine love, and more striking proofs of his own weakness and unworthiness.

6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and

brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be the portion of their cup.*

7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

Very awful must be the termination of a life of sin, to whatever age protracted, or however lengthened. *Tell ye the righteous it shall be well with him. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him.* Isa. iii. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

How blessed it is, to have a God in Christ to flee unto, and to put our sure trust in, when storms invade the church, or when the enemy comes forward with a high hand. Though a host encamp against me, said one of old, yet shall not my heart be afraid. And it is here alone, in the well-grounded confidence of salvation by Jesus, that a true believer finds an adequate support for every affliction. And what real, solid, and substantial comfort must every truly regenerate believer find, who hath Jesus for his hope, and righteousness, and salvation. Reader, how stands the case between God and your soul? Is Jesus your hope, your consolation, your security? Then, and not otherwise, will the soul be borne up, and carried through, all the difficulties of a spiritual conflict: for if God be for us, who can be against us? Jesus, Lord! be thou my everlasting security, my hope, my righteousness, and portion for ever.

PSALM XII.

CONTENTS.

This is a short and pathetic lamentation over the languishing state of the Church, and the decrease of the faithful. The sacred writer, however, takes comfort in the assurance, that God will preserve a seed in the heart.

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

HELP, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

The prayer begins beautifully. When faithful men are minished, to whom shall souls zealous for God's glory look, but to a faithful God? The Lord hath so commanded; and he that bids to pray, is then coming forth in mercy to answer. Isaiah lxii. 6, 7. Reader, if there was more concern for Zion's interest than there is, it would be well for the Church. It is much to be feared, that when the waters of the sanctuary are low, the people are not wrestling as they ought with the Lord in prayer.

2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: *with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaketh proud things:

4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips *are* our own: who *is* LORD over us?

While the Lord's people are not earnest to assemble, the vain will assemble, and their conversation will be trifling. The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light. But, Reader, it is not among the vain and the carnal that we find vain conversation only. Alas! as our Lord foretold concerning the latter days, so we find it; because iniquity abounds, the love of many is waxen cold. Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!

5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him *in* safety *from* him that puffeth at him.

What a blessed relief is here found in divine strength against human deceitfulness; and with what sweetness doth this verse come in to comfort every sorrowful soul, that is sighing and crying for the abominations of the land! There is a time to favour Zion; and that time the King of Zion hath already marked. When his people groan, and when his enemies seem to be at the height of their cruelties, then, saith the Lord, will I arise. My soul, I charge it upon thee to remember this: and when matters seem to be most discouraging; when all human help seems over, and the enemy crieth out, "Aha, aha, so would we have it;" then Jesus is near at hand, and deliverance at the very door. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? saith the Prophet. Why, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it. Isaiah xiv. 32.

6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

How beautifully is this verse introduced, by way of contrast to what was said before concerning the words of the ungodly. Do sinners talk of vanity? let saints then speak of Jesus and his gospel. Do they talk impure words? then let the faithful use the pure words of God, which, like silver, the more used, the more melted in the fire, the more precious will they be. It is true indeed, despisers will esteem both God and his word as trifling; but oh! what unknown treasure doth the word, the promises, the covenant relation of the divine things of Jesus, contain! They are more to be desired than gold, yea than fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

These verses seem to have no immediate connection with what went before; nevertheless they come in with a blessed conclusion, to ensure the faithfulness of Jehovah. What though bad men triumph and the faithful are minished, Jesus is the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail. 1 Sam. ii. 9.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, there never was a period of the Church, when this Psalm seemed to be more applicable. How few are there asking the way to Zion! How many the vacancies made by death in the congregations of the faithful! And who is there pleading, crying, wrestling with Zion's King in prayer, and determined to take no denial, that the Lord would fill those vacancies, and raise up a generation to call him blessed? Alas, alas! may it not with too much truth be said, all seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ? Blessed Lord, help us to look to thee. O for grace to be poured out from on high on churches, ministers, people; that the Lord would yet make Zion a praise in the earth. Oh! that the cause of truth, of God, and of his Christ, were become the most interesting concern of all his people. Oh! ye servants of Jesus; cry, cry mightily to the Lord, and tell him how Zion languisheth. And ye who love her courts and ordinances, pray, pray for the peace of Jerusalem; for they shall prosper that love Zion. But oh! from men, my soul, look thou to the Lord. Tell thy Jesus, that Zion must be dear to him, when her walls are always before him, and her name graven on the palms of his sacred hands. O, then, Lord, let my soul hear, by the ear of faith, thine own most precious promise, again and again repeated. Now for the oppressions of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord. Come, Lord! take thy glorious cause into thine own most glorious hand: then wilt thou turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon thy name, and serve thee with one consent; even from beyond the rivers of Æthiopia, thy suppliants, even the daughters of thy dispersed, shall bring thine offering.

PSALM XIII.

CONTENTS.

Here the Psalmist is represented as crying out under grief of mind, from an apprehension of God's having withdrawn his face. He accompanies his prayers with professing faith in God's return, and concludes with praise.

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

HOW long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, *having* sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

While we keep in view the person of our Lord, whose desertions of the Father for our sins, which he bore, made him eminently distinguished in this instance, as well as all others, for the greatness of his sufferings; we may very profitably make improvement of this Psalm, both in the complaint and cure, according to our own personal concern in what is here said. But, Reader! while we feel and groan under the many *how longs* in which we estimate the time of our exercises, do let us seek for grace to be looking more to Jesus, than be thus taking counsel in our own souls. Depend upon it, that our poring over ourselves, and what we feel in infirmities and the like, instead of looking, as we are continually enjoined, to the Lord, and casting all our care upon him who careth for us, is one sad cause, and a very great cause too, of all our misery. Psm. xxxiv. 4—6.

3 Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;

It is profitable when our complaints lead to prayer. That affliction, be it what it may, which leads to Jesus is blessed. Jesus himself, being in an agony, prayed more earnestly. Oh! how very sweet and sanctified is it, to trace the manhood of Jesus in his footsteps going before us. Luke xxii. 44.

4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; *and* those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

What a blessed argument hath the Holy Ghost provided here, and put in the mouth of the people of God, for pleading at the throne! Shall the enemy triumph? Shall the efficacy of Christ's blood and righteousness fail? Shall God's faithfulness be lost? Shall my case be the only one where divine grace is not manifested? Surely, Lord, thou art the Holy One of Israel still; and thou hast been a refuge to all who have called upon thee. I will trust, I will not be afraid. The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation. Isa. xii. 2. Reader! how beautiful it is, when by looking out of ourselves, and looking to all-precious Jesus, faith finds strength to rely upon him who is the Lord our righteousness? Faith begets prayer, and prayer calls in Jesus.

5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

See how the note is changed. Yes! when a soul is thus enabled to act faith upon Jesus, and the divine promises in him, there will be soon cause to praise and sing aloud of God's faithfulness and bounty. But do not fail, Reader, to observe with me what the joy of the soul here is.

Not that his frames were altered; not that his heart was enlarged; not that more light was brought into his soul: these things he had, and these were all precious; but these were the *effects* and not the *cause* of his joy. No! read the verse again, and you will see that what his heart rejoiced in was God's salvation, and God's mercy. And what is this but Jesus, all-precious, all-satisfying, soul-comforting Jesus? I pray you, Reader, mark it down as a matter of great importance for every occasion of soul exercises, that it is Jesus, and not our frames or feelings, that is the cause of all real joy. When we put the *effects* for the *cause*, and magnify the *fruit* of faith instead of the glorious *object* of faith, we place our comfort where it is not. So that when our frames alter, as alter they soon will, where is our joy then? But if we place it in Jesus, and have it in Jesus; here we may always find it, in every rainy, dark, or gloomy day that follows.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! in following the sweet steps of soul exercises which are marked in this Psalm, while God the Holy Ghost is our Guide, how lovely is it to eye Jesus as having gone before. Yes! thou Holy One of God! what sorrow, what trial, what distress or anguish of spirit can any one of thy redeemed be called to, where thy bright and blessed example doth not hold forth precious views to console, as well as gracious paths to follow. Oh, Lord! vouchsafe to sanctify every appointment to our furtherance in the greater knowledge of thee, and of our being conformed to thee in all things. And when, Lord, in dark seasons, the enemy cometh in like a flood, O let thy blessed Spirit lift thee up to our view, as a standard against him. And oh! our gracious God! let it please thee to grant, that when, from the darkness of our mind, we cannot see thy beauties so clear as at other times, nor our own personal interest in thee; then, blessed Jesus, may we have grace still to trust thee. If we cannot sing the song of triumph, still let us not hang the harp upon the willow, but cry after thee. Still let faith have its perfect work: and may we venture all upon thee, amidst all the darkness around, or the darkness within. Yes! precious Jesus, if thou wilt grant but faith to trust thee, to believe in thee, to hang upon thee, and to commit all into thy blessed hands, under all the emptiness and barrenness in our own hearts; faith thus acting all its workings upon thee, will at length find strength, and light, and life, in thee, and from thee; and thus our heaviness will be turned into joy, and we shall join in the same song, as the Psalmist here hath recorded, and sing unto the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with us.

PSALM XIV.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm comes home recommended from the comment the Holy Ghost was pleased to make of it, by the Apostle Paul. Rom. iii. 10. The principal subjects of it are; The universal sin of man; his enmity against God; and the prophet's prayer in consequence, that salvation would speedily arise out of Zion.

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good.*

What an awful state is man reduced to by the Fall! Here we read that the foolish man saith in his heart, *There is no God:* and in the world we see how foolish men come forth to say it by their actions. Alas! what is man by nature?

2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God.*

3 They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

It would have been some alleviation of our ruin, had the deadly sin been only here and there in *certain* instances, or even *general* in many instances: but when by the divine inquiry we find that the disease is *universal*, and that all have sinned and come short of God's glory, Reader, behold the misery of nature. Who is there that will venture to make an appeal against the decision? See Prov. xx. 9. Rom. iii. 9 to 19. I detain the Reader here to remark, that in our common-prayer translation there are added three verses similar to those in Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter iii. 13. to 18. which are not in this translation.

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as they eat bread,* and call not upon the LORD.

5 There were they in great fear: for God *is in the generation of the righteous.*

6 Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD *is his refuge.*

The sad blindness of men's minds in their denying the existence of God, is here very strongly described; and the contradiction of such unbelief as strongly pointed out in the fear of such a guilty mind. And the cruelties to God's people is also shewn. The sacred writer hath drawn a striking representation of the horrors of an alarmed conscience, enough to make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle. Deut. xxviii. 66, 67.

7 O that the salvation of Israel *were come out of Zion!* when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and Israel shall be glad.*

What a blessed relief, views of Jesus and hopes in his salvation afford,

to bear up the mind under the sad and heart-breaking prospect of universal corruption. Reader, what but this can relieve your soul under the consciousness of your own participation in the universal corruption of a fallen nature? My soul! what would be thy state, hadst thou not found redemption in the blood of the Lamb, and if God had not found a ransom to deliver thee from going down to the pit? See how the faithful of old longed for the coming Saviour! And how doth the whole church of Jesus now long for his second coming, without sin unto salvation.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, what blessed improvements, under the Spirit's teaching, may be drawn from the perusal of this Psalm? Surely the Holy Ghost intended it for the greatest benefit to the church: and therefore let us look up for his divine influence to be upon us, that we may gather what is his mind and will in our improvements from it. And, first, shall not the picture here drawn, of universal corruption, be blessed to our view, in the conviction of the truth, and the consciousness that we are involved equally by nature in the same melancholy ruin? If all have sinned and come short of God's glory, all are implicated in the guilt. And it is a decided mark of grace, when a sense of our lost state hath induced a sense of our unworthiness and helplessness to our own recovery. Surely the very hope of God's favour is begun in a consciousness of guilt, and the desire of deliverance from it. If then God, by his Holy Spirit, hath given this conviction in the heart, and put a cry there, *What must I do to be saved?* then the same earnest longings as holy men of old put forth for salvation to arise out of Zion, will appear in the devout breathings of our souls also, that we may be brought into a saving acquaintance with, and heart-felt enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, thou precious Redeemer, thou, and thou only, art the salvation of our poor ruined and undone nature! Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Thy holy life, thy spotless death, thy perfect obedience and sacrifice, as the Surety of poor sinners, have raised up our nature from the ruins of the Fall. And therefore, Lord, we now join the petition of Old Testament saints, that the salvation by thee may be manifested to all thy people, to bring the prisoners out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. And oh! Lord, hasten all thy comings here in grace, and bring on the full manifestation of thyself, in thy kingdom of glory.

PSALM XV.

CONTENTS.

Every portion of this beautiful Psalm is gospel. It treats first of Christ, and then of his people in him. Here is the Citizen of Zion described in his person, life, and conduct.

A Psalm of David.

LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

The Psalm opens with an interesting question, humbly proposed to the Lord himself, Who shall be the happy person dwelling on the Lord's holy hill? Reader, remark first, that if we desire to know the Lord, that instruction must come *from* the Lord. Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by him. John xiv. 6. Next, let us attend to what is meant by the holy hill and tabernacle. In the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the church of Zion, the Holy Ghost was shadowing forth the heavenly tabernacle, the Jerusalem which is above, and both the gospel church in grace below, and the celestial temple in glory. This is, as the Apostle saith, the true tabernacle which God hath pitched, and not men. Heb. viii. 2. And when we have thus beheld the true tabernacle of God's pitching, and not man's, we must then immediately perceive, that He, and he alone, must be the person the inquiry hath in view, who can fix his residence in this holy hill of Zion, who is himself holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: He who hath an everlasting priesthood, who is a divine Prophet, an almighty King. So that the question is at once answered, in the very description of the place: and we already behold him, whom Jehovah hath set as King upon the hill of Zion, as the glorious One to inhabit there, even the Lord our righteousness.

2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

But as the Holy Ghost delights to set forth the glories of the Redeemer's person, offices, and character, he here enters into a more particular description of some of his features. Now, Reader, do not fail to remark, that this walking uprightly, this working righteousness, and this speaking the truth from the heart, never did, nor ever will belong fully to any but Jesus. Even his people that are renewed in spirit, still carry about with them a body of sin and death, under which they groan, and under which, as long as they are in the body, they must groan, being burdened. I consider this so important a point to be well understood, and thoroughly impressed upon the mind, that I beg the Reader not to pass over the view of it too hastily. It is of Jesus the Psalm wholly treats. And though by virtue of his people being righteous in him, they do fully partake in all that belongs to him, and share in all his blessedness, yet they still feel a heart prone to wander, prone to depart. They desire to be conformed to his lovely image in all things, to be holy as he who hath called them is holy, in all conversation and godliness, yet they are constrained frequently to take up the language of the Apostle, and say as he did, *When I would do good, evil is present with me.* Hence their ascending now by grace upon God's holy hill, in the ordinances of his church, and partaking of all the privileges of Citizens of Zion, and hereafter their dwelling with him in glory, are blessings wholly derived from their acceptance in Jesus, and being members of his body, in a oneness with him. No inherent holiness in them, no righteousness of theirs, first brought them to God's holy hill, nor becomes the cause of preserving them there. Reader, if you know any thing of what passeth in your own heart, there you will find the fullest conviction of these precious truths. If you know any thing of the Lord Jesus, let him have all the glory, for it is his most certain due.

3 *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that* sweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not.

5 *He that* putteth not out his money to usury, and taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these *things* shall never be moved.

Having said so much upon the first account given of the citizen of Zion, less will be necessary to be observed here, in the other different features of character added. But the Reader himself, if he loves to trace the loveliness of the altogether lovely one here drawn, will find throughout the Bible, beautiful repetitions of the same, in every part, to shew that it could be only Him the Holy Ghost had in view. And though all his redeemed have fellowship with him, are righteous in his righteousness, and are citizens, in him their glorious Head, of Zion; yet from first to last, while in the body here below, it is by grace alone, and from God's accepting them in the Beloved, that they are considered holy, *and without blame before him in love*. Reader, pause as you read the several characters given of our Jesus, in these sweet verses, and see how fully they mark his person, and at the same time, how all his saints fall short of him. Who but of Jesus can it be said, that he never slandered his neighbour, nor did evil to him, nor took up a reproach against him? Who but of Jesus could it ever be said, that a vile person is uniformly contemned without respect of persons, and he that feared the Lord, was always honoured? Who but of Jesus could it be said, that he never swerved from his kind purposes, though it was to his own hurt, and changed not, however personally he suffered for it? Of none among the fallen sons of Adam, though renewed by grace, could such accounts be strictly given. But of Jesus all these features of character, yea, and a thousand more, mark his divine person. Yes, thou Holy One of God, thou and thou only, when thou wert reviled, reviled not again, but wast led as a lamb to the slaughter. Thou didst shew no respect of persons, but didst choose the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of thy kingdom, when sending the rich empty away! Thou didst not change thy blessed purposes, when thou hadst once undertaken the redemption of thy people, though by becoming surety for another, thou didst smart for it, and every joy of theirs, in thy great undertaking, cost thee pangs and blood. Hail! blessed Jesus: thou alone art worthy of ascending, and fixing thy eternal residence upon thy Zion, which thou hast justly earned. *Thou alone wert worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* Rev. v. 9.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, here let us sit down, and contemplate our Jesus, the King and Citizen of Zion. First, view his spotless person, in the beauties and

loveliness of our nature, holy, harmless, and undefiled, and as such justly entitled to an everlasting residence on the holy hill, in the heavenly tabernacle; and then our right of inheritance also, by virtue of our union with him.

Here is his just and striking, though short description, when he came forth for the salvation of his people. He was to earn the crown before he put it on. He was to manifest the holiness of his nature, before he ascended the holy hill of his everlasting abode. Hence he took upon him our nature, in the purity of that nature, and in that nature was found without guile before God. Not a single thought of his heart was foreign, or in opposition to the law of his Father. Hence he could and did say, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in my heart. And as he rejoiced to do the will of his Father, by a perfect conformity to all his precepts, so did he become a willing sacrifice to the breaches of the law which his people had committed, by his death; that, both by doing and by dying, he might recover what man had lost, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. And thus it became him, in bringing many sons unto glory, to be all this, and infinitely more, that he might be "the Lord our righteousness."

Now then, Reader, here it is, by virtue of his holiness and purity, that our nature hath recovered the original holiness and purity which our first father lost; and by Jesus alone, a better paradise than Adam forfeited, even an heavenly one in the Zion above, whither his people are entitled to ascend, and eternally dwell with him. United to him in spirit, by virtue of his Spirit's influences, we are quickened and kept alive in grace, and by and by shall be with him in glory. And although while we carry about with us a body still open to corruption, and daily ripening by corruption for the grave, and as such we feel, at times, the sad breakings out of the remaining foes to our peace lurking within, yet the hour is hastening when this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Hail! thou Almighty Lord! in thy light shall we see light. Be thou our portion while below! Help us to ascend by faith now the holy hill of thy dwelling, and in thy righteousness to contemplate thy person and complete work, until thou shalt bring us home to behold thy glory, and dwell with thee for ever. Amen.

PSALM XVI.

CONTENTS.

This blessed Psalm is so directly applied, under the influence of God the Holy Ghost, by the apostles Peter and Paul, to the person and work of the Lord Jesus, that we must wholly overlook David the writer of it, (except considering him as a prophet,) so as not to lose the great object intended by it, in supposing that ought of David is meant by what this Psalm contains. Here Christ, and his faith in covenant engagements, are beautifully set forth.

Michtam of David.

PRESERVE me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

VOL. IV.

E E

This is the first time we have met with the word *Michtam* by way of title since we opened the book of Psalms. Various have been the translations of this word ; but all agree, that it is meant to imply somewhat very important. Some have rendered it, *precious* ; others, *golden* ; and others, *precious jewel*. And as the Holy Ghost, by the apostles Peter and Paul, hath shewn, that it is all about the Lord Jesus Christ, what is here said of him is precious, is golden, is a jewel indeed. Lord ! I would say for myself and Reader, as we enter upon its perusal, ‘ Make it by the sweet savour of his name, precious indeed as ointment poured forth.’ The very first opening of it, in those words of Jesus, which David here marked down by the spirit of prophecy, plainly proves to whom it belongs, by the parallel passage in Jesus’s life. See John xii. 27.

2 *O my soul*, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord : my goodness *extendeth* not to thee ;

3 *But to the saints that are in the earth*, and to the excellent, in whom *is* all my delight.

This is a most precious portion, in which we find Christ claiming the privilege of covenant relation, and, at the same time, disclaiming all pretensions to merit, from any supposed good Jehovah could derive from the Mediator’s righteousness. It is most evident, that Jehovah is not benefited by man’s redemption, though it is to the praise of the glory of his grace. But it is the seed of Christ, the excellent of the earth, in whom Christ, as the wisdom-man set up from everlasting, always delighted, Prov. viii. 31. For their sakes Christ sanctified himself. John. xvii. 19. But, secondarily, and subordinately, this precious portion, as referring to the seed of Christ, and their safety and happiness in him, becomes very delightful also. For then it is as if a child of God in Christ should say, O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, thou art my Adonai, my helper, my strength, my salvation : thus taking confidence in Jesus, and delight in his people.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that hasten after another god* : their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

It is easy to perceive to what those expressions have reference. No sacrifices could atone for sin, neither satisfy the guilty conscience. If the sacrifices under the law were offered by Israel, with an eye of faith to Jesus, then they were sweetly satisfying and consolatory. But, void of this, *it was not possible that the blood of bulls, and of goats, should take away sin*. Heb. x. 4. It is remarkable, and very conclusive on this subject, that Christ never, in all his ministry, spake of the law sacrifices but with an eye to the sacrifice of himself. Matt. xx. 28.

5 The LORD *is* the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup : thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places* ;
yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me
counsel ; my reins also instruct me in the night
seasons.

These are very blessed things spoken of, both as they relate to Christ, and to his people in him. Jesus in his human nature, uniformly made Jehovah his portion, and looked unto him to maintain his cause, and carry him safely through his vast undertaking. He not only considered it his meat and his drink to do his Father's will, but his redeemed he considered a goodly heritage. And what is it to his people but the same? They who have chosen God for their portion, find that portion to be a goodly one, and are fully satisfied with Jesus, for they need no other.

8 I have set the LORD always before me : be-
cause *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory re-
joiceth : my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ;
neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see cor-
ruption.

How peculiarly this belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, hath been already observed ; and if the Reader desires (as he ought to do) to enter into the clearest apprehension of this most precious prophecy, I refer him to Acts ii. 25—36. and xiii. 35—39. And if we add to these what the Apostle, under the Holy Ghost, declared to be the whole scope and tendency of the prophets' ministry, when the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow, we shall have yet a clearer light thrown upon this important scripture. 1 Pet. i. 11. When we have paid all due attention to this glorious scripture, as referring to the great Head of his Church, we may then, with lively faith, consider also the interest his body, the church, have in the same. If the grave could not hold Jesus, neither can it for ever make any of his members prisoners. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a sure pledge and earnest of his people's. He arose in a public capacity, and thereby became the first fruits of them that slept. Precious Lord ! thou art gone before ; and, as thou saidst, only to prepare a place for thy people to follow thee. Hence their flesh shall rest in hope. And they can and do say, in the consciousness of being part of Jesus, that though, after their skin, worms destroy this body, yet in the flesh they shall see God. Oh ! thou that art the resurrection and the life, be thou the joy, the hope, the portion, and the sure resurrection of thy people in grace here, and glory hereafter. Job xix. 25—27.

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy
presence *is* fulness of joy ; at thy right hand *there*
are pleasures for evermore.

REFLECTIONS.

GRANT, most blessed Jesus, that as oft as I read this blessed Psalm I may read it as the *Michtam* of David, because it treats wholly of thee. I would forget David, and all the excellent of the earth, to contemplate thee, and thy matchless love, as here beautifully set forth. And, dearest Lord, as thou wert looking to Jehovah, so would I look to thee. Surely thou art my Adonai, my Lord, my Holy One, my righteousness! O for grace to set thee always before me. I know thee indeed to be on my right hand, I shall not be moved. And oh, for grace to rejoice in the blessed hope. My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth! As thy holy body saw no corruption, so thy members, though seeing corruption, must partake in thy triumphs over death and the grave. Living or dying, all thy redeemed are thine; so that they die, whenever their hour comes, in union with thee. And sweetly their bodies slumber, waiting thy call in the morn of the general resurrection. Thou wilt then call, and thy redeemed will answer, for thou wilt have respect to the work of thine hands. *For, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so all them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* Hail, Almighty Lord! thou art indeed the resurrection and the life. Thou art gone before; thou wilt come again to take all thy redeemed to thyself, that where thou art, there they may be also. Thou wilt shew us the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

PSALM XVII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here again at the mercy-seat, pleading his cause against the ungodly. In a tried God, who had before manifested his faithfulness, he now confides, and closeth with the assurance of a happy issue.

A Prayer of David.

HEAR the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* not out of feigned lips.

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, *and* shalt find nothing; I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

As none but Jesus could ever make appeal in the justice of his cause, so it is blessed to discover him in this sweet prayer. Reader, you and I may, in his righteousness, look up to that God, who is and can be just,

and the Justifier of every poor sinner that believeth in Jesus. To the throne we may, and indeed we are commanded to come, that the sentence of our justification in Jesus may come forth. God hath found no iniquity in our glorious Surety; and, therefore, the sweetest, and strongest, and best of all prayers are those which the poor believer in Jesus puts up, when he tells God, that the life of Jesus was perfect, and his nature wholly free from taint or shadow of sin. Precious Lamb of God! what unanswerable arguments may the souls of thy redeemed find in this holiness of thine as our Surety! And what can a sinner tell Jehovah, so pleasing to him, as when he follows up the gracious voice and proclamation from heaven, in which the Father said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; and saith, Lord! I am well pleased too in Jesus and his justifying righteousness, and am now come for acceptance in the beloved!

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept *me from* the paths of the destroyer.

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.

6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, *and hear* my speech.

This is blessed, as it concerns our glorious Surety; for God engaged to carry him through his whole work; see Psalm lxxxix 21—24. And it is blessed also, as it concerns his redeemed in him. The Redeemer committed them to the Father in the moment of his departure. And God our Father hath engaged to keep them also for Jesus's sake: see John xvii. 11. 1 Pet. i. 5.

7 Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee* from those that rise up *against them*.

Over and above all covenant promises we are commanded to seek divine favor. And the apostle tells the *Ephesians*, by way of encouragement so to do, that *God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think*. Ephes. iii. 20. These mercies may well be called marvellous!

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

By comparing this verse with what the prophet Isaiah predicted of Jesus, a beautiful light is thrown upon both scriptures, and we are led to see to whom both refer. In the one Jesus is spoken of, under the spirit of prophecy, as praying to be kept and hid: and in the other, as of the thing done, when he saith, *the Lord hath called me from the womb; and in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me*. Isaiah xlix, 1, 2.

9 From the wicked that oppress me, *from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*

10 They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

11 They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

12 Like as a lion *that* is greedy of his prey, *and as it were* a young lion lurking in secret places.

It is impossible to read these verses but with an eye to Christ. For though his people, as his people, do partake in the afflictions which the enemies of their salvation excite, yet eminently so in the life of Christ. The whole gospel is full of it: so that I stay not to mention particulars.

13 Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, *which is thy sword:*

This is a beautiful verse, and the doctrine of it is as important as the verse is beautiful. Jesus eyes the hand of the Father in his afflictions. Satan will advance; the enemies of salvation will arise: but the Lord Jehovah is in the permission and appointment: and at the cross also, though Jesus was taken and by wicked hands, crucified and slain; yet, that we may not overlook the first and grand predisposing cause, the Holy Ghost puts it into the mouth of Peter to say, that all this was *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.* Acts ii. 23. Reader, it is most profitable, it is blessed, to be always looking beyond second causes in all our trials and distresses, and to discern the Lord's hand, in infinite love and wisdom, appointing all. For this brings the soul into a state of resignation and tranquillity at least, if not of holy joy. *I was dumb: I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* Psalm xxxix. 9.

14 From men *which are thy hand,* O LORD, from men of the world, *which have their portion in this life,* and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure:* they are full of children, and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

What a beautiful contrast is drawn here between men of the world and the followers of the Lord! The former have their portion in this life. It is all they wish; all they covet; all they can enjoy. From such, the *latter* saith, the good Lord keep me. But let Jesus and his

covenant blessings be mine; and thus, enjoying by faith the sweetness of his love here, by and by I shall arise up to the full and everlasting enjoyment of him and his salvation to all eternity.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! help me to be looking unto thee, and, under the trials my soul is exercised with, teach me, Lord, so to pray, and so to commit my cause unto thee, that in thy righteousness I may find confidence, and wait thy precious decision among all thy redeemed.

And do thou keep me, Lord, as the apple of thine eye; keep me from the world; keep me from the men of the world; keep me from the snares of the world, that neither its smiles nor its frowns may seduce my soul to sin. Keep me, Lord, in thyself, and by thyself, that I may rise above every difficulty, and be made more than conqueror, through thy grace helping me.

Be thou my portion, blessed Jesus, for he hath no need to glean in the fields of worldly men, who hath Jesus for his treasure. None but thou, and wholly thou, canst be a portion to live upon through time and to all eternity. Hence, dearest Lord, I would pray, that thou shouldst be my all in all. For thou art the bottom and only solid foundation of all that can be truly called blessed. And as thou art the foundation, so thou art the superstructure, to complete our blessedness. Thou comprehendest all, sweetest all, and suppliest all. Lord Jesus! be thou my daily portion now, and when I shall have done with time, and awake up after thy likeness in eternity, I shall be satisfied for ever with thee.

PSALM XVIII.

CONTENTS.

We met with this Psalm in David's history, 2 Sam. xxii. and had it referred to David only, I see no reason why it should make a part in this book. Indeed, doth it not seem, by being placed here, to intimate that we are to look beyond David for the highest and best sense of it? The Psalm itself treats of deliverance from enemies, and is an hymn of praise to this effect from beginning to end; and if read with an eye to Christ, is beautiful indeed.

To the Chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. And he said,

I WILL love thee, O LORD, my strength.

I beseech the Reader to be upon he look out for the Lord Jesus through every part and portion of this Psalm, in which the death of Christ, his resurrection, and his kingdom, are by the spirit of prophecy, beautifully set forth. Indeed, is not the very title suited particularly to Jesus more than to David. For though David might sing of his own personal deliverance from the hand of Saul, and the greater part of his

enemies, yet none but Jesus could sing of *all*, for the last enemy that is to be destroyed is death; and none but Jesus conquered death. I beseech the Reader, therefore, to behold Jesus in it, and while, as the servant of Jehovah, he hears the Lord triumphing in his victories over death, hell, and the grave, let him, as I do, beg of God that we may both read it with faith, and feel our own personal interest in all the triumphs of our God and Saviour.

2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

How very sweet and gracious the Psalm opens! Jesus in his manhood had an eye to the Father, and his covenant promises, for help and strength, through all his great undertaking. And having found God faithful, he here recounts it, under all the variety of similitudes, by which the grace, and love, and strength of Jehovah could be set forth. He is a rock indeed, his work is perfect. Deut. xxxii. 4. I beg the Reader to remark with me, as a confirmation that David spake the words of this song under the spirit of prophecy, and with reference to the person of Christ, that the apostle Paul quotes from this verse a saying of Christ, as the margin of our old Bibles sheweth: Heb. ii. 13. which, as well as the verse of Paul's quoting before, Hebrews ii. 12. taken from the 22d Psalm, 22d verse, evidently refers to the Lord Jesus. Reader, never think it a trouble, but rather a mercy, to be able to turn from one scripture to another, for this is the way which God the Holy Ghost hath blessed, and will bless, in opening his sacred truths, if we delight to *compare spiritual things with spiritual*. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. Psm. xxv. 14.

3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

It is said of Jesus, that, in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and was heard, in that he feared. Heb. v. 7.

4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

How beautifully Peter comments upon these sufferings of Jesus, Acts ii. 24. But, while we behold the holy nature of Christ, as incapable of corruption, and therefore incapable of being holden by the cords of death and the grave; let us recollect also, that the sorrows here

spoken of as compassing Jesus, were that flood of our sins and transgressions, which so overwhelmed the man Christ Jesus, as to force him to sweat drops of blood in his agony, and filled his soul with amazement and anguish inexpressible. Reader, while we look at Jesus in those seasons as our Surety, oh, think what it cost his love to redeem our souls! Here, surely, the words of the church were solemnly applicable: *many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.* Song viii. 7.

7 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

The sacred writer seems to have had in view the Lord's descent on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law. But surely we can discover that what he here delivered was under the spirit of prophecy, in reference to the triumphs of Jesus at his resurrection. Then the earthquake, and the other prodigies of that hour, testified the Lord's displeasure at sin, and his perfect approbation of the redemption by Jesus, in raising him from the dead. Matt. xxviii. 2.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness *was* under his feet.

10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness his secret place: his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies.

12 At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire.

13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail-stones and coals of fire.

14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

15 Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

Is here not (for I do not presume to decide) an allusion to the descent of the Holy Ghost, after the return of Jesus to glory? And may we not without violence to the several expressions here set forth, trace the footsteps of that gracious descent, when, by sending forth his preachers, the arrows of conviction in the sinner's heart are manifested, and the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit, converting, confirming, and establishing his people in the truth as it is in Jesus, may not unaptly be compared to the lightnings shot forth? Surely, in all instances of the display of grace upon the sinner's heart, in turning them from darkness to light, something similar to the great work the Lord wrought at the Red Sea, is manifested in spirituals, as there in things of nature. The channels of the deeps of sin are seen, and the new and living way, which the Lord opens in the blood and righteousness of Christ for his ransomed to pass over, are no less marvellous, than when the Lord led Israel through the deep, as through a wilderness. Exod. xiv. 22. Heb. x. 19, 20, &c.

16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.

17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

How strong are these expressions to point to one particular foe! Not only was Jesus, in the days of his flesh, delivered from the malice of men, but from the malice of Satan. The human nature of Christ, unassisted by his Godhead, would have found Satan too strong, as is here said. How blessed then to see, in the union of the Godhead with the manhood, the stronger than he coming upon him and overcoming him! Luke xi. 22.

18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

Oh! how very precious are these expressions, read with an eye to Christ. The predictions of the Prophets of the Old Testament Scripture, from the Spirit of Christ which was in them, were all directed to those two grand branches in the life of Jesus, of his sufferings which were first to take place, and then of the glory which should follow. Hence we find, for the most part, these distinct views, as in these verses so in many other places, beautifully blended together. 1 Pet. i. 11.

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For all his judgments *were* before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

23 I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

If there was no other passage in this Psalm to imply that David delivered this song of praise under the spirit of prophecy, in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, than what these verses contain, what is here said would be enough to determine the point. For David, in no part of his life, ever could make use of such expressions. It would be straining the language too far, to suppose that he meant to say such things of himself, considered in his being kept from idolatry, and his attachment to the true God of Israel. Clean hands, free from sin, and no wicked departures from God, would even then be too strong expressions, consistent with the many sins of David's life. But reading these blessed truths in reference to Jesus, oh! what very delightful features do they give of him and his pure nature, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Heb. vii. 26. Neither is this all. For the recompense of this holiness and obedience of Jesus, we are interested in so very highly, that every one would be very cautious how he parted with a single portion respecting Christ, his glorious Surety, to adorn David with what never could belong to him.

25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;

26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.

27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.

28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

29 For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.

All these verses become doubly precious and blessed to the people of Christ, from their personal concern in all that is his. The promise of Jehovah is to the seed of Christ, in Christ as well as to Christ himself. And, as if no child of his should ever find cause to question or doubt it, the Lord himself, in the close of his ministry, left behind him, in that blessed prayer he offered up to the Father concerning his church, so decided a proof as for ever silenceth all fears. *The glory* (saith Jesus) *which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are*

one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. John xvii, 22, 23.

30 *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

31 *For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?*

Reader, while we contemplate the Lord Jesus, as here celebrating the ways and works of Jehovah in redemption, as altogether finished and complete, it will be a sweet note in this song, if you and I can say the same, from our own personal interest in Jesus. He indeed is our Rock, our Jesus, our Salvation. And he is Jehovah's salvation for the people to the ends of the earth. Psm. xcv. 1. Isa. xlix. 6.

32 *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

33 *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.*

34 *He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*

35 *Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.*

36 *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.*

37 *I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.*

38 *I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.*

39 *For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.*

40 *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.*

41 *They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.*

42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind : I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.

These are all glorious triumphs of our risen and exalted Saviour. And He who hath thus conquered for us, can and will conquer sin in us. Like another Joshua, our Almighty Leader and Commander, which Jehovah hath given to his people, he will put our feet upon the neck of all our enemies. Isaiah lv. 4. Joshua x. 24. Romans xvi. 20.

43 Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people ; *and* thou hast made me the head of the heathen : a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.

44 As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me : the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.

45 The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.

How beautiful are these verses, in reference to the conversion of the Gentiles. Here surely, as before, David's history falls far short of celebrating such victories. But seen with an eye to Christ, how are the promises of Jehovah fulfilled, and the words of Christ confirmed ! Isaiah xlix. 18—23. Isaiah lxxv. 1.

46 The LORD liveth ; and blessed *be* my rock ; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

47 *It is* God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people unto me.

48 He delivereth me from mine enemies : yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me : thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king ; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

How delightfully the Psalm ends ! By the spirit of prophecy, Christ is described as declaring his love to Jehovah, for all his promised strength imparted, and now, having sat down on the seat of the Conqueror, he finisheth his hymn of praise in again celebrating his glory. The Lord Jehovah liveth an everlasting and eternal I AM. And as Jehovah liveth, so

hath he exalted and crowned his anointed. And, Reader, do not fail to observe, how Christ includes the blessedness of his seed for evermore. Yes! precious Lord, thou and thy seed are one. *In thee they are beheld, by thee they are made victorious, and through thee they are blessed for evermore. Amen.*

REFLECTIONS.

Now, Lord, having beheld thy victories and the triumphs of thy redemption-work, let my soul pause over the same, and look up to thee in all those endearing characters, in which thou hast manifested thy grace and glory, when thou camest forth for the salvation of thy people. Do I not behold, in all that is here so sweetly expressed of thee and thy great undertaking, how graciously the Father's hand was with thee, in and through the whole of the work the Father gave thee to do? And shall I not by faith, while remembering thy victories this day, follow thee in the praises of Jehovah, and call God my Father in thee, my Rock, and my strong Salvation? Oh! precious, precious Jesus, how inexpressibly sweet and refreshing to my soul is it to see that, from the intimate connection in which all thy redeemed stand to thee, what thou rejoicest in, we also rejoice, thy triumphs are our triumphs, and thy victories our victories. Thou art our glorious Head, and thy church is thy body; thou art the fulness of all fulness, to fill all in all.

And now, Lord, lead all thy redeemed forth to the same victory, in the casting down all the strong holds of sin and Satan. Subdue *in us*, blessed Jesus, as thou hast subdued *for us*, every remaining lust within or foe without, and hasten the glorious hour, when all that would now oppose our everlasting enjoyment of thee shall be destroyed; and, like Israel on the shore of the Red Sea, beholding their foes destroyed before their eyes, may we see their faces no more again for ever. Oh! for grace to begin the song of redeeming love, and to chaunt every verse of it daily, as we travel home to our Father's house: *Salvation to God and the Lamb!* And oh! for glory to break in upon our souls, when the pilgrimage is ended, and when we shall sing aloud that glorious song: *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever. Amen.*

PSALM XIX.

CONTENTS.

We have here another hymn, if not to the victories of Jesus in the works of grace, yet to his glory as manifested in the works of creation, and in the gospel of his salvation. In the former part, the wonders of God's power, as displayed in the creation of the heavenly bodies; in the latter, the still more marvellous power as set forth in the new creation of the soul.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work.

The book of God in creation, which the heavens open to the world, so full and plainly demonstrates his Godhead, that, as the apostle speaks, the invisible things of God are clearly seen by the things which he hath made, even his eternal power and Godhead. Rom. i. 19. They most evidently prove a first cause, since they could not create themselves, nor have existed from eternity.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

In like manner, the regular succession of day and night prove no less his order and government. He maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise him. Psm. lxxv. 8. And so universal are those teachings, that there is no nation under the sun but hath this book of God in creation opened to their view.

Reader, remark by the way the perpetuity of this order and regularity, as a confirmation of God's covenant with Noah. After the deluge the Lord promised, that while the earth remained seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, should not cease. And, although this promise was made more than four thousand years since, yet God is as true to his promise as though it was made but yesterday. Mark this, Reader, as a further proof of divine faithfulness, and remember what God commanded by Moses, *Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God.* Gen. viii. 22. Deut. vii. 9.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

These verses contain a most delightful account of the heavens and the heavenly bodies, in their light and beneficial influence: and particularly with reference to the glorious luminary of the day, which is placed in the centre. Under the striking similitude of a bridegroom, or of a strong man, the sun is represented, as unceasingly issuing forth with renewed vigour from day to day, to enlighten, fertilize, and warm all the varieties of the earth. But much higher views had the inspired writer before him, when thus contemplating the glory, and splendor, and usefulness of this planet; it is of Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, he speaks, and whose glories he celebrates. This is the tabernacle of our nature, here referred to, which God the Father provided, when a body he prepared for him, and in which God the Son tabernacled, when he became God manifest in the flesh. From whence, as the light and life

of the world, he graciously communicates all the blessed rays of spiritus and eternal life. Here Jesus indeed rejoiceth in giving out of his fulness, shining in upon the dark minds of his people, and causing them to rejoice in his light, and to find happiness in his grace here, and glory hereafter. He is, my soul, that Sun of righteousness, which the prophet predicted should arise with healing in his wings. And he is that glorious sun, which another prophet predicted should arise no more to go down. Precious Jesus! be thou my everlasting light, and my God and my glory. Malachi iv. 2. Isaiah lx. 19, 20.

7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them *there is* great reward.

Here the sacred writer makes a beautiful transition from the works of nature to contemplate the works of grace. Having celebrated the praises of Jehovah in his outward courts, he now enters the inner temple to adore him. And if the former preached Christ, still in much higher strains doth the latter. I would have the Reader remark with me, how much the sacred penman dwells upon the glorious and incommunicable name of Jehovah. No less than six times in three verses is that high and lofty name mentioned. And, in like manner, he maketh use of six different terms to denote Christ and his sacred word by. For, I take it for granted, the Reader is apprized that Jesus is all along referred to by what is here said. He is indeed the substance of the law, and the testimony, and the statutes. He converts the soul. He rejoiceth the heart. He is the Alpha and Omega of all God's gracious dealings with men. And, therefore, is more precious than gold, yea, than the golden wedge of Ophir. He causeth them, as he saith himself, that love him to possess substance, yea durable riches and righteousness. Proverbs viii. 18—21.

12 Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

This forms a most beautiful break and interruption to the Psalmist's devout contemplation. It comes in with a striking demand upon the heart, as if under a consciousness that having such discoveries made of

Jesus and his preciousness, how inexcusable it must be in any soul to overlook and forget him. And hence he cries out, Who can tell, in the multiplied instances of his own transgressions, these particulars? Reader! recollect, how secret soever or unknown in numberless occasions to ourselves, yet our sins are all open and naked to the eyes of him with whom we have have to do. Oh! what a relief to the soul is that scripture, *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.* 1 John i. 7.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

These are sweet prayers, and when offered in faith through Him, who is the Lord our Righteousness, then may we hope that he who is the Sun of Righteousness, and both the substance and the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, will sweetly accompany, by his blessed Spirit, the song of praise and love in which we celebrate his glories, that we shall praise him here, and ere long unceasingly praise him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the firmament of his glory for evermore. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, as oft as you and I look up and behold the heavenly bodies all ministering in their appointed order, and contemplate God's covenant love, existing and confirmed at this hour as much as when first God promised that seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night should remain; oh! let the view bring home additional proofs of God's faithfulness. I would say to my heart, as Moses the man of God, said to Israel, Know thou, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.

And, Reader, let this confirmation of God's faithfulness in the works of creation, become a blessed testimony to strengthen both our souls, of the faithfulness of Jehovah in the kingdom of his grace. Yes! blessed Jesus! thou art he whom God our Father hath given, as the light and life of thy people. In our nature, at the call of Jehovah, thou hast tabernacled. Thou hast with unceasing brightness, from day to day, been illuminating thy gospel church. Oh Lord! let the law of thy mouth, and thy statutes; thy testimonies, thy judgments, thy commandment, and thy fear, be inwrought by thy grace in our souls. And give us to esteem thee and thy word more than our necessary food. Cause us, under the enjoyment of it, to cry out with thy church of old, thy lips drop as the honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue. Thy love is better than wine. Precious Lord! what shame and confusion of face ought we to feel, in the recollection of our numerous offences, numerous neglects, and forgetfulness of thee. Lord! revive thy work!

awaken meditation! Oh thou, who art the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof! be thou my constant joy, my unceasing delight; and let my meditation of thee be sweet, and all my springs be in thee!

PSALM XX.

CONTENTS.

We have here a prayer, put up by the whole church in faith, for Jehovah's prospering the cause of his glorious Messiah, the Church's king. And the Church, already taking for granted that what is asked in faith shall assuredly be obtained, in the close celebrates the victory, and sets up banners.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

THE LORD hear thee in the day of trouble;
the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.

It is a sad hindrance to our full enjoyment of divine and spiritual things, that our more frequent acquaintance and intercourse with things altogether earthly makes us overlook the grand object intended by the Holy Ghost, in leading the mind of the Church wholly to the Lord Jesus. Here is a prayer for no other purpose, but for the prosperity of Christ, as King in Zion, the glorious head and mediator of his Church. As such the prayer is directed to Jehovah; and the sole object of it is, that Jesus may, for his Church and people, subdue all his and her adversaries.

2 Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.

3 Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. Selah.

4 Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.

God the Father promised to be with his Christ through the whole of his undertaking. Psm. lxxxix. 22, &c. But observe how the church hath an eye to the merits of Jesus's obedience and sacrifice. And what the heart's desire of Jesus was, is read to us in every part of the Bible. The promises of God are also in covenant to the same. Psalm xxi. 2. Isaiah liii. 10.

5 We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

This is a blessed triumph of faith. And the people of God do already celebrate the victories of Jesus, and their victories in him, from their oneness with Christ, even in the wilderness below. Hence the Church is seen as coming up out of it, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Song vi. 10.

6 Now know I that the LORD saveth his

anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand.

I would beg the Reader not to overlook the change of person here made from *we* to *I*. The verse before evidently referred to the whole church of Christ. And who is this *I*, but the glorious Head himself? Doth not Jesus tell his people how sure he is of being heard, and being successful? See a beautiful instance of it in the days of his flesh, John xi. 41, 42.

7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Now again the Church breaks out in her confidences, because of her Redeemer's victory. And is it not so now? Do not some go down to the chariots of Egypt, and trust the reeds there found, rather than the Rock of ages? Reader, doth not every one do this, who is looking to an arm of flesh, instead of the Lord Jesus and his righteousness? See that solemn scripture, Jer. xvii. 5—8.

8 They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.

9 Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.

Beautiful and striking contrast! and which is manifested in the experience of the world every day, in the different characters: the faithful in their deliverances, and the ungodly in their false confidences. Hence the Psalm ends, as it begun, with faith in God's covenant love in Jesus. Save us, is like the Hosanna of the Gospel, and is indeed the same word. Matt. xxi. 9. Keeping a constant eye, through the whole of this beautiful Psalm, upon the person and victories of Jesus, will be the only way to enjoy by faith a blessed participation in what is here recorded. But after this, in a secondary and subordinate sense, it forms a very suitable prayer for kings, and for all that are in authority, that, as the apostle exhorts, prayers may be offered for them, so by the Lord's blessing, under their government, we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. 1 Tim. ii. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

WHO can read this Psalm, and behold to whom it refers, and then call to mind the blessed victories of our King and Saviour, but must with heart-felt joy join in every part of it; while celebrating the triumphs of the Redeemer? Yes! blessed Jesus! God the Father did hear thee in the day of trouble, when thou didst stand forth as our Surety for the salvation of thy people! God, even the mighty God of Jacob, did defend thee. An angel from heaven was sent to strengthen thee. And God did accept thy sacrifice, when thou by thyself didst make thy soul an offering for sin; and by virtue of it thou hast made all thy people accepted in thee, the beloved. Here, Lord, thy redeemed upon earth

set up their banners, and thy redeemed in glory are clothed in white, and have the palms of victory in their hands.

And now, Lord, while we rejoice in thy strength, as becometh all thy redeemed, do thou make us more than conquerors, through thy grace helping us, in all the remaining conflicts we have to encounter. In thy name we will greatly rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make our boast. And surely, Lord, while thou art the glory of our strength, we shall not be like those who trust to chariots or horses: but we shall be made strong in thy power, and thou wilt finally bruise Satan and every foe under our feet. Save Lord! Jesus, hear us when we call upon thee!

PSALM XXI.

CONTENTS.

If the foregoing Psalm prayed for the Mediator's success in his great undertaking of redemption, here we have a thanksgiving Psalm for the answer of Jehovah to that prayer, in the triumphs of the Lord Jesus. The Church is here blessing the Lord for those victories of her Redeemer and King, and expressing her sure confidence of everlasting triumphs in Jesus.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

THE king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

Reader, here is so much of Jesus, our glorious triumphant King, in this Psalm, that I do entreat you to be looking up for grace, and on the look-out through every portion of it, that we may not overlook or miss any of the very precious things which are here recorded concerning him. Observe, immediately on the opening of it, what is said of the Lord Jesus's joy in the salvation of Jehovah. Yes: Jesus is the Christ of God. And the salvation he brought is Jehovah's salvation to the ends of the earth. Isaiah xlix. 6.

2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.

Reader, look here again, and be abundantly comforted in the view. The heart's desire of Jesus was and is for the redemption of his people. And depend upon one certain truth: Never did any poor burthened sin-sick soul long or desire so earnestly for his salvation by Jesus, as Jesus hath for the salvation of that sinner. Sweetly the Church echoed to this desire of Jesus, her husband, when she said, I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me. Song vii. 10.

3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

Do observe again here, what a lovely account is given of the Father's grace in the salvation of the Church, outrunning and being beforehand with Jesus in his desire for it. God the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. The Father's hand was first in the blessed work. The Father ordered, planned, appointed, and finally blesseth the rich salvation of Jesus. Of all mercies going before, and preventing the very wishes or prayers of his people, the gift of God's dear Son is the highest and the best. Reader, I charge it both upon your heart and my own, never forget this. We owe all our blessings in Jesus and by Jesus, nay, Jesus himself, with all the mercies of redemption, to the gift of God our Father. Hence the Apostle was taught by the Holy Ghost to say, *We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* 1 John iv. 14. And hence the redeemed in glory are represented as before the throne chaunting the hymn of praise to the Lamb, for the blessings of his great salvation, in that he had redeemed them to God by his blood. Thus testifying that it was *from* Jehovah as the first cause, and *to* Jehovah as the final end, all the blessings of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ are to be ascribed. Rev. v. 9. Sweet thought! also suggested in the latter part of this verse: Jehovah is said to have set a crown of pure gold upon the Mediator's head. Yes: long before the incarnation of Jesus, by the spirit of prophecy, Jehovah is introduced as proclaiming him King in Zion, and crowning him upon his holy hill. Jesus is said to declare this decree. And when was this done but in that glorious event John saw by vision, in order to tell the church, when he saw that book of the divine decrees in Jehovah's hand, who was sitting on the throne, and when none was found worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon, but the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Surely, Reader, if none but this Lamb of God was found worthy to open the book, none but him could declare the contents of it. Compare Psalm ii. 6—8. with Rev. v. 1, &c. Reader! you perceive Jehovah hath set a crown of pure gold upon the head of Jesus, and crowned him King in Zion. Do you know of another coronation day of our Lord Jesus? Yes, every poor sinner that puts the crown of his salvation, also, upon the same blessed head of Jesus, doth the same, and, in so doing, proves that the mind of Jehovah, and the mind of that poor sinner, are here fully agreed. Oh, the wonders of redemption!

4 He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest it him, *even* length of days for ever and ever.

Now here we have a verse, that if we needed it by way of shewing to whom the whole Psalm belongs, and of whom alone it treats, would at once decide it. This king whom Jehovah crowned, is said to have asked life, and the Lord gave it *for ever*. And this silenceth every question that otherwise might arise, whether David, King of Israel, or any other earthly monarch, could be meant. And hence it should act as a guide to every other passage which is not of so plain a nature. It enervates the blessed energy of the scriptures, when we presume to construe them with a double meaning. Jesus, and Jesus only, is the glorious King all along treated of: and therefore I would pray for grace, that I might never lose sight of him, in having my thoughts or affections taken off to the consideration of any other. And, Reader, that you and I may have also a clear apprehension in what sense Jesus is here repre-

sented as the King asking life, and Jehovah granting him a long life, even for ever and ever, do not forget that in this, and in all other similar passages in the Bible, where Jesus is represented as asking, and Jehovah as granting, it is as our Head and Mediator. The Son of God, as God, one with the Father in his essential power and Godhead, can neither ask nor receive; for all creatures and things are his, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

But when the Son of God condescended, for us and our redemption, to take upon him our nature, and in the union of the two natures, both God and man, he became one person, even Christ; here, as our Head, our Mediator, he hath a kingdom *given* to him, to *reward* him for his blessed work of redemption, and to *furnish* him with all blessings for his people, in time, and to all eternity. Hence those scriptures, like the present, which describe his reign, his sovereignty, and his people, as blessed in him. Psalm ii. 6—8. Psalm xxiv. 7, &c. Psalm lxxii. throughout, &c.

5 His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

6 For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.

Language is incompetent to describe all the precious things contained in these verses. How great the Mediator's glory, in the salvation thus planned and executed by Jehovah! How great his own blessedness! How inconceivable the mutual enjoyment of the glorious persons of the Godhead in each other! We must be first qualified to apprehend what kind of joy that is, which the infinite mind of Jehovah is capable of receiving, before we can describe it. And as in the highest perfection of our nature, even in glory, we never can arrive at this, because it belongs only to the incommunicable perfections of the Godhead, it is evident that we never can conceive in time, in what it consists, much less speak of it. So that all attempts to enlarge upon these verses are fruitless. And indeed in their own pure unaltered language, they convey more than when the least addition is made to them. The margin of some of our old Bibles makes a little variety in the phrase, 'Thou hast made him to be blessed for ever;' and reads it, 'Thou hast set him to be *blessings for ever*;' intimating, in a sweet manner, that what Jesus, as Mediator, is in himself, he is for his people. None but Jesus can be said to be blessed in himself: but, as the Head of his people, and from their union with him, he is what he is, a blessing, and an eternal one, to all them.

7 For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.

8 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the

time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.

10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

11 For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, *which* they are not able to perform.

12 Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, *when* thou shalt make ready *thine* arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

I do not interrupt the reading of these verses, that I may not swell the Commentary unnecessarily: they all refer to one and the same thing. The King Mediator having, by his own personal victories, established his kingdom, and committed his church into the hands of his Father, now being returned to glory (see John xvii. 11, &c.), is assured that his church and redeemed shall be preserved in the earth, until their time comes to follow him to his kingdom. Hence all the different expressions contained in these verses are directed to one and the same end. The enemies of the cross may and will oppose; but the ultimate termination shall be victory to all the army of Jesus. *The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Rev. xi. 15.

13 Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: *so* will we sing and praise thy power.

A beautiful close to this most glorious Psalm is here, in which the Church offers up a joyful acclamation to her Sovereign Redeemer, that being now exalted in his own strength, and having gotten himself the victory, and a name being given to him above every name, all the ransomed of Zion, the whole church of God's redeemed ones, shout aloud his praises, devoutly bend the knee, the heart, the whole soul, before him, and with one heart, and one tongue, confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, here let us pause, and with holy admiration, love and praise, contemplate the astonishing love of God our Father, in giving his dear Son, and the astonishing love of God the Son, in coming to redeem our nature, and by such a process of grace opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Surely never did God display such love, wisdom, and grace, as in the redemption by Jesus. And if the King rejoiceth in such great salvation, well may the happy objects of it, who,

by his gracious undertaking, and victory, are made kings and priests to God and the Father.

And oh, thou glorious Mediator! was it thine heart's desire, which God thy Father granted thee, that thou mightest see of the travail of thy soul, that thou mightest have thy church, thy spouse, thy fair one? Didst thou, blessed Lord, from everlasting set thine heart's desire upon thy people? Didst thou, from this desire towards thy people, come and tabernacle among them? And was such thine ardent desire for the working out their redemption, by thy sufferings and death, that thou was straitened until that thy baptism of pain and agonies was accomplished? And as thou didst all along desire every thing that had a tendency to bring about those blessed purposes, is it not now, blessed Jesus, thy desire for the time to come, in every individual instance of thy purchased ones, that their conversion may be accomplished? Dost thou not wait to be gracious? Dost thou not count thy people as the excellent of the earth, in whom is all thy desire, all thy delight? And do we not know, that those desires of thine will never be fully gratified, until thou hast gathered all thy redeemed around thee in glory? O thou glorious, thou almighty Shiloh! to thee shall the gathering of the people be. Yes, Lord, thou art the desire of all nations! Thou art the one glorious object of desire in every awakened heart. Lord Jesus, be thou my King, my God! And as the Father hath put a crown of pure gold upon thy head, and declared thee to be his King in Zion, so would my poor withered hand, through thy grace, be stretched forth in faith, to put the crown of my salvation on thy sacred head, declaring thee to be my lawful, rightful Lord, both by the Father's gift, the purchase of thy blood, and the conquests of thy grace. Lord! henceforth make me wholly thine, for I am no longer my own; thou hast bought me with a price, and therefore would I glorify thee with my whole soul and body, and spirit, which I pray thee to sanctify, and to preserve blameless, until the day of thy coming.

PSALM XXII.

CONTENTS.

Here is indeed a gospel Psalm, full of Jesus, and of Jesus only, from beginning to end. It consists of two parts: Of the sufferings of Christ, and then of the glory that should follow: his cries, agonies, discouragements, desertions, death; his glory, and the blessedness of his salvation.

To the chief Musician upon *Ajeleth Shahar*. A Psalm of David.

Is not Christ discoverable in the very title of this Psalm? For who is *the Hind of the Morning* but Jesus? *Ajeleth Shahar* means Hind of the Morning, and so is rendered in the margin of our old Bibles. Sweet thought! Jesus was so from the everlasting morning, when set up from everlasting. And when in time, was he not hunted and slaughtered by the dogs spoken of in this Psalm? See Song viii. 14.

MY God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

2 O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

Who that reads these words set down in the church under the spirit of prophecy, at least a thousand years before the coming of Christ, and then hears them uttered by Jesus on the cross; who that duly attends to these things, but must feel his soul overpowered in the contemplation, and be constrained to exclaim with the astonished apostle, *My Lord, and my God!* Yes, precious Jesus! we need not here inquire of whom spake the prophet this,—of himself or of some other man? Acts viii. 34. But what do the words themselves imply? Is this the voice of complaint? Yes: Jesus as the sinner's surety, cries out under the pressure of divine wrath against sin. Not that God had exacted more than our sins deserved, but that the heavy displeasure, and the desertion which accompanied it, bore hard upon his holy spotless soul. Yet, let the Reader not forget to remark, in the same moment, that Jesus never lost sight of his relationship; for he kept it in view, in his cry, in reiterating the tender title, My God, my God! Reader, if Jesus felt the momentary desertion so oppressive, think what horrors must form the state of those who are deserted for ever. And if Jesus thus passed through the dark valley of desertion, let not any of his followers complain, if at any time they are made conformable to his likeness. Rom. viii. 29.

3 But thou *art* holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

This is a sweet verse. Jesus proclaimeth the holiness of God the Father in the midst of his sufferings. As the sinner's surety, he bore the whole weight of sin, and the punishment due to it. Oh! how precious is the holiness of God, beheld in this point of view! It is a glorious part of Jehovah's character, that he will by no means clear the guilty, Exod. xxxiv. 7. And rather than this holiness of God shall be slighted, the Surety shall suffer, shall die. Reader, do you enter into the precious apprehension of this blessed truth? Do you behold Jesus, and Jesus as your Surety, taking all your guilt, and all the curse due to the sinner, upon him, because of God's broken law, and thus expiating both the sin and punishment by the sacrifice of himself? Do you see this, believe in this, and feel your interest in it? If so, surely you will admire and adore God's holiness, and humbly adopt the same words as your Saviour did, and cry out, Thou, Lord, art holy; O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel!

4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

One of the most blessed thoughts, in confirmation of Jesus acting as

the surety of his people, and his people receiving all the blessings and benefits of that suretyship, is the testimony the Holy Ghost gives, in various parts of the scripture, concerning the faithful. Wherefore did they live and die so comfortably, but because Jesus had taken out the sting of sin, and removed the curses of the broken law, by the sacrifice of himself. And although the Old Testament saints all lived and died before this great sacrifice was offered, yet it was intentionally offered, for *Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Rev. xiii. 8. Hence they died in the sure faith of it, as much as though it had already taken place, and were accepted in it. So that they trusted, and were not confounded.

6 But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying,*

8 He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

Whence, Reader, is it, that while the fathers were made happy, Christ was thus treated, but because he stood in their law place, and endured the very curse which the law denounced against the sinner? And if he, the Surety, paid the debt, surely the principal debtor, the Surety paid for, ought to go free. Both could not, with strict justice, pay: and this explains wherefore that Holy One of God was thus despised, and made a derision and a reproach. But, while it explains the cause, who, blessed Jesus, shall calculate thy love? We need only turn to the Evangelists to behold these things awfully verified. Matt. xxvii. 41—43. Mark xv. Luke xxxiii. &c.

9 But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.

10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother's belly.

The miraculous conception and birth of Christ, for the purpose of redemption, hath numberless particularities in it, which make these expressions peculiarly suited to our Lord. Compare Psalm xl. 6. with Heb. x. 5. Psalm cxxxix. 13—16.

11 Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help.

Here Christ evidently throws himself upon the covenant engagements. Isaiah xlii. 1—4. Psalm lxxxix. 21, 22.

12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round.

13 They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death:

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD; O my strength, haste thee to help me.

20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

It would be a loss of time to continually remark, how impossible it is to preserve any kind of consistency in those scriptures, by keeping up the recollection of David, King of Israel, as being at all personally represented in these and the like accounts. David never was in the situation here described; and therefore I do request the Reader, once for all, to forget David, unless as a type of Christ, and wholly look to Him, whom David, as a prophet, and under the spirit of prophecy, is so accurately describing. Reader, look into the Evangelists, after reading these prophetic relations of your Redeemer, and behold how the history corresponds to the prediction in every point. Never indeed were sorrows like unto his sorrows, in the days of his humiliation. Who can hear of a Lamb in the midst of bulls, and behold Jesus under the buffetings of the soldiers, the reproaches of the Scribes and Pharisees, the scourge and the spear, and the thorny crown, but must be struck with the striking nature of the similitude to the reality? Who can hear of a soul so afflicted as to be poured out like water, and all the bones of his body out of joint, and then behold Jesus when nailed to the cross, and by the elevation and fixing the cross, dislocating, though not breaking, the bones of his sacred body, but must cry out, Behold the Man! And was not Jesus parched, with his tongue cleaving to his jaws, when he said, 'I thirst.' In short, under every circumstance, in his buffetings, sufferings, crucifixion, dying, and the dust of death, into which he was brought, if the prophet had been at the hall of Pilate, and the hill of

Calvary, he could scarcely have made a more accurate portrait of the Lamb of God, than he hath now done: so exactly was fulfilled a prophecy delivered a thousand years before the period of its accomplishment. Dearest Lord, give me so to meditate on these things, until I feel my whole soul going forth in all that love and affection which thy people participate, who know thee in the power of thy resurrection, and in the fellowship of thy sufferings. Philip. iii. 10.

22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

The apostle Paul was taught by the Holy Ghost to tell the church, that these words, delivered by the patriarch David under the spirit of prophecy, were the words of Christ: Heb. ii. 12. It is a blessed thing (and we never can be sufficiently thankful to the Holy Ghost for it), when at any time the precious words of Jesus, or passages referring to the Lord Jesus, are not left to our conjectures, but are positively explained. Hence, therefore, from this charming account of prophecy, we have authority to conclude, that when Jesus had fulfilled all that was written of him, in respect of suffering, he should, by his Holy Spirit, proclaim his salvation to his redeemed. And this he did when he sent down the Spirit at Pentecost, and when at the same time he sent his disciples forth to preach his gospel to every creature. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts ii. 1—4. Mark xvi. 15. But Reader, do not overlook that delightful feature of Jesus's love, in calling his people brethren. Oh! thou brother, born for adversity! Surely thou art our brother; and every one of thine may say, with the church, *When I find thee without, I would kiss thee, for I should not be despised.* Song viii. 1. Prov. xvii. 17.

23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

Here is the first declaration of his name unto Israel, after the flesh; and that they should be gathered unto him to praise him. Yes, Jesus shall have a church, a seed to serve him, to call him blessed.

24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

Sweet and blessed testimony of our God himself. It is as if Jesus had said, My Father hath not despised, nor abhorred the affliction of me his afflicted One, but hath accepted me, and my offering for you, my redeemed. What an encouragement is this, at all times, for Jesus's afflicted ones to go to a mercy-seat, in his most precious name. Oh! how sure of success. John xvi. 23.

25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him:

Every verse in this beautiful Psalm hath an immense blessing annexed to it, as it concerns the church, accepted and blessed in Jesus. The Lord Jesus hath paid his vows, hath performed all the work the Father gave him to do; and therefore all his people in the congregation shall praise him, and God the Father in him. John xiii. 31, 32.

26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

Here is another blessed verse, and most comprehensive indeed, of all blessings in Jesus. The meek, that is, all humble, lowly in heart, and seekers after salvation in Jesus, shall have an everlasting table spread in the fulness, freeness, suitableness, and all-sufficient supplies in Jesus. Living *upon* Jesus, they shall be living *to* Jesus, and *in* Him; and shall rejoice all the day and live for ever.

27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

Nay, so extensive shall be the blessings in Jesus, and so vast the extent of redemption by Jesus, that all the ends of the earth, not Israel only, but Gentiles shall come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising. Isaiah lx. 3.

28 For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations.

29 All *they that be* fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all *they that go* down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

30 A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.

31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.

Here is a beautiful variety of terms and descriptions, to point out the glories of the Lord Jesus, in the fulness and greatness of his salvation, and the felicity and happiness of his church, saved and accepted, and everlastingly made happy, in him. So that without making further division of these precious words, and the glorious things contained in them, the whole scope and tendency of the Psalm, taken in one collected point of view, is exactly corresponding to the whole tendency of prophecy, and comes up to what the apostle Peter had it in command to tell the church, by the direction of God the Holy Ghost, that the Spirit of Christ, which was in the ancient prophets of God, taught them by all their ministrations to signify, first, the sufferings of Christ, and then the glory which should follow. 1 Pet. i. 11. And here we have an epitome of both, in this most blessed Psalm. The sufferings of our adorable

Redeemer fill up the subject of relation to the close of the 21st verse; and from thence to the end, the Lord Jesus is introduced, as declaring to his church, whom he is not ashamed to call brethren, that the covenant engagements of his Father must and will be fulfilled. He must have a church, where his name shall be known, where his praise shall be heard, as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another. He shall have a seed to serve him; and this seed shall be as incalculable as the dew drops of the morning. There shall be a constant succession of them, declaring, from father to son, his righteousness, unto a people, even his own precious people, which shall be born. And when he writeth them up, it shall be said in Zion, that this and that man was born in her. Oh! precious God and Saviour, thou who now rulest in Zion, shew the people of thy doings. Psalm lxxvii. 5, 6.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, where shall we begin, or where end, in our views of the Lord Jesus, as set forth in this most precious scripture? Let us, as we are most bounden, bless our God and Father, for this most gracious gift of his dear Son. Let us, as we are most bounden, bless Jesus, the Son of his love, for the wonders of redemption, and the wonders of his love to us, in thus dying for us, and causing us now to participate in his triumphs. And let us, as we are most bounden, bless and adore God the Holy Ghost, for having raised up prophets in his church, thus to shadow forth to Old Testament Saints the grand features of the Lord Jesus in his humiliation, and the glory that should follow; and hereby to have taught New Testament believers also, the blessings in which both Old and New are all alike equally interested, by the glorious person, and glorious work, of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well may every soul cry out, Blessed be the Lord Jehovah, for Jesus Christ!

But oh, thou precious Redeemer! what praises shall we offer thee now, or what shall we say to thee to all eternity, for thy great undertaking? Never shall we be able to express sufficient thankfulness, for such unparalleled love. And not only, dearest Lord, that thou hast accomplished redemption for us, but that thou didst accomplish it in such a way. Was it not enough, O thou glorious Benefactor of mankind, that thou didst overcome death, and hell, and the grave, for thy redeemed; but that in the vast work thou didst take away even the bitterness of death, for thy people, and didst drink the cup of trembling thyself, even to the dregs, that they might have the cup of salvation? How many of thy redeemed have gone to heaven triumphant, in the merits of thy cross, whilst thou thyself didst die under extreme sorrow? David feared not the valley of the shadow of death, because thou wert with him: and Paul gloried in sufferings, that thy power might rest upon him: whereas thou, blessed Jesus, didst groan and cry under the pressure of death's pains.

Didst thou, indeed, take all the curse; all the sin, all the load, all the sorrow, on purpose that thy people, in their dying hours, should feel nothing of the sting of sin? Oh, thou Lover of thy people! help me to adore thee, to love thee, to live to thee, and, with thy servant the apostle,

always to keep in remembrance that love of thine, which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Now, heavenly and triumphant Saviour, hasten thy kingdom. Let thy church bless thee; let all thy redeemed give thanks to thee. Fulfil, Lord, and complete thine own blessed promise: let thy seed for ever serve thee on earth, until thou shalt come to call home all thy redeemed to heaven: and the whole church shall be brought into one fold, both Jew and Gentile, and all the nations of the earth shall be converted to the Lord, as the waters cover the earth. Amen.

PSALM. XXIII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist here expresseth his entire confidence in the Lord, and considers him under the beautiful and interesting character of a shepherd: a well known office of Jesus Christ.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

When we consider in how many parts of Scripture the Lord Jesus is described under the character of a Shepherd, we shall not be at a loss immediately to make application, through every part of this Psalm, as it concerns ourselves to him. I stay not to observe also how, and in what sense, Christ himself, in his mediatorial character, might call Jehovah his shepherd; but I shall confine what is here said concerning the shepherd, in reference to him. God had promised in the Old Testament scripture, to raise up a faithful Shepherd, meaning Christ. And it is well worth our inquiry, under how many descriptions the several writers of the word of God had it in commission to point him out. He is called God's Shepherd, Zech. xiii. 7. And that no possible mistake concerning him might arise, he is called One Shepherd, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. He is called also the Chief Shepherd, 1 Peter v. 4. And the Great Shepherd, Heb. xiii. 20. And Christ himself takes the appellation of the Good Shepherd, John x. 11. Reader, how delightful, if you and I, like David, can with the same authority say, 'The Lord is MY Shepherd.' Depend upon it, if so, we shall never want either food or raiment, neither chastisement nor support, either blessings in providence nor grace. He that is the Good Shepherd, and the Great Shepherd, and Jehovah's Shepherd, will never suffer his sheep to be unprovided for.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

These are sweet verses. Jesus leads, and feeds, and waters. And this he doth night and day, lest any hurt. Feeding, takes in the whole employment of a Shepherd: Jesus hath knowledge of the persons of his

sheepfold. He knows their wants, knows their situation, necessities, their diseases, sicknesses, infirmities, weaknesses, and, in short, all that concerns them. Reader, do not overlook these things. They must be well fed, well taught, well taken care of, that have Jesus for their Shepherd. The Prophet hath given a particular account of this office of Jesus, and blessed it is to know it by experience. See Ezek. xxxiv. 11, &c. But what I would particularly desire the Reader to keep in view, in this contemplation of Jesus as the Shepherd of his people, is the method by which Jesus doth all these gracious things. How doth he feed his flock? Surely with himself. He is the bread of life, the bread of God, which came down from Heaven. Now, by the blessed word of his gospel, which the Holy Ghost opens and applies to the believer's heart, Jesus feeds them, nourishes them, comforts them, strengthens them, and so leads them on from day to day, that he becomes the very life of their soul, and their portion for ever. Surely they are well fed, and well taken care of, to whom Jesus thus acts the part of a gracious, wise, and affectionate Shepherd.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Hence the soul, resting upon Jesus, can and will look forward to the hour of death with perfect composure and serenity. It is but a valley, not a dwelling place, he hath to enter. And though he enters it, it is not to abide there. Moreover, it is not death, but the mere shadow of death, the true believer in Christ hath to pass through. The sting of death, which is sin, is taken out by the blood of Christ. The cause, which is to be brought before the judge after death, hath been already before him, in which the accusations of the law, and Satan, and conscience, Jesus hath answered; and God hath declared himself to be well pleased. Hence, therefore, there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 1. So that death, and the valley of the shadow of death, have lost all their terrors to a true believer in Jesus, who is relying wholly upon the glorious person, and the finished and approved righteousness of the Mediator.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Blessed conclusion to a blessed frame of mind, when a soul is well founded in the covenant righteousness of God his Saviour; can look up to God as his Father, Jesus as his never-failing Shepherd, and the Holy Ghost as his Comforter. Jesus and his Holy Spirit have gone before, like the pillar of the cloud, have surrounded, followed, and compassed, us about as a shield; and therefore, in the experience of all that is past, the believer finds confidence for all that is to come. It is Jesus, who is

the Alpha, and he is also the Omega. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory and praise for ever and ever, Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL! thou great Shepherd of Israel, thou that ledest Joseph like a flock! May I not humbly look up, and call thee, blessed Jesus, my Shepherd also? Surely thou hast been sent, and appointed, by the Father, to take upon thee the sheepfold of all thy redeemed, whom thou hast purchased with thy blood. And dost thou not gather every one of them out of their state by nature, before that they are brought within thy fold? Dost thou not go after every wanderer into the mountains, to seek and search them out, whither they have been scattered in the dark and cloudy day? And when thou hast found them, blessed Shepherd, dost thou not lay them on thy shoulders rejoicing? And when thou bringest them home, dost thou not cause thy angels to rejoice with thee over them that were lost? Surely, Lord, thou hast done all this for me; thou didst seek me out, for else never should I have sought thee. Thou hast brought me into the fold of thy church, and never, never shall I want. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou causest thy flock to rest at noon! Yes, thou wilt feed me in wholesome pastures, even thy blessed word, and by thine ordinances; thou wilt cause me to drink of that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; thou wilt heal me when diseased; thou wilt bind me up when torn; thou wilt defend me from the lion's den, and the mountains of leopards; thou wilt clothe me with the garment of thy righteousness; thou wilt separate me from the goats, and the unclean; thou wilt cause me to lie down, with present joy and safety, upon the green pastures of thy glorious person and glorious work, thy covenant righteousness, relations, and characters; and I shall lie down hereafter in thy bosom, where thou puttest the lambs of thy flock. Yes! yes! thou almighty Shepherd, all this, and infinitely more, wilt thou do for me, and in me, and by me, until thou bringest home all thy flock into one fold; when every one shall pass again under the hand of him that telleth them, to manifest that of them the Father hath given thee none is, or can be lost; that none of thy sheep can perish, nor any pluck them out of thine and thy Father's hand. And at length, blessed Jesus, thou wilt bring thy whole fold around thyself in glory, where thou wilt lead them to fountains of living waters, and all tears shall be wiped away from all eyes.

PSALM XXIV.

CONTENTS.

Here is another gospel Psalm, in which the Holy Ghost, by the pen of his servant David, describes the Lord Jesus Christ as the glorious Mediator, Head, and King of his Church. He is first described as Him by whom Jehovah made the world; and then he is pointed out both in his kingdom of providence and kingdom of grace; and a demand is

made upon the heavenly gates to receive this glorious Mediator, returning from the great work of redemption with triumph and holy joy.

A Psalm of David.

THE earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

The sovereignty of Jehovah over the universe is here beautifully set forth by right of creation; and all the inhabitants, in like manner, are his by the same right, as their Author and Maker. And the sovereignty of the kingdom of grace is also as beautifully set forth, inasmuch as God hath created all things by Jesus Christ, so hath he redeemed his church and his people by him. Hence he hath given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as he hath given him. John xvii. 2.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

The Prophet having thus established the lawful right of the Mediator, as Lord of all, by virtue both of creation and redemption, to universal dominion, he here looks above the earth to the heavens, and contemplating the gospel-church, as represented by the holy hill of Zion, he puts the question, Who is the man that shall be found worthy for communion here with God, and the everlasting enjoyment of him hereafter? Reader, pause over the question. It is a solemn one; and when you have duly pondered it, go on and attend to the answer the Holy Ghost hath given in what follows:

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Who is this? Where is the man that can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin? Prov. xx. 9. Where shall we look among all the fallen sons of Adam for one to answer this description? *All have sinned, and come short of God's glory.* But there is a man, whose name is Wonderful, and who hath been found worthy, as the representative of our poor nature, both to ascend and to dwell there; even Jesus, the Glory-man, the God-man, who, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Heb. i. 3. How sweet that hymn in heaven, in consequence of all this, Rev. v. 8, 9. Reader, pause again here, and observe in proof, that it is Jesus, and him alone, of whom this scripture speaks, that it is a single person here spoken of; and as of none but of Jesus could it ever be said, that he had clean hands and a pure heart, so it is a sad perversion of this precious scripture, to suppose it refers to any but him. Moreover, it prompts the

vanity of men's minds, to fancy themselves something when they are nothing, if we look off Jesus, in supposing it can, in a single instance, be applied to any other.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This becomes a confirmation of the above: for who, but Jesus, can receive the blessing? What blessing? The blessing of covenant-redemption, surely, must be meant, and which includes every other. Hence Jehovah saith, and saith it in reference to this redemption by the Mediator,—*My righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.* Isaiah li. 8. And doth not Jesus call God the Father the God of his salvation? Psalm lxxxviii. 1; Psalm xxi. 1—5. These are precious things. *Michtams* indeed, if read with an eye to Christ: but if we throw Him into the back ground of the subject, or, what is much the same thing, join ourselves with him, as though our persons are meant, and our obedience and faith, and the like, make us such characters as the one here described, we sadly corrupt this scripture, and offer a most unbecoming tribute to gratify the pride of our nature. I have dwelt the more upon this point, for two important reasons. The first is, because I am more and more convinced, every day I live, that the one design of the Holy Ghost, through all the scriptures, is to glorify the Lord Jesus (John xvi. 14); and the other reason is, because the life of all comfort lies in the conviction and enjoyment of this most blessed truth, that it is the perfect righteousness of Jesus, which justifies the persons of his people; and that it is this righteousness in which they are beheld and accepted before God, and which is unto all, and upon all, them that believe. Rom. iii. 22.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

Reader, do remark, in confirmation of what went before, that here is now a change of persons. The two preceding verses treated of one person, and one only. Here we have a plurality of persons, even a generation. And what doth all this mean, but that the generation of Christ-seekers, even that seed of Christ which God the Father promised him (Isaiah xlv. 4, 5; Isaiah liii. 10), and concerning whom Christ himself speaks (Psalm xxii. 30.) shall, by virtue of his righteousness, and their right and title in that righteousness, from their union with him, be admitted also upon his holy hill, and enjoy all the privileges of his redeemed? Reader, it is beautiful, it is glorious to see our interests thus clear and incontrovertible, from our oneness with Christ. Here is all safe, all is secure. But if our admission into God's holy hill here below in church communion, or our everlasting admission into the heaven above, depended upon our clean hands and a pure heart; or even taking into our view Christ's righteousness, as a partly-procuring cause to make our hands clean and our hearts pure; when will any man, that knows what passes every day within, find confidence of ever ascending there? Surely nothing short of the righteousness of Christ himself, as the very righteousness in which his seed and the generation of them that seek his

face, are accepted and justified, can give comfort now, or confidence in the day of judgment.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads; O ye gates; even lift *them* up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who *is* this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he *is* the King of glory. Selah.

What a sublimity there is in these blessed words; and what a rich treasure they contain, in reference to the person and glory of our almighty Mediator! So important a doctrine was the triumph of Jesus, that God the Holy Ghost was pleased to shadow it forth in the Old Testament church, when the ark was conducted with all the splendour and gracefulness of holy worship to Mount Zion. See 1 Chron. xv. &c. But the glorious event itself was accomplished when the Lord Jesus Christ, having finished redemption-work upon earth, ascended to his throne in heaven. The disciples, and those that looked on, when Jesus gradually went up from the Mount of Olives, in presence of the many who were gathered together, saw, and wondered as they beheld, and were no doubt absorbed in contemplation, until the clouds received him out of their sight. Acts i. 9. But they knew not what was going on in heaven, but which this scripture records. Perhaps angels, or perhaps the church of the redeemed above, who had died in the faith of Christ before the wonders of his redemption had been wrought; perhaps both angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, were those who demanded the gates and everlasting doors to lift up their heads, at the approach of the almighty Conqueror. For angels, we are told, are at the gates of the New Jerusalem. Rev. xxi. 12. And, surely, the souls of the redeemed in glory, who had gained entrance there by virtue of Christ's blood and righteousness, must have been longing with holy desires for the return of the Lord Jesus. Supposing then, that this holy company were those who demanded the gates to open; or supposing it was Jesus himself, how suited is the demand, by way of gracing his triumph! Angels kept the gates of heaven, and angels had kept the way to the tree of life, when man was turned out of Paradise. Gen. iii. 24. Jesus had opened that way, by his blood, into the holy place, and now demanded entrance as our forerunner, into the holy place not made with hands, even heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Heb. ix. 11, 12. The inquiry, Who is this King of glory? seems to have been made with a view to heighten the triumphs of the Lord. Angels, when Jehovah brought his first begotten into the world, were commanded

to worship him. And now, when he is returned from the spoils of war, and hath led captivity captive, let all heaven adore him. Who is this King of glory? Pause, Reader, contemplate that King of glory in thy nature; and while thou art beholding him, who is one with the Father over all, God blessed for ever, in the essence of Jehovah, behold him no less the *Man*, even thy brother, in the nature of manhood; and by the union of both in one person, even Christ, thus behold the king of glory, at whose approach those gates and doors, which but for him would have been everlastingly shut, were thrown open, and Jesus entered as the forerunner of his people, to take possession in their name. Oh, the astonishing mercies of redemption! Oh, the miracle of miracles contained in the love of Jehovah to our poor nature, as manifested in Jesus Christ! But Reader, let us not dismiss the subject yet. The Holy Ghost hath caused the demand for the opening of heaven's gates to be twice made, at the entrance of Jesus, and as often the answers of the glories of his person and victories to be made. Well may we therefore go over them again. And is there not, besides Christ's entrance into glory, another beautiful sense of these words, and, without violence to their meaning, capable of being made of them? Doth not the Lord Jesus demand admission into the hearts of his people, when, as he saith himself, Behold I stand at the door and knock? Rev. iii. 20. Doth he not find in every individual instance of his redeemed, the door resolutely shut against him? And unless he who demands entrance puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and opens for himself, would not the heart remain everlastingly shut and bolted against him to all eternity? Song v. 4. John i. 11, 12. Blessed Jesus, how precious is it to know thee to be both King of grace, and King of glory!

REFLECTIONS.

READER, short as this Psalm is, yet what glorious things are contained in it! What volumes are folded up in its bosom. Here is enough to excite inquiry, and to exercise contemplation upon the person and work of Jesus to all eternity.

Let us seek grace to gather every improvement from it, which God the Holy Ghost evidently designed, in causing it to be written for the use of the church; and while we learn from it, that the earth, and all its inhabitants, the lower and the higher world, the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace, are all his right, both as one with the Father, God, and by donation as God and man, Mediator; let us cheerfully give our God and Saviour the glory due to his most holy name, and know that none but the man Christ Jesus ever had right in himself, from the perfect holiness of his nature, to ascend the holy hill; and the only claim of his people is founded in him. Reader, let us pray for grace, that we may tremble to seek acceptance in any other way. Let Jesus have all the glory, for the whole work hath been his:

And blessed it is to look to Jesus, as a whole Saviour, to whom we come in the last moment of our pilgrimage state, as we came the first moment we found our need of a Saviour, poor and needy in ourselves, and made rich only in him.

And oh! thou glorious Holy One, before whom heaven's gate and everlasting doors were thrown open for thine entrance, give me to see, Lord, that every bar and obstruction which stood in thy way to my heart thou hast thrown down. Do thou, blessed Jesus, for thou art strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle, do thou drive out the strong men armed, that have kept me so long in the vassalage of sin. Come in, thou blessed Lord! wherefore standest thou without. Take full possession of my poor heart, and bring down every thought into captivity, and every imagination to the perfect obedience of thee, my God. Oh for grace to be thine now, and thine to all eternity. Amen.

PSALM XXV.

CONTENTS.

We have here expressed the state and fervour of the soul towards God; suited strength and help is earnestly desired, and that upon the promise of the covenant.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

We shall enjoy the spiritual sense of this beautiful Psalm still more if we behold Christ in it as the great Intercessor. For who, but Jesus, could undertake to say, 'I lift my soul unto thee?' 'Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?' saith the Lord. Jer. xxx. 21. And this view of Christ, as our High Priest, will by no means lessen, but rather heighten our confidence in those devout exercises.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

These are blessed promises, and blessed encouragements, to those which wait upon the Lord. . Isaiah lxx. 24.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

There is a beautiful order in these expressions; first to be shewn, then to be taught, and then to be led, in the path of grace. How blessed it is to have the Spirit to teach, the Spirit to lead, and Jesus himself to be the way. And all this because God in Christ is every poor sinner's salvation that trusteth in him.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 Good and upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

These are all so many witnesses to the same blessed truth; and they all speak to the evidence of human wants, and divine faithfulness.

11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it *is* great.

There is a great singularity in this petition. Men, in their dealings with one another, plead, when they ask for forgiveness, either the slenderness of their offence, or that it hath not been repeated, or that the offender will not again trespass. But here the petition for mercy is founded upon the greatness of the offence. Is not this with an eye to Christ; as if the suitor said, Lord, I am a great sinner, but Jesus is a greater Saviour; therefore, for his sake, pardon me. Reader, think what methods the Lord hath taken to magnify the exceeding riches of his grace: and when sinners cry from the deeps of sin to the deeps of divine mercy, these are blessed encouragements, in Jesus, to go upon. But Reader, besides this view of the subject, I would ask, Is here not a view of Christ, who, though in himself he knew no sin, yet, standing as the sinner's surety, may be supposed here to be calling upon Jehovah?

12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

I do not interrupt the reading through the whole of these verses; their plain and obvious meaning they carry along with them. They bear a decided testimony to divine faithfulness, and man's necessities. And though the enemy of God's people doth wage open and secret war against God's heritage, yet Israel shall be ultimately successful, in a full triumph through God's deliverance. Isaiah xlv. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let us never lose sight of Christ, as Jesus, the Christ of God and our appointed High Priest, in all the fervent prayers we meet with in the written word: for as we cannot pray profitably without his Spirit helping us, so neither can our prayers ever come up before God and our Father unless presented with an eye to Jesus, and his finished salvation, and by him as our great Intercessor.

But, blessed Jesus! who is it that thus addresses the Father but thee? Who is enabled to lift his heart to God but thee? Thou thyself hast graciously taught us, that without thee we can do nothing. Do thou, therefore, gracious Lord, both teach us how to pray, how to appear before thee in the way that thou shalt choose, and how to lift up our whole heart's affections and desires after thee, for thou art the Lord our righteousness. And as God our Father pardoned all the sins of thy redeemed, though they were heavy, great, and grievous, because thou didst bear them all, and take them as thine own; so, Lord, for thy great name's sake, pardon ours, notwithstanding their heavy nature, and the many provocations with which they have been marked. Precious Jesus! may our souls find confidence in the blessed hope that, as thou wert made sin for us, when thou knewest no sin, so thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in thee: and art made of God to us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.

PSALM XXVI.

CONTENTS.

Under the spirit of prophecy, the Psalmist in this Psalm describes the Lord Jesus as his church's representative, making an appeal to God's justice, in the consciousness of his own integrity. He implores deliverance from unjust accusation, and closeth with praises.

A Psalm of David.

JUDGE me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.

That the Lord Jesus Christ, and not David, is the person here to be kept in view, is most evident, not only from the expressions contained in what is here said, but also from the general tenor of David King of Israel's demeanour, as it referred to God. When David was unjustly accused by men, as in the case of Shimei, he could and did appeal to God. But when God takes up the cause, as referring to his sins before God, he deprecates divine judgment. Psalm li. &c.

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

Who but the Lord Jesus Christ could ever take up such language? Who but him must assume such language, *If thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord who shall stand?* Psalm cxxx. 3.

3 For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

4 I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

5 I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.

The Reader will recollect that Jesus, in the days of his flesh, received sinners, and did eat with them. But then we must recollect also the cause, and observe the difference here intimated. Physicians may go into infected rooms, to administer a remedy to the sick: but this by no means guarantees the safety of others.

6 I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

How beautiful to view Christ as our holy, harmless, undefiled High Priest, at the altar. Help me, O Lord, to wash my polluted hands and heart in thy blood.

7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy

house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

Sweet are the proclamations of Jesus, from the mercy-seat! and how will every one that is made partaker of the rich salvation in Jesus proclaim, in the voice of praise, the wondrous works of distinguishing grace: Surely, Lord, the place, the ordinance, the very door, of Jesus's gospel church, is dear to his redeemed. Christ is himself the whole of it, and the all of it. He is our Great High Priest, our Altar, and Sacrifice. And as the zeal of Jehovah's house is said by the Redeemer to have eaten him up, so the love for him and his glory fills the soul of his redeemed with such a joy, that their language is, *Here would I dwell, for I have desired it.* Psalm lxxix. 9. John ii. 17. Psalm cxxxii. 14.

9 Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:

10 In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

12 My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, how truly lovely it is to behold Jesus in the immaculate holiness of his nature! For with that holiness we should ever connect the interests of his people. And of all the pleas for a poor sinner to use at a throne of grace, the holiness of Jesus, as his justification, is the highest and the best; indeed the only plea. Oh! what unknown arguments are contained in that sanctity of Christ, which could, and did appeal to Jehovah, to examine and prove and try his reins and his heart. Precious Lamb of God! methinks I feel the confidence of it! Surely it hath a double assurance; for the Father's grace and the Son's righteousness are here blended. And can I have any just apprehension of my God's condemning me for sin, while I am looking up, in God's own way, for acceptance in the perfect justifying righteousness of his dear Son? Here, then, blessed Jesus, would I adopt thine own words, as oft as I go to the mercy-seat, and say, Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in the integrity of Jesus; I have trusted in his righteousness, therefore I shall not slide. Surely, I will say, in the Lord have I righteousness, and strength: even to him am I come; for thou hast said, *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

PSALM XXVII.

CONTENTS.

We have in this Psalm the blessed effects most fully described of strong confidence and faith in God. The happiness of communion with

God is also very beautifully set forth, and the certainty of God answering prayer.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid.

2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will* I be confident.

We shall enter into the spirit of this most lovely Psalm with double delight, if, as it refers so highly to Christ, we keep him in view through the whole of it. And that it is Jesus who is principally intended by what is here said, is most evident from this very passage at the opening of it; for we never read in the life of David of the stumbling of his enemies before his face. But we see this most strikingly displayed in the life of Christ. To stumble and fall at the sight of another, is a peculiarity of expression deserving our attention, because it should seem as if the Holy Ghost by it would direct the church to the Lord Christ. David conquered, through the Lord, a host of foes, it is true; but never did the mere speaking of a man cause others to fall, until in the garden, when the band of men and officers, with the wicked Judas, went to apprehend Christ, they, at a word speaking, went backward, and fell to the ground. Reader, think of this; and consider how frequently, during the Lord Christ's exercising his ministry upon earth, the power of the Godhead broke forth through the veil of that flesh, which was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. John xviii. 3—6. And, Reader, make a double improvement of this sweet scripture. First, let it teach thee, that this Psalm plainly and decidedly points to Jesus. And secondly, ask yourself what greater testimony you would require of the Godhead of Christ, than the moment of his life to which this refers. Was it ever heard, in all the histories of wars, that the voice of a whole army caused others to fall backward on the ground? And yet this was wrought by Christ in such a season. What a confirmation of that prophecy, *He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.* Isaiah xi. 4. Precious Jesus, how animating it is to thy faithful followers, when, under the leadings and guidings of thy Holy Spirit, they are enabled to discover here and there in the scriptures, and in pieces least expected by them, such incontestible evidences of thy glorious person and Godhead.

4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that

will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

While we distinguish Christ here also, as our glorious Head, thus seeking, above all things, communion with the Father; and while we behold the blessed Jesus spending whole nights in prayer to God (Luke vi. 12), we may, by virtue of our union with him, and interest in him, see how delightful an evidence this becomes of our new life. My brother, if the Lord Jehovah be indeed your light and salvation, then *this one thing* will also be the one thing needful, and the grand desire of your soul: no one, who hath once seen the King in his beauty, will feel his heart captivated with any other. To contemplate the glory, grace, wisdom, love, and faithfulness, in God the Father, as manifested most eminently in the redemption by his dear Son; to behold the glories of Christ's person, the infinite beauties in himself, and the infinite riches in his salvation; and to admire and adore the love, and grace, and condescension of God the Spirit: whoever hath thus seen Jehovah, in his threefold character of person, will find, under Christ, a heart constrained, by the same influence, to desire *this one thing*, and *this one only*, as the sum total of all happiness.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

These are some of the blessed effects of the knowledge and enjoyment of the Lord. Oh, how blessed is it to be in Christ, the sanctuary! Oh, how blessed to lift up the head in his strength! And oh, how blessed to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, here below; while the church above is singing the same at the fountain-head of joy.

7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 *When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

These also are precious things, if considered with an eye to Christ: but, without him, as was said by Joseph to the sons of Israel, ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. Gen. xliii. 5. But in Christ, as the way, the new and living way in his blood, and through Christ, as the means and end, the very life of the soul consisteth in prayers going up, and answers coming down, in a perpetual communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

9 Hide not thy face *far* from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

Reader, all connections cease but this of Jesus. Hence, when flesh and heart both fail, what an everlasting resource is that, *that Christ is the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.* Psalm lxxiii. 26.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

I detain the Reader just to remark on this beautiful verse, the two things here prayed for. It is not enough to *teach*, but the Holy Ghost will *lead* also. He will not only *shew* the path, and *point* to Jesus, but he will *incline* the heart into the love and delight of him.

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

Here again, if it had been needed by way of confirmation, that this whole Psalm primarily belongs to, and is speaking of the blessed Jesus, this verse most plainly testifies: Mark xiv. 55—59.

13 *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

How beautiful this verse is also, if read as the words of Jesus. Through the whole of Christ's ministry, he had an eye to the promised aid of his Father. God had said that he would strengthen him for the work, and carry him through it; and therefore Jesus is continually reminding the Father of his covenant-engagement. Psalm lxxxix. 21, &c. Psalm xxii. 1.

14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the LORD.

Nothing can be more blessed than viewing Christ in the promises, and pleading for the fulfilment and accomplishment of them, in and for him. Isaiah xl. 31.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, how beautiful is that scripture which hath Christ for its one glorious object, and that by holding him forth to the church's view, in the blessed work the Father gave him to do, represents him at the same

time to his people, as their glorious Head, and as their glorious example. We shall derive all the blessedness which faith can derive from the many delightful encouragements held forth in this precious Psalm, if we keep up an unceasing dependence upon our glorious Redeemer, and approach to plead, for every blessing here sought for, from our sole interest in him. Jesus is our light, our life, our salvation, and the lifter up of our heads. Without him, we have neither life, nor light, nor strength, nor confidence. In him, we find all: the source, the fountain, the means, the end, of every temporal, spiritual, and eternal security. And while we thus behold him, as our great Mediator, desiring to be everlastingly in communion with the Father, let us behold our vast privileges, and plead for some sweet and spiritual enjoyment in him, and through him, who is the one object of desire, to his redeemed in all nations. And, Reader, let us seek grace to resemble the blessed Jesus, who, in the days of his flesh, was assaulted by all the powers of darkness, by waiting until the hour of deliverance arrives, which will preserve us from fainting, or from being weary in our minds. Let us pray him, who hath gone before in the trying path, that we may be looking unto him, until we find our souls strengthened with his Spirit's might in our inward man. And depend upon it, while that grace within imparts strength to resist enemies without, neither the remains of unbelief, nor the corruptions of our nature, no, nor all the powers of darkness, will cast us down; but his strength will be perfected in our weakness, and we shall be more than conquerors, through his grace helping us.

PSALM XXVIII.

CONTENTS.

We have here the same speaker, under situations not unsimilar, to what went before, in the preceding Psalm. The opening of this blessed scripture, is with prayer, and the close of it, with praise.

A Psalm of David.

UNTO thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, *if* thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

It is well worthy our observation, that for the most part, in the several portions of this blessed book of the Psalms, the Holy Ghost, as if in order to lead to Christ, and that the church may not overlook him in the view of David, hath given some striking and luminous features of the Lord Jesus, by which the other characters of his person might be the easier discovered. Thus we find in the last verse but one of this Psalm, the arguments made use of for help in the former part of it, are assigned to have been because Jehovah is not only the strength of the people, but the saving strength also of his Messiah, his anointed One. Reader, I consider these lights, thrown here and there, as blessed things to guide us in our way, in our researches after Jesus. As a further confirmation, what is here said of going

down into the pit, corresponds with what was prophetically spoken of the Lord Jesus elsewhere. Psalm xxii. 15.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, will I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

Here also, as in numberless other instances, with an eye to Jesus, we have a lovely example, how to tell the Rock of our Salvation what our confidence is; and how to supplicate all suited grace, when we lift up our hearts, and hands, and eyes, to a God in Christ, as his holy oracle. The mercy-seat was the Old Testament propitiatory, as representing Christ. And what is the New Testament but Christ? Exod. xxv. 21, 22. See a beautiful example of answers given from thence: Numb. vii. 89.

3 Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.

4 Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

Jesus felt this, in the days of his flesh, of the deceitfulness of men. Matthew xxii. 15 to 18.

6 Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

8 The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

Here is a sweet hozanna. It was first sung by Christ, and may be well sung by all his redeemed in him. Reader, do not overlook the benediction in the close of it. Is not this another view of Jesus? Remember how Aaron was commanded to bless the people, as a type of Christ, in his everlasting priesthood. Numb. vi. 22, &c.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE, my soul, take a lesson from the ever blessed Jesus, David's Lord, how to cry unto God as thy Rock, thy Jesus, thy sure salvation. He will not be silent to this cry, for he hath said, 'Before my people call, I will answer.' And learn moreover, that thine oracle, unto which thou art to approach, is a sure hearing place for poor sinners, and a sure answering place from God in Christ to poor sinners. Deliverance must come in God's own appointed time, and in the Lord's own appointed way. Let the inhabitants of the Rock, even them that inhabit the refuge in Jesus, sing.

And wilt thou not, my soul, from the beautiful example of this Psalm, close every prayer with praise? What, shall a mercy-seat ever be a witness against thee, that thou didst depart without giving thanks to the Lord? Forbid it, gracious Lord. Surely thou knowest, thou canst not indeed but know, never was a petition put up in Jesus's name unheard; neither was it ever unanswered, though not always according to our wish of things, either in time or manner, but according to God's purpose, whose promises are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Learn then, my soul, as one of the sweetest tokens of a spirit of grace and supplications, with thanksgiving in prayer, that blessings follow prayer, as suitably as mercies are returned to supplication. Yea, Lord, I would desire grace in all things to give thanks; and as this blessed scripture expresseth it, in this Psalm, so would I, in every renewed approach to the throne of grace, follow up the same devout doxology, and say, The Lord is my strength, and my shield: my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and in my song will I praise him.

PSALM XXIX.

CONTENTS.

The very particular manner in which the voice of Jehovah is here celebrated, should lead us to a serious inquiry of the importance of the expression. All sovereignty and authority of earthly rank is demanded to give praise unto it, as well as all nature.

A Psalm of David.

GIVE unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

This repeated call to ascribe glory to God, in three several demands, very fitly corresponds with the many repeated examples we have in the word of God, as if to imply a plurality of persons in the Godhead. Whoever will attend to this particularity, will find very often occasion to remark how much more generally it is to be found in the scriptures throughout, than, without this attention, might be supposed.

3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters, the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.

4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars: yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of *his* glory.

These are all so many various descriptions of the astonishing power of God. By the voice of God in the kingdom of nature, no doubt, is meant the operations of God in nature. The thunder and the lightning, the waves of the sea, and the winds and tempests,—these indicate his astonishing power, and demonstrate his sovereignty. God may be said to speak by such operations. See Psalm cvii. 25, &c. But I rather conceive that the expressions here are to be taken in a figurative way, and to be considered as God's speaking in the works of his providence and his grace. For here, in a more eminent and illustrious manner, may the Lord be said to speak, when the voice of Jesus is heard, according to his own declaration, in the graves of sin and death. John v. 25. And, agreeably to this figure of speech, the voice of the Lord is upon the waters of the sanctuary, causing them to give life, and to call into spiritual life sinners which were before *dead in trespasses and in sins*. It was by this voice of Jehovah, light sprung forth at the original creation of nature. It is the same almighty, quickening, life-giving power, when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shineth in the heart, whereby he giveth the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ; 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is by the same power, that the cedars are broken, the stout heart of sinners is broken, and made willing in the day of his power. And as even flames of fire, at the voice of God are divided, so the heart of a sinner is divided and separated, in that day when Jesus speaks to the conscience, from all its idols; for the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. Heb. iv. 12. And as the wilderness is made to shake at tempests, so the wilderness state of a sinner's mind is shaken, and soon made to blossom as a rose. Isaiah xxxv. 1.

10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

What a beautiful thought to quiet every troubled mind, arises out of this view of the Lord. Let what will arise, or what storm soever, Jesus governs all. It is he which sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. Reader, think of this, in application to all spiritual exercises. Isaiah xl. 22, &c.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

How delightfully the Psalm closes! 'The Lord will give peace.' Yes, Jesus is the peace, and the salvation of his people; and therefore he is the peace of God, to all his church, which passeth all understanding. Philip. iv. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

HEARKEN, my soul, to the voice of God! Hear it on the waters of the sanctuary, in the thunders of his law, in the soft whispers of his gospel. Surely there is enough in it when Jesus speaks to awaken sinners, though dead in trespasses and sins. And hast thou, my soul, so heard that solemn, awful, gracious, pleasing voice, as to give God the glory due unto his name, and to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness? Blessed voice of Jehovah! thou dost indeed divide the flames of fire, for thou hast been in my soul as a Spirit of judgment, and a Spirit of burning. Oh! how powerfully have I at times felt thy word! how it hath enlightened my mind, softened my heart, and subdued my will. Yes, truly, Lord, thou hast said, and I have found it true, *Thou art the Lord, who teachest me to profit.*

And now, blessed Jesus, let me hear more and more thy voice, in all the gracious manifestations of thy love. Thou hast given, and thou wilt give strength, unto thy people. And as thou art thyself our peace, and hast made our peace in thy blood of the cross, so, Lord, be thou my all in all, that though in the world I shall have tribulation, in thee I shall have peace. Truly, Lord, thou shalt be our peace, when the Assyrian shall pass through the land.

PSALM XXX.

CONTENTS.

The title of this Psalm tells what it is. The Psalmist praiseth God for his goodness, and he calleth upon others to do the same from the same cause.

A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.

I WILL extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

The dedication of David's house leads to the spiritual sense of this blessed scripture. The temple, or house, is a type of the body of Jesus. Our authority for this interpretation we find in the Apostle James (Acts xv. 16), who expressly, in so many words, determines the repair of David's tabernacle to be altogether a type of the ever blessed Jesus at his resurrection. So that here we are at no loss to discover Jesus thus extolling God the Father for that illustrious event. And with this clue, we shall find sweet discoveries of Jesus praising and blessing God for his own victory over all the foes of his salvation, and his people's victory in him. Reader, pray for grace to keep this in remembrance, while perusing this Psalm; and then if through faith we are raised from the death of sin, through him, we shall feel our own personal interest in all that is here said concerning him, in whom we triumph.

2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

How beautiful are these expressions, if applied to the Lord Jesus Christ? Here the subject was altogether real. David, and all other men, delivered from the snare of the enemy, may be said to be kept, in a figurative way, from the grave and the pit. But of none could this be really and truly said, but of Christ at his resurrection. And, Reader, do not forget to connect with it all his redeemed, from the interest they bear in his resurrection. He was the first fruits. 1 Cor. xv. 20.

4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

Here again, what a personal application this hath to the saints of his. Resurrection to them is among the highest of their triumphs. But our Lord Jesus Christ himself makes this a glorious event only to them. He saith, indeed, that the hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall come forth: But he adds a solemn conclusion, to those that die out of Christ: John v. 28, 29. The sorrows of a night, and the anger of a moment, are beautifully contrasted to the everlasting day of light and joy. Isaiah liv. 7, 8.

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.

8 I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.

The children of God have a chequered state, and feel the changes. And, no doubt, with an eye to the wilderness condition of God's people, these things are said. They who live in a moveable tent will not have always the same plain ground, or the same favourable aspect.

9. What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth.

10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

12 To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Jesus's strong crying and tears were so important a part in his mission, that the Holy Ghost seems to be directing the church to keep them continually in view. And he generally blends with them the triumphs of Jesus in his songs. Probably that these two grand features concerning Christ, which were prophesied of him, should be remembered,—the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow. Never was that scripture more applicable to the members of Christ's body, than to the Head: 'They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.' Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6. 1 Peter i. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let us behold our glorious Head in this beautiful Psalm, and then, in his name, we also shall set up our banners. When he had by himself purged our sins, and when, by the sacrifice of himself once offered, he had for ever perfected them that are sanctified, think how highly the Father exalted him, and, as our glorious Mediator, gave him a name, which is above every name. Hail, thou risen, holy, exalted, high, and glorious Saviour. We bow the knee before thee, and with joy confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And now, Lord, in thy light, shall we see light. Beholding thy personal triumphs, and feeling, by the sweet constraining tokens of thy love and grace, how highly we bear a part in all that concerns thee, we begin already the Song in thee, and extol our God and King, who hath delivered us from the pit wherein is no water, and will bring us from the grave of death, to a joyful resurrection, when the Lord shall come to gather his saints together, and to be admired in all them that believe. And although, when we go home to our Father's house, we meet with a chequered path in the way, yet the everlasting day, which hath no night, is hastening,

Heaviness may endure for the night, but ere long all heaviness will be done away. The Lord himself is our everlasting light, and our God our glory.

PSALM XXXI.

CONTENTS.

This is a memorable Psalm, in that it contains some of the very words pronounced by our Lord on the cross. So that here also, as in numberless instances, we may discern somewhat of Jesus. The Psalm opens in prayer, and ends in praise.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.

3 For thou *art* my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* my strength.

5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

The last verse of these five becomes a key to open to us the four preceding. Nothing can be more evident than that the whole must have been written by David, under the spirit of prophecy, in direct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ; for Christ closed his ministry on the cross with those very words: Luke xxiii. 46: as if to shew to whom this scripture pointed. How delightful is it to view Christ in this scripture! We see him here as our Surety; we behold him at prayer, agreeably to the covenant engagements of support from his Father, through the whole of his great undertaking; and thereby manifesting, that while he was and is the salvation of his people, he was and is Jehovah's salvation, in all the merits of his work. We behold him no less our glorious example, in all the circumstances of our exercises, and are hereby most plainly taught, how, in his name and righteousness, we are to look up to the Rock of our Salvation, and commit our cause into his hands, as Jesus did into the hands of his Father. See Isaiah xlix. 6. Psalm lxxxix. 21—23. Heb. ii. 17, 18.

6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.

7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;

8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my foot in a large room.

Some of the sweetest views of our Lord, considered as our Redeemer and Surety, are those which represent the unequalled humility of Christ when completing salvation. As the servant of Jehovah, how frequently do we find the meek and lowly Saviour expressing his obedience to the Father, while manifesting his regard to holiness and purity! Who but Christ uniformly set forth a perfect hatred against the doers of iniquity? Who but Christ could say, that he possessed a perfect freedom from the power of the enemy, though so violently assaulted by Satan? Reader, doth not this last verse refer to the subject of Christ's temptations? Matt. iv. 1. Luke xxii. 53.

9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, *yea*, my soul and my belly.

10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

When we recollect how the sorrows of Jesus wasted his strength, so that the Jews spake of him as supposing him near *fifty* years of age, when he was but little more than *thirty*, we may discover very clear references in these words to the person of Christ; John viii. 57. These things could never be said of David; for, though persecuted by Saul, yet we find his health and confidence kept him above such wastings. And when Jesus bore our iniquity, which, as our Representative, is said in scripture to be laid on him, and thereby considered as his own, being made sin, and a curse, well do these words apply. Isaiah liii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.

11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.

12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.

13 For I have heard the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

If the Reader will mark the different expressions here, and turn to the scriptures concerning Christ, he will discover their plain and evident reference to Jesus. David was never so bitterly reproached as Christ: neither so great a fear to his acquaintance, neither did men flee from him so apprehensive of danger, as in the case of Jesus. But we find Jesus indeed reproached as a blasphemer, a deceiver, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, and even a devil. For fear of being involved in the same ruin, all his disciples forsook him, and fled: and at his death, though they had trusted that it was he which should have redeemed Israel, no sooner was he laid in the grave, than they were about to return to their usual occupations. Luke xxiv. 21. John xxi. 3. And never, surely, did men proceed with more slander, mingled with fear and apprehension, than when the chief priests and the council planned with the traitor Judas against the Lord of life and glory. John xi. 47, 48. Matt. xxvii. 1—5. Matt. xxvi. 59—63.

14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my God.

15 My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.

Nothing can be more lovely, as a token of the unequalled humility of Christ, than the very frequent mention he makes of being the servant of Jehovah. And nothing can be more highly satisfactory to his redeemed, than beholding him as their surety in that character. Jehovah pointed him out to the church as such. Isaiah xlii. 1. Under the law he was most strikingly represented to come as such. Exod. xxi. 5. And in the gospel, the Apostle introduces the Lord Jesus, though Lord of all, yet making himself of no reputation, and taking upon him the form of a servant. Philip. ii. 6—11. Reader, would you wish to add to these scriptures the Lord Christ's account of himself, and to behold also one lovely view of his unequalled humility, as the servant of his redeemed also; turn to these two passages, Luke xxii. 27; John xiii. 3 to 14. While we view Christ in those scriptures, as especially referring to him, we may by faith, from our interest in him, take the comfort of them also to ourselves. Reader, think what a blessed thing it is, when, from our union with Christ, we can also say, *I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said thou art my God; my times are in thy hands.* Oh, with what composure may we refer all things, and all times, and all events, into his almighty hands, who is our covenant God and Father in Christ Jesus; times of sickness, times of health, times of trouble, times of joy, life, death, all and every event, for time, and for eternity. Oh, the blessedness of thus having God for our portion!

17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.

18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

If we consider the foregoing verses as referring to Christ and his enemies, how striking are these verses, if read with an eye to Judas and the foes of Christ. Acts i. 18. And may we not take the words still further as holding forth a sure prophecy, to all the enemies of Jesus and his church?

19 *Oh* how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

These words seem to speak the security of the church, in the chambers of the everlasting covenant, into which she is invited to enter in times of trouble. There is laid up, and there will be brought forth in due season, all the blessings of redemption; for it is *a covenant ordered in all things, and sure.* Isaiah xxvi. 20. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

21 Blessed *be* the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

Here we find again a single person speaking, and, no doubt, by the spirit of prophecy, David spoke of Christ. On the cross Jesus so complained; nevertheless, in that complaint, he spoke his trust in the Father. Matt. xxvii. 46.

23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

These words will come home with double strength and recommendation, if we consider them as the words of our adorable Redeemer, dictated by the spirit of prophecy. And who but must love Father, Son, and Spirit, in such views of covenant love, and grace, and mercy, as are treasured up in his person; and secured to all his faithful, to all his redeemed, sinners made saints, and preserved, and called, in Christ Jesus? 1 Cor. i. 2.

REFLECTIONS.

STAND still, my soul, and make a solemn pause over the perusal of this most precious Psalm. Did David, indeed, by the spirit of prophecy, here describe Christ? Was the Holy Ghost so graciously attentive to the interests of the church, as to cause such a treasure to be laid up, concerning the Redeemer's exercises, so many ages before his incarnation? Well then mayest thou regard every portion of it as blessed, and while hearing Jesus, in those exercises, thus pleading with the Father, rejoice in contemplating the gracious fruits of his intercession. Yea, my soul, let such views of Christ, as thy Surety, support thee in all the lesser exercises of thy warfare, and give thee comfort in the assurance, that, as Christ was heard in that he feared, thy prayers in him will come up at all times with acceptance, upon that altar.

And oh! thou blessed Lord, didst thou indeed, in thy suretyship engagements, thus smart for it; and wert thou made a reproach and a derision? Was thy life consumed with grief, and thy years with trouble? Oh Lamb of God! cause me to contemplate with increasing earnestness, and increasing delight, at every renewed view, thy marvellous love in thus exposing thyself to evil for the everlasting happiness of thy redeemed.

And do thou, blessed Spirit, impress upon my mind such a deep sense of the infinite preciousness of Jesus and his salvation, that in him and in his righteousness I may go forth from day to day, humbly casting myself upon the covenant faithfulness of Jehovah, as my strong rock and house of defence against all my enemies. May my soul rejoice in the Lord, and triumph in the God of my salvation. And in all the exercises and events of this short pilgrimage state, may it be my joy that my times are in the Lord's hands: and when he shall appoint the time of my departure, may I be enabled from long acquaintance, long proved and well-founded confidence in the merits and righteousness of Jesus for salvation, to make a full and perfect surrender of soul, body, and spirit unto him, humbly adopting the same blessed words: *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.*

PSALM XXXII.

CONTENTS.

The blessedness of having sin cancelled, and the blessedness of being brought into a state where there is no iniquity, are here both set forth. The joy and comfort of having favour with God, and having God for a hiding place, are also set forth in strong expressions of delight.

A Psalm of David. Maschil.

BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

It is our mercy that we are not left to make our own comment upon

this Psalm without a guide. The Holy Ghost, by his servant the apostle Paul, hath done it to our hands. In the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, in the person and character of Abraham, the great truth here set forth is explained. The blessedness here spoken of, in pardoned sin, and iniquity not imputed, is expressly said to be to that man, *unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*. Hence, therefore, nothing can be more plain, from the Holy Ghost's own explanation, as instanced in the case of Abraham, the great father of the faithful, than that every believer in Christ, as Abraham was, hath his sins covered and Christ's righteousness imputed unto him, though he himself hath wrought no righteousness to entitle him to such mercy. In confirmation of these things so infinitely momentous as they are, I very earnestly beg the Reader to peruse these scriptures: Rom. iv. throughout; John viii. 56.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

I do not presume to say that Christ, as the sinner's Surety, is here speaking: but as the word *Selah* occurs at the close of this complaint, and as the words themselves correspond to some well-known words of Christ, I think it may not be unprofitable to keep our eye upon Christ while we read them. Psm. xxii. 14, 15. But if they are not spoken of Christ by prophecy, yet all the people of Christ may be well supposed feeling their own case more or less described in them.

5 I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

This is a beautiful verse. What a lovely view doth it give of a poor penitent! What a view doth it give of the clemency of God in Christ!

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

Every believer's experience confirms this: Psalm cxlv. 18. And every believer knows also, that many waters cannot quench Jesus's love, neither the floods drown it: Song viii. 7.

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

What a rich verse this is, and what a rich representation is made in it of the Lord Christ, as the hiding place of poor redeemed sinners? In his person, in his righteousness, in his blood, in his salvation, in his power, love, goodness, grace here, glory hereafter, how everlastingly se-

cured are his redeemed ones! Hid from sin, from Satan, from themselves and their own corruptions; from all the accusations of the law, the alarms of conscience, and the justice of Almighty God. Jesus hath sustained all for them, when he became a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. Precious Jesus! be thou to my soul all these, and every thing I want beside; for thou art indeed to all thy redeemed, both as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Isaiah xxxii. 2.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, *which* have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

All these expressions, if accepted in reference to what went before, are to the same effect, and directed to the same purpose. God will guide his people with his counsel, and compass them about with mercy. So that there is always cause for the children of God to triumph; while sinners, unreclaimed, and who refuse divine teachings, will find cause for continual sorrow.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! how very gracious the Lord is, in the blessed provision made against the evil effects of sin and iniquity in our poor fallen nature? How sweet is it to feel the effects of grace leading to repentance. But, Reader! let you and I keep in remembrance, that although a gracious God in Christ, when we confess our transgressions, will forgive the iniquity of our sin; yet this pardon ariseth not for our repentance and confessions, but for the sake of Christ the Lamb of God, who hath taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself. It is not our tears, our repentance, our sorrow, our confession, which entitle us to mercy; for what glory, or what recompence to God's righteous laws, which we have broken by sin, can the Lord find from these and ten thousand more of our endeavours to restore the honour of his holiness and his glory, which by us is impossible? Surely, if we think at all, we cannot but conclude, that there is nothing in us, or in our greatest exertions, which can satisfy divine justice, when we ourselves are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses as filthy rags. But it is Jesus, in his holiness and

covenant righteousness, it is his blood which cleanseth, and his obedience which justifieth, without any other procuring cause on our part, and which brings us into a state of acceptance before God. Reader! are you fully established in these truths? Then will you enter into a real, heartfelt enjoyment of the blessedness this Psalm speaks of. It is indeed most blessed, when in Christ we behold righteousness imputed to us, who are poor sinners in ourselves: and it is most blessed when the load of guilt is taken away, and the sin of our souls is so completely covered, that, like the sin of Judah, though written by nature as with a pen of iron, and given upon the tablet of the heart, yet, by grace in Christ, when sought for, it shall not be found. - God saith, I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. Blessed Jesus! in thee these blessings alone we find. Thou art the Lord our righteousness. Clothe me, holy Lord, with thy garment of salvation, and cover me with the robe of thy righteousness; then will mercy indeed compass me about, and my soul will shout for joy with all the upright in heart.

PSALM XXXIII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here engaged in praise, and this holy joy and thanksgiving is founded upon the consciousness of God's faithfulness, and truth, and mercy. The hymn closeth with a determined trust in God.

A Psalm of David.

REJOICE in the LORD, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright.

There is somewhat very beautiful and gracious in the opening of this Psalm. The man of God cannot be content in blessing Jehovah himself alone, but he calls upon all the redeemed to join in the Hallelujah. And he very properly founds his argument upon the justice of the thing itself, for all the world must confess that the Lord is entitled to the everlasting praises of his creatures. Let all that hath breath praise the Lord; and in an especial manner let the redeemed of the Lord say so, for they have peculiar praises to bring; Psalm cvii. 2.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

I have no doubt but that musical instruments were made use of in the temple service. But still I cannot but think, that somewhat of a higher and more spiritual nature is intended from the frequent account we meet with concerning their use. Surely the stringed instruments of the soul are the only things from whence true melody can be offered to the Lord.

And I venture to believe that the only suitable concert under the New Testament dispensation, is the melody which is wholly spiritual, when true worshippers with one mind and one mouth glorify God. Rom. xv. 6. The new song since David's days hath been published; John heard it in vision; and the Church are enabled to sing it by faith; Rev. v. 9, 10.

4 For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Here, Reader, is a song, that all the New Testament saints may sing, in which God hath found out a way whereby his justice and mercy harmonize in the redemption by Christ Jesus. Psalm lxxxv. 10, 11.

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

Do we not discover Christ, the uncreated Word, and the Holy Ghost, the breath or spirit of every living thing, in this verse? Reader! if it be so in the old creation of nature, think, I pray you, whether it be not so also in the new creation of grace? And what an additional evidence is here found to the same glorious truth through all the Bible. Ephes. iii. 9. Gen. i. 2, 3. Oh! what an hymn of praise ought to burst forth from every heart to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the joint agents in creation, redemption, and all our mercies, in time and to all eternity!

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in store-houses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it *was done*; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

From the kingdom of God in the works of nature, the Psalmist here turns to the contemplation of his government in the kingdom of his providence. What a sweet thought is suggested here to God's redeemed and exercised family, in the consciousness of the Lord's over-ruling power. No counsel but God's can stand. Think of this, my brother, under any overbearing oppressions of the mighty: They may plan, they

may threaten, they may for a while seem to exercise a high hand; but Jesus looks on: and whoso toucheth one of his little ones, toucheth the apple of his eye. Zech. ii. 8.

12 Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 An horse *is* a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.

What a beautiful advance the Psalm makes, in still going on through the courts of nature and of providence, to that of grace. How blessed indeed must be the Church and people, who have the Lord for their God! There is nothing else to give happiness or security. The strength of horses or chariots, the strength of a host or an army, the power of kings or giants, nay, of all mighty men; what can be the whole of creatures, whose breath is in their nostrils? But in Jesus there is everlasting strength, and therefore the prophet sings aloud, Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed; Isaiah xlv. 24.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Do not these verses sweetly follow the former, as an application of the blessed doctrine there expressed? If unfolded and explained in a gospel strain, do they not in effect say, Behold and take notice, every individual of you that are the Lord's heritage, the eye of Jesus is always upon you; his arm is stretched forth to your protection, help, and deliverance. In times of temporal and spiritual famine, Jesus will keep both body and soul alive: your bread shall be given, and your water shall be sure. He that is your God, will be, and is all that you can need. Isaiah xxxiii. 16.

20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he *is* our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

And do not these verses give back the answer of the Church, and of every individual believer, as if they cried out with one response, Amen, to so much proffered mercy? Yes! the Lord is both a sun and a shield. He that now gives grace will by and by give glory. And observe, Reader, the joy of the believer is because he trusteth in the holy name of God in Christ. Our safety is in Jesus; and our joy is when we have a believing trust in Jesus. And, indeed, if this would not bring joy, nothing would. This makes the soul of the believer not only assured that heaven is his own, because Jesus is his own: but he rejoiceth now in the hope of, and anticipates by present possession, the glory that shall be revealed, because Jesus is his portion. And this, no doubt, is what Paul the apostle meant, when he prayed for the Church, that the God of hope might fill them with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. xv. 13.

22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

We never can sufficiently admire the beauty and comprehensiveness of this prayer. It is a prayer of faith, and includes almost every petition that can be offered, because it looks to Jesus, as the mercy looked for, the mercy promised. Luke i. 72. It forms the richest conclusion to the whole hymn of this Psalm. It is as if the Church had said, We know, Lord, that thine eye is always upon us; and we know that thou hast delivered thy people, and thou dost deliver them, and thou wilt still deliver them; and thou wilt be every thing to them they need in time, and to all eternity. Now, Lord, in a believing expectation that all these blessings are in him that is the Mercy promised, the Messiah, the Jesus which is to come, thine Old Testament saints will live and die in the full enjoyment, by faith, of this great covenant blessing. Let our God come even as we do wait his coming. Song ii. 17. Reader! and what ought to be the language of New Testament saints, in closing this hymn of praise, and faith, and dependence, who have seen that mercy promised actually fulfilled, but still increasing bursts of holy joy, adoration, love, and confidence? Hail, Lord Jesus! thou art the Mercy promised. We bless thee in thy *first* coming with all thy finished work of redemption: and we desire to live and die in the full assurance and expectation of thy *second* coming, when that hope we have in thy salvation will be swallowed up in absolute enjoyment, and we shall live with thee, and enjoy thee for ever!

REFLECTIONS.

LET every justified soul rejoice in the Lord, and rejoice always, for surely the rich redemption of Jesus is enough to fill all hearts that are the partakers of it with praise. But, my soul! what hast thou learned of this sacred and hallowed song? Canst thou go over the several parts of it with an eye to thine own interest in it, and make the responses, as thou goest along, from a real heartfelt and personal enjoyment of it? Thou canst sing indeed of *creation*, for the Lord in mercy hath called thee

into existence, and thou canst testify, as this Psalm of praise records, that by the word of the Lord the heavens were made; and by his Spirit hath he garnished the heavens. Thou canst sing of his *providence* also, for his counsel must stand, and the Lord will perform all his will. Thou canst sing of *grace* no less, because thou hast seen how the Lord led out Israel, blessed him as a nation, and chose him as a people for his own inheritance. But, my soul, though these subjects are blessed aids to call forth hymns of continual praise; the question is, what part dost *thou* thyself bear in it? If, as this Psalm records, the Lord looketh from heaven and beholdeth all the sons of men; if the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and upon them that hope in Jesus, the mercy promised; hast thou a well-grounded hope and assurance that his eye is upon *thee* in grace, because thou art hoping in Jesus? Pause, my soul! Art thou acquainted with God's mercy in Christ? Hath he delivered thy soul from spiritual death, in having found a ransom for thee to keep thee from going down to the pit? Hath he kept thee alive in famine, both before thou knewest him in grace, and now in the numberless instances since thou hast known him in mercy, when thy fears have been alive, and thy hopes dying from unbelief, and the temptations of the enemy? O then, my soul, if these things be so, and thou canst set to thy seal that God is true, look up to Jesus, look up to thy God and Father in him, and under the continued influences of the Holy Ghost, daily, hourly, adopt this sweet prayer of faith, and tell thy God that thy hope is in him; and never can any wait long for his blessing, who live upon Jesus's mercy. See, Lord, my expectation is alone in Jesus: and therefore, Jesus, be thou with me and upon me, according as my hope is in thee. Amen.

PSALM XXXIV.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is celebrating divine goodness through the whole of this Psalm, and from his experience calling upon the whole Church to engage in the same delightful employment.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

I WILL bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

If we read this Psalm with an eye to David King of Israel, we shall find great light thrown upon it by turning to the history of David to which the title refers, 1 Sam. xxi. 10—15. If we read it with an eye to David's Lord, of whom David was a type, and to whom he ministered as a prophet, we must turn to the Evangelists, and behold the deliverance of Christ from the powers of darkness at his resurrection. And if we read it as applicable to every true believer in Christ, in all his escapes from sin, and his final triumph over death and the grave; we must still consider the believer in Christ as only conquering in his name, and triumphing in his salvation. What I would recommend the Reader therefore to do through the whole of this Psalm, in order that he may enter into the enjoyment of the precious things in it, is (what I desire

grace to do myself,) to keep a steady eye on Jesus, and in his triumphs and victories to take part. This will be (as the Psalmist expresses it in another place) to rejoice in his salvation, and in the name of our God to set up our banners. Psalm xx. 5.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

It is a blessed way so to praise God as to invite others to the same practice by our example; and when we not only invite by action, but by winning words. And the best evidence produced by way of propelling others to the praise of the Lord, is, when a soul can say, I have found him gracious. But Reader! is not Christ here strongly featured? Did not Jesus seek to the Lord, when, in the days of his flesh, he cried, and was heard in that he feared? Here then we find Christ. And what inference doth the Apostle make from this view of Christ? Why (saith he) he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. And being called of God an High Priest, in that he himself hath suffered; being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Heb. v. 7, 8. Heb. ii. 17, 18.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Is not Christ emphatically here spoken of? Is he not the same poor man as Solomon hath spoken of also? Eccles. ix. 14, 15.

7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

The ministry of angels is a very pleasing thought. Heb. i. 14. Acts xii. 6—11. But, Reader! let us ever keep in view the angel of the covenant, even He who is indeed both the covenant itself, and the messenger, administrator, and the whole of it.

8 O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him.

9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him.

10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*.

All these verses are beautiful representations of the fulness; suitability, completeness, and all-sufficiency of a God in Christ to answer all the wants of his people. And is there not a vast elegance in the compa-

rison taken from the hunger and rapacity of the lion, even the impetuosity of the young lion, to that of the patience and silent waiting of the faithful believer? A life of faith will find food in every thing, because it is all founded in Christ. The young lions may, and will lack, because nothing will supply their voracious appetites but that which is carnal.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 What man *is he that* desireth life, *and loveth many* days, that he may see good?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

How exceedingly to be desired is it, that those who set up for instructors of children would adopt David's plan, and instead of useless sciences, falsely so called, teach that happy science, the only one truly to be esteemed, so to know and to fear the Lord. These are all charming precepts, and when souls are brought under divine teachings, and feel the divine influence, it is blessed to have so learned Christ as to put off the old man which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephes. iv. 20—24.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry.

16 The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

May we not, indeed ought we not to behold Christ as our Mediator, when reading, in this and similar passages of scripture, of the Lord's looking upon us, and his ears being open to our cry, and his countenance being upon us? I beg the Reader to observe, that I do not positively assert any thing on subjects of this mysterious nature. But I speak with all possible reverence when I say, I venture to believe that it is of Christ as our Mediator, God and man in one person, that these scriptures treat, which thus ascribe to God human parts and human actions. Not of Jehovah, as Jehovah alone, but of Him who is both God and man, and our glorious, gracious, lovely, and all-loving Redeemer. And I must further add upon this subject, that thus read and accepted, the words, like similar ones in various parts of the Bible, open the most blessed views of our Jesus; and open also a door for seeking sweet communion and fellowship with Christ, from the several near and dear connections in which he hath condescended to put himself with our nature, as our Brother, Husband, Surety, and the like, over and above what Jehovah hath engaged for and promised, in the everlasting covenant of redemption.

1 *The righteous* cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

These are all so many charming additions of the security and blessedness of the people of God, and so plain as to need no comment.

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

I detain the Reader at this verse to fix his eye upon Christ. It was never said of any other but the paschal Lamb; and this the apostles John and Paul declare to mean Christ, that *not a bone of him should be broken*. Many of God's dear children have gone to heaven with broken bones. So that it is Christ, and Christ alone, who is the righteous person, and God's Holy One here spoken of. Exod. xii. 46. John xix. 36. 1 Cor. v. 7.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Mark, ~~my~~ soul, the striking contrast between the unreclaimed and the regenerate. The one must be slain by the sin unpardoned, unsubdued, and which will prey for ever upon the vitals like a canker. The other must be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, because Christ hath redeemed his people from the curse of the law, and from the evil of sin, by the sacrifice of himself. Gal. iii. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! think how gracious God the Holy Ghost is, in calling again and again upon the Church to view Christ in his ministry and in his triumphs, to prompt all his redeemed to triumph in him and through him, when the Lord at any time gives new cause for praise. And shall not you and I, in Jesus's name and righteousness, take up the same language? Is there a day, or a portion of a day, but what we find cause to say, The praise of a God in Christ shall be continually in my mouth? And shall we not invite the humble and the exercised to come, and magnify the Lord with us, and that we may bless his name together?

Blessed Mediator! let thine eyes be upon thy people for good! Let thine ears be ever open to their prayers! Surely, Lord, thou hast never put thyself into those near and tender connections with our nature for nothing! Thou hast come down to us in the most endearing ties of re-

lationship for this express purpose, that we might come unto thee, and that our eyes may be always up unto thee as the eyes of a servant unto the hand of his master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress! And therefore, blessed Jesus, we would have our whole soul centered in thee, that our faces may never be ashamed.

O Holy Father! thou hast heard the cries of the poor man! thou hast delivered him out of all his troubles. And now, Lord, hear thy redeemed in Jesus. For his sake do thou redeem the souls of his servants, and let our souls never be ashamed nor confounded who trust in him, world without end. Amen.

PSALM XXXV.

CONTENTS.

The prophet David is evidently here typifying Christ and speaking of him. The Psalm is a subject of prayer, with strong faith and assurance. In the close a song of thanksgiving is added.

A Psalm of David.

PLEAD *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

The Psalm opens with powerful pleadings: Christ may be plainly seen here as in the garden. The church, and every individual of it, beholding their interest in Christ, and union with Christ, are authorized to adopt this language. But let the believer always keep in remembrance, that this calling upon the Lord's strength to appear for us, is only so far, and no further than as it is for his cause and his glory; and that it is not as our own personal resentment against our enemies, that such petitions are suitable or becoming. I pray the Reader, as I desire grace for myself, ever to keep this in view. And then, with an eye to Christ, or David, or any other of his church, we shall enter into the full apprehension of the truths here contained, and our concern in them.

2 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

3 Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, *I am thy salvation.*

The last clause in these verses shews the blessedness in what goeth before. If the Lord speak pardon and peace to my soul, he will speak ruin and slaughter unto all mine enemies. Reader! what a precious thought is it that the Lord not only gives salvation, but is himself the soul's salvation.

4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

When the prayer is thus expressed in faith, let the opposers of Christ and his church be confounded, and ashamed, and turned back; it is in other words, they *shall be* so brought to ruin and confusion. And who will not recollect in this place how exactly this prediction was fulfilled in the garden, when the band came to apprehend Christ, and fell to the ground backward? John xviii. 5, 6.

7 For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

Who can be at a loss to discover the blessed Jesus here pointed out. Of him it might be strictly said, it was indeed causeless when the enemies of God's Christ sought his destruction: John xv. 25. And what an awful visitation soon after followed upon Jerusalem. Lord! how slow soever may seem to some men the just judgment of God, yet it doth not slumber. 2 Pet. ii. 3. Eccles. viii. 11.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

Is there not an allusion here to the whole body of Christ, who will all rejoice at length in his great salvation?

11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good, *to* the spoiling of my soul.

I do not think it enough to prove that these words were spoken in a spirit of prophecy, wholly referring to Christ; but I would desire the Reader to remark, with me, the gracious love of the Holy Ghost to the church, in thus keeping up the faith of Old Testament saints, and confirming the faith of New Testament believers, by such continued references to the person and sufferings of their Redeemer. Matt. xxvi. 59—63. John x. 32.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth: I humbled my soul with

fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14 I behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend *or* brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth *for his* mother.

Literally this is true of Christ. For our sickness was unto death. And to recover us did not Jesus clothe himself with the sackcloth of mortality? Did he not fast forty days and forty nights? Did he not both fast and pray, and mourn over us as though we had been friends or brethren, when we were all enemies to God by wicked works? Oh, thou compassionate Lord! Yes! thou wert a brother indeed born for adversity! Thou wert and art a friend at all times, and thou didst, and still thou dost comfort us, as one whom his mother comforted. Prov. xvii. 17. Isaiah lxvi. 13. John xv. 13—15.

15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: *yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:

16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

Look at the cross, and behold this most strikingly fulfilled. Where indeed shall we look for it in the affliction of any other? Matt. xxvii. 39—44.

17 LORD, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

We have a similar cry delivered concerning Christ, by the spirit of prophecy, Psalm xxii. 20, 21.

18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

Reader! do not overlook, I pray you, the tenderness of the blessed Jesus, and his love to his people, even in the deepest sufferings. And do not forget that this congregation is his brethren. For confirmation, see Psalm xxii. 22—25. Precious, kind Redeemer! still thou wilt keep up the remembrance of thy relationship, and still thou wilt own thy brethren, though many of them were among thy murderers, and all by nature enemies to thee. Heb. ii. 11, to the end.

19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20 For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against *them that are* quiet in the land.

21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *it*.

Reader! recollect the peaceable temper and meekness of Jesus: recollect the temper of his apostles and followers: recollect in all ages, and even now ask, what is the temper and pursuit of God's people: is it not that of following peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord? And yet is not hell up in arms against them, and are they not considered as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things? 1 Cor. iv. 13.

22 *This* thou hast seen, O LORD; keep not silence; O LORD, be not far from me.

23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God and my LORD.

24 Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness: and let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so we would have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify *themselves* against me.

27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long.

Christ is frequently in scripture represented as longing for the year of his redeemed, before his coming; and both Christ and the Church longing also for his second coming to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. In that day he will root out of his kingdom all things that offend; and songs of everlasting salvation and joy will then be heard among all his redeemed in glory.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! methinks I would pass by every other consideration while going over this precious Psalm, and overlook all other persons and characters, to contemplate Him, and Him only, who here, under the prophetic inspiration given by God the Holy Ghost to his servant David, is so strikingly set forth! Let us behold him here as our surety, sustaining

every indignity, reproach, and suffering which we merited, and he endured: and as the holy, harmless Jesus, who had done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, appealing for the justice of his cause to his most righteous Father. And while you and I read the sorrowful account, oh! for grace so to take interest in what we read of Jesus, as the Christ of God, as to feel our whole souls drawn out in love and affection to him. Yea, blessed Jesus! I would say, did false witnesses arise up, against thee; did they rail thee to the cross, and insult over thy sacred person in those unequalled seasons of sorrow! Did they add cruelty to injustice, and bid defiance to thy sovereignty, grace, and love; and wert thou thus oppressed, detested, and despised for me and for my salvation? Didst thou indeed give thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not thy face from shame and spitting? And all this for me! Oh! love inexpressible, incomprehensible, and passing knowledge! Henceforth, dear Lord, let me never, never lose sight of thee, and thy patience under sufferings. Give me, I beseech thee, grace in all the little provocations which I meet with in life in following thee and thy glorious cause; give me grace to consider at all times Him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, that I may never be weary nor faint in mind. Lord! let me esteem it my highest honour, my most distinguishing privilege, to be conformed to thee and to thy likeness in all things; that I may know the power of thy resurrection and the fellowship of thy sufferings. And oh! let my tongue speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long.

PSALM XXXVI.

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The Psalmist from his own knowledge here describes the sad state of a fallen nature. He extols the mercy of God. He prays for the continuance of God's loving kindness, and foretells the ruin of the ungodly.

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David the servant of the Lord.

THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

I never read or saw a commentary upon this verse of scripture, but what referred this knowledge of the heart to another's conduct, and not to the Psalmist's own. As if the transgression of my neighbour told me what the heart of another man saith, and not what passeth within. And it is strange that men should thus read the passage in terms the very reverse of what the passage saith. David saith that this transgression of the wicked speaks in his *own heart*. And how then should it be supposed to be another man's? I venture to read the passage literally as it is; and I venture to believe that in doing this the passage describes every truly regenerated christian's experience. Reader! do you not think that in that body of sin and death we carry about with us, even the best and holiest of men (like Paul) feel the workings of sin and cor-

ruption within? And when this is the case doth it not shew, by a believer's experience in what passeth in his *own heart*, how plainly the fear of God is banished from the ungodly and unregenerate?

2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

3 The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.

4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil.

These are the outlines, and but the outlines of a heart, whose imagination is only evil, and that continually. Gen. vi. 5.

5 Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; *and* thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.

6 Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

7 How excellent *is* thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

What a beautiful transition the Psalmist here hath made from the corruption of men, to contemplate the mercy and faithfulness of God? How beautiful also the highly finished comparisons here made of God's righteousness, and judgments?

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Reader! observe the richness, and greatness, and extensiveness of these promises. And observe how sure and certain they are, being all founded in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God the Father is a river, full, plenteous, unceasing, eternal; Psm. xli. 4; Jeremiah ii. 13. God the Son is a river; Song, iv. 15; John, vii. 37, 38. God the Holy Ghost is a river; Isaiah, xlv. 3, 4; John, vii. 39; Rev. xxii. 1.

10 O continue thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come against

me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

This is a beautiful conclusion for faith to make in the contemplation of a corrupt heart, both in ourselves and the ungodly, and in the contemplation also of the healing, cleansing fountain, opened for sin and for uncleanness in the Lord. Where shall a soul convinced of his own dry and barren thirsty soil go to, but to him that is a fountain of life in himself, and hath grace in endless streams to communicate to his people?

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us both pause over the contents of this Psalm, and let us ask ourselves whether our own transgressions and daily shortcomings, have brought us to the same conclusion as the Psalmist? It is a blessed experience and among the first principles of a cure for disease, as well spiritual as bodily, when we are led to discover in what the disease consists. Yea, Reader! if the Holy Ghost hath convinced of sin, then transgression within our own heart will say, and say it too sometimes in a daring manner, the fear of God is for a while lessened. Alas! what is man, what is every man by sin?

Reader! let us both look to him where alone is our remedy. It is wholly with Jesus, in Jesus. He is indeed the fountain of life, the fountain for pardon, for sin, and for all uncleanness. Oh! for grace to be seeking to him continually. Depend upon it, my brother, the more we come, the more we seek, the more we draw, the faster will flow the streams from that spring, which is inexhaustible, unchangeable, eternal. Lord, be thou in me a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life!

Lord! I beseech thee, fulfil that blessed promise of being abundantly satisfied with the fulness of thine house. Oh! Lord, what can satisfy the desires of an awakened soul, but thyself? Life in thee, and communion with thee, unceasing enjoyment of thee, and unceasing and increasing desires after thee; these, Lord, are the longings of my soul: and do thou, Lord, grant me to be, according to this sweet promise, both satisfied, and abundantly satisfied, during a pilgrimage state here, in this dry and barren wilderness, until thou shalt bring me to the fountain-head of everlasting enjoyment with the church above; where, when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall indeed be satisfied with thyself, and in thee find an eternal fountain of joy for evermore. Amen.

PSALM XXXVII.

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This Psalm is a psalm of instruction. It should seem that God the Holy Ghost was graciously pleased to make use of his servant the pro-

phet's pen, to give suitable information to the church, concerning the prosperity of the wicked, and the apparent distress of the righteous.

A Psalm of David.

FRET not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

The prosperity of sinners, and the distresses of good men, have been in all ages a stumbling-block even to the faithful. The prophet Jeremiah puts it down as an undeniable conclusion, that God is righteous; but yet desires permission to make an humble inquiry wherefore the way of the wicked should prosper? Jerem. xii. 1, &c. *Asaph* was perplexed much on the same account; Psalm lxxiii. 1, &c. And Job's friends went upon no other conclusion in their ideas of Job's hypocrisy, but from the greatness of his calamities; Job, iv. 7, 8. We cannot therefore sufficiently thank God the Holy Ghost that he hath condescended by this beautiful Psalm to set the doctrine in a clear light, and, before those brighter discoveries made of God's government in the gospel by our Lord Jesus Christ, that he should give the church those blessed views of his attention to the righteous, and sure punishment of the wicked. How very gracious, and kind, and affectionate, doth this Psalm open to this effect, and even in the opening, framing a conclusion similar to the prophet, Isaiah, iii. 10, 11.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.

Reader! do not overlook, however, the person of Christ in what is here said; while the chief scope of the Psalm is to comfort his church, yet recollect that that comfort is, all in, and from Jesus. It is his righteousness which is said to be brought forth as the light. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. But he is made of God to us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. Isaiah lxiv. 6.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall* not *be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall* not *be*.

Jesus is the rest wherewith the Lord will cause the weary to rest; and he that believeth in him will not (for he need not) make haste. Isaiah xxviii. 12. There is a great beauty in the thought of the transitory abode of the sinner. Even while looking upon him, or looking after him, he is gone. Psm. ciii. 15—17.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The Reader will not forget that Jesus hath said the same, and pronounced a blessedness on the meek, Matt. v. 5. But Reader! do not, by looking to the meekness of any follower of the Lord, overlook the source of it, and more especially the meek and lowly Jesus. Yea, Lord! I would pray to learn of thee; for thou art meek and lowly in heart. Matt. xi. 29.

12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The LORD shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.

15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

What an awful day of God will this be. Reader! if you look into the world, and behold the proud man's scorn, and the poor man's oppressed circumstances, recollect what is here said: The day is coming. Man hath seemingly *his* day. But the Lord certainly hath *his*. And oh! what woe, what accumulated woe to the wicked, when God riseth up in judgment.

16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

22 For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

These verses are all so plain, that, as they need no explanation, so an attempt to do it would only enervate their own pure and decisive language. A little with Christ is beyond millions of riches without him. Reader! look diligently in all your enjoyments, whether Jesus be in them, and whether those enjoyments be real enjoyments, because of finding the Lord Christ in them.

25 I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed *is* blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

This is a charming observation, founded on long experience, from youth to age: never was it known that the Lord forsook his redeemed. But, Reader! without my observing it, surely it will strike you, as it doth me, that the begging of bread means somewhat of more importance than the bread that perisheth; for many of God's people have been driven to great straits and difficulties, by reason of outward circumstances of poverty. But if read with an eye to that bread which Jesus bandeth in secret, and which none knoweth save he that receiveth; even in the deepest want the soul can say, in the language of his master, I have bread to eat that the world knows not of. Rev. ii. 17. John, iv. 32. I detain the Reader just to remark on this last verse, concerning the mouth of the righteous, that it is the righteous One, even God's holy One, that is here spoken of, and of whom, as the following verse saith, the law of his God is in his heart, or in his bowels, wrought up and forming part of his very nature. Psalm xl. 8.

31 The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree.

36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that man is* peace.

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD: *he is* their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

I have not interrupted the progress of these verses from the same reason as before: they contain so many beautiful repetitions of the same unquestionable truth; the wicked shall not go unpunished, neither shall the faithful go unnoticed. But let the Reader take with him the cause of the good man's safety and security, as expressed in the last verses; namely, that the salvation of every believer is of the Lord. Jesus is

their righteousness, and their hope, and their trust; and it is he that will save them. He will rest in his love, and rejoice over them with joy and singing. Zeph. iii. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! from the perusal of this blessed Psalm, take the apostle's words as the best conclusion from the whole, and subscribe to the doctrine, as a doctrine perfectly conclusive and unquestionable: *Godliness is profitable unto all things; it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

Oh! ye children of sin, wherefore do ye oppress the righteous? Why is it that ye enlist yourselves under the banner of Satan? Why should you wear his livery, engage in his service, and oppose Christ and his little ones? What are your wages now? And what will be the just judgment of Almighty God hereafter?

Oh! ye feeble souls, who bear the image of Christ, and are persecuted for righteousness sake! What though enemies surround you, and the world, and sin, and Satan, sometimes make you afraid; be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. In the mean time, see that ye live by faith. Lay hold of the hope that is before you, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith. Think of him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in mind. The hour hasteneth, (nay the judge is at the door,) when those Egyptians which now harass you shall be seen by you no more. Be patient; stablish your heart; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

PSALM XXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

Here is another of those blessed portions of the divine word, in which the Prophet speaketh much of Christ. The whole Psalm is a continued petition, in which Jehovah is appealed to for compassion.

A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

In the very opening of this Psalm, I beg the Reader's particular regard to the title of it, and that with an eye to Christ. *A Psalm to bring to remembrance.* What is worthy to be so done, but what concerns the Lord Jesus? Is not the Holy Ghost said by Christ himself to be his remembrancer? John, xiv. 26. And is not this act of bringing to remembrance among the sweetest and most blessed offices of the Holy Ghost? If we therefore look to the Holy Ghost as the Author and Giver of his own scripture, and this Psalm among the rest; and if we can clearly trace Christ as set forth in this Psalm; do we not then enter into a full apprehension of the gracious purpose for which it was written,

and for what special design the object of it is intended, in bringing to the remembrance of the church all things which refer to the person and work of the Lord Jesus, as well as all things whatsoever Jesus himself hath said unto us? I do not presume to decide upon this point; but I venture to throw out the views I have of it in this light. And if I do not greatly err, I humbly conceive we shall find, as we prosecute the perusal of this Psalm, much indeed to bring to remembrance concerning the Lord Christ, if the Holy Ghost graciously condescends here, as in numberless other instances, to be the kind remembrancer in our hearts of what is here recorded in relation to him. If we consider the prophet describing in this first verse the Lord Christ, we may behold him as our Surety, bearing our sins, and carrying our sorrows; and as such the apostle represents him in the days of his flesh, offering up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears. Heb. v. 7. Reader! we shall be so far from lessening the interest we have in what is here said, in our cries and groans under the conscious sin of our nature from thus looking unto Jesus, that, under God's grace, it will call forth a more awakened concern at every petition, when we behold what sin hath done in calling forth the agonies of the Son of God. And a conscious interest in him, and union with him as our Surety, will give energy to all our prayers upon this and every other occasion. And how truly interesting is it to behold Christ with an eye of faith thus praying; and to hear him with the ear of faith thus pleading; when enduring that curse which the law denounced against the sinner, and thus redeeming us from the curse by becoming both sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither *is there any* rest in my bones because of my sin.

4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease*: and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

9 LORD, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

Let any man read these verses, and then turn to the gospel, and his mind must be led out to remark the striking similarity between what is here said by the spirit of prophecy, and the history of the sorrows and sufferings of Jesus. Reader, turn to some few passages, and then pause over both, in comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and say whether David spake these things of himself, or of some other man? Luke, xxii. 41—44; Mark, xiv. 32—34: then read the Holy Ghost's own comment of one servant's writings by another servant's expounding, and all with an express reference to Jesus, Acts, viii. 32—35.

11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

Look at the cross, and behold Jesus's relations and disciples indeed standing afar off. Angels might well have done the same, for none but the arm of God could bear up the burden of sin. Matt. xxvi. 56.

12 They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

Here again look at the gospel. Mark xiv. 12. Luke xxii. 3—6.

13 But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not; and I was as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.

14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.

Who that ever read the prophet's account of Him, that as a sheep before her shearers was dumb, so he opened not his mouth; or who that ever read the relation of Jesus standing before Pilate, when, amidst all the blasphemy poured upon him, he remained silent, until the unjust judge himself marvelled; or who that ever attended to what the apostle hath said of Jesus, that when he was reviled, he reviled not again; who, I say, that ever attended to these things, could hesitate for a moment to behold the Lord Christ in this prophetic description of him? Surely no one that knows any thing of David's history, will give him credit for this dumbness and insensibility to the reproaches of his enemies. No! thou patient suffering Lamb of God, it is thou, and thou only, who wert able to endure such a contradiction of sinners against thyself. Isaiah, liii. 7. Matt. xxvii. 12—14. 1 Pet. ii. 23. Heb. xii. 3.

15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope; thou wilt hear, O LORD my God.

16 For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me.

17 For I *am* ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.

It is blessed, and it is precious to see Christ thus rolling himself, if I may so say, upon God the Father in his trials, because it comes in as a confirmation of all the covenant-engagements concerning redemption, between the Persons of the Godhead. Isaiah, xlii. 4. Psm. lxxxix. 20—26. Hence Psm. xxii. 18, 19.

18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

Let not these words stagger the faith of the believer in considering them as spoken by Christ. As the sinner's Surety, he was truly made sin for his people, so the scripture declares, yea, also a curse for them. Hence, in the eye of the law, Christ and his seed are one. Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21.

19 But mine enemies *are* lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow *the thing that good is*.

21 Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.

22 Make haste to help me, O LORD, my salvation.

I need not enlarge on these verses, they all express the same blessed truths, and bear a gracious correspondence to the whole tenor of this Psalm. Jehovah is the salvation of his people, and Christ is the salvation of Jehovah's appointment to the ends of the earth. Psm. xxvii. 1. Isaiah, xlix. 6.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! how blessed is it to behold the attention of God the Holy Ghost to the interests and happiness of the Church in all ages, in thus keeping alive the grand and leading points of redemption by the Lord Jesus in the minds of the people. Well might this Psalm be called a Psalm of remembrance, since it treasureth up so many tender and affectionate particulars concerning the Lord Christ. I would say for myself as I peruse it, to God the Holy Ghost: Blessed Lord, I thank thee for so precious a record in the Old Testament scripture concerning my Lord. And I would add, Do thou, blessed Lord, be the frequent remembrancer to my poor forgetful soul, of all the precious things which relate to my God and Saviour.

Reader, is Jesus here set forth! Is it indeed He of whom the prophet speaks? Oh! then for faith in this blessed surety to find deliverance

from all the sins, sorrows, and punishments due, and justly due, to God's broken law. Oh! for grace and faith in lively exercise to believe the record which God hath given of his dear Son. Oh! for faith so to receive the blood and righteousness of Christ, and plead it at all times, and upon all occasions before the throne, as the very righteousness in which my soul now lives, in which my body will die, and in which both soul and body shall appear before God, and be clothed in, to all eternity.

Precious blessed Jesus! now I see how it is, and why it is, that thou art, as the Christ of God, so suited and so desirable to every poor, awakened, convinced, and broken-hearted sinner. Thou hast stood in our stead. Thou hast borne our sins in thine own body on the tree. Thou hast died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Oh! the beauties, the glories, the loveliness of Jesus! Let others glory in what they may; let others boast in what they will; be thou all my rejoicing, all my confidence, all my hope, my righteousness, my joy! This is the sum and substance of all my happiness here and for ever. *The Lord is my strength and my song, and he also is become my salvation.*

PSALM XXXIX.

CONTENTS.

This is a mournful Psalm, on the sorrows and uncertainty of life, full of pious breathings on death, and the solemn consequences of it. The Psalm closes in prayer.

To the chief Musician, *even* to Jeduthan. A Psalm of David.

I SAID, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, *even* from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

What a beautiful and lovely example doth Jesus hold forth of silence, not only in the sight, but under the reproaches of the ungodly! Oh! for grace to be always keeping in view him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our mind. Heb. xii. 3.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: *then* spake I with my tongue.

We see here the profitableness of silence towards man, for it tended to receive the descendings of grace in leading the mind out in devout meditation towards God. How lovely are the kindlings of the Holy Spirit, and what blessed effects do they induce! Isaiah, xli. 1.

4 **LORD**, make me to know mine end, and the

measure of my days, what it *is*; that I may know how frail I *am*.

5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

What a devout prayer this is, and what blessedness is intended in the discovery. Observe what the object of the petition is; not to know the hour of death, or the place of departure, or the means God in wisdom might appoint to produce the termination of life; these were not the subjects the Psalmist had in view; but that grace might so impress his mind with a sense of the frailty of life's tenure, that an habitual preparation, like a pilgrim on his journey, might make him always ready for the call. How sweetly and affectionately Jesus enforceth this, when he saith, *Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.* Matt. xxiv. 44.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

7 And now, LORD, what wait I for? my hope *is* in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst *it*.

10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I *am* a stranger with thee, *and* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

I have made no break or interruption in these verses, because the subject through the whole is one and the same. Under several very striking and elegant similitudes, the Psalmist in his prayer shews the shortness of life, and the vanity of all earthly things to satisfy the desires of the

soul; and from hence takes occasion to seek an interest in the favour and love of God, to guide him, as a stranger and a sojourner, safely home through the whole of the wilderness state. And no doubt, if this prayer be read with an eye to Christ, who alone can give us to inherit substance, and fill our souls with durable riches and righteousness, this will be to convert the vanity of our present state into the means, under God, of procuring substantial good, and over-ruling the shortness of our existence, into the greater opportunity of obtaining in Christ an everlasting duration, in an inheritance that fadeth not away.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let our improvements on this solemn meditation of the Psalmist, (for we are all, as men, equally interested in it,) lead out our thoughts upon the same necessary subject. Have we ever lifted the earnest supplication like him unto God for grace, so to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom? Have we so counted ourselves for strangers and sojourners upon earth, as like sojourners only to make Christ our home, our resting place, our one only pursuit, our one only desire? My brother! I would say, are you a stranger upon earth? Then surely your plan of life, your pursuit, your conversation, your daily walk, will be as the pilgrim, foreign to all the customs, manners, habits, pleasures, and delights of those around. If a sojourner only, then this is not your home, nor are these objects worth your regard. Are you then asking for the good old way the holy fathers trod? Are you seeking the way to Zion with your face thitherward? Is Jesus the pearl of great price, God your Father, the Holy Spirit your guide, the church of Christ your inn, the ordinances of the gospel like waggons on the road to refresh you, and the holy sabbaths like so many wells of salvation to draw from? Oh! how blessed is it to sit loose and detached from all things here below, that we may have our conversation in heaven, that while going home to our Father's house we may use the world as not abusing it, knowing that the fashion of it passeth away; and, like the patriarchs, may be always on the look-out for that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

PSALM XL.

CONTENTS.

This is altogether a gospel Psalm; and most certainly, from the authority of the Holy Ghost, we may safely conclude that here the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, guided and directed the pen of David to speak of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow. We have here the Lord Christ described by the prophet, as speaking in his divine office, both as the High Priest and the sacrifice offered to God.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

I WAITED patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

I cannot but imagine that we sadly overlook the design of God the Holy Ghost in this most sublime Psalm, when we apply any part or portion of it to David king of Israel. That David was an eminent type of Christ in many instances, there can be no doubt; but never as a sacrifice; and here Christ is represented wholly in that character. Observe how the Psalm opens. Here is the mire and the clay, the wormwood and the gall. And here is the patient sufferer calling out from thence, and still staying himself with humble waitings on his Father. Now who that reads Christ's agony in the garden, and hears his dolorous cry, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, can look at these things without being struck with the vast similarity? Who that recollects what the apostle hath said concerning Christ, that when in the days of his flesh he offered up strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared, can hesitate in concluding that the prediction and the history are one? Heb. v. 7.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Was not this the case both with Christ and his church, when Jehovah raised the body of Christ from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might? Ephes. i. 20, 21. And were not many convinced by the Holy Ghost of the truth as it is in Jesus, brought over to the interest of God and of his Christ, and made followers of God as dear children? Acts, ii. 41.

4 Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

What a blessed testimony is here found in the Old Testament church concerning the whole New Testament dispensation. By him, that is Christ, all that believe are justified from all things. Acts, xiii. 39. And who is there that doth not feel his whole soul constrained into the same acknowledgment, as is here expressed under a sense of divine mercy; who indeed is able to express the noble acts of the Lord, or shew forth all his praise? Psalm cvi. 2.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire;

mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

The Holy Ghost would not suffer the church to make her own comment upon this most momentous passage; but by his servant the apostle Paul (Heb. x. 5—14.) hath very fully done it himself; and plainly and decidedly declared that it wholly refers to Christ. Nay, that it is Christ himself speaking these words in his own person. It would form the subject of a volume, rather than the limits of a work like this, to enter at large upon the many blessed and interesting things here spoken of Christ. I must observe shortness. But I pray the Reader to notice how Christ speaks of the inefficacy of all sacrifices but that one which is himself. It is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin; and yet without shedding of blood there is no remission. Somewhat Christ must have therefore to offer, since He is to be the one all-sufficient sacrifice, by which he will for ever perfect them that are sanctified. This then being the case, that sacrifice Jehovah did not desire, and yet that this great High Priest must have somewhat to offer, *mine ears* (saith Christ) *hast thou opened*, or as the Holy Ghost in the parallel passage expresses it, *a body hast thou prepared me*. The terms are the same. In the *former* text the appointment of Christ as Mediator, as servant to Jehovah, in the great work of redemption, is declared by an allusion to a custom in the Jewish church, that when a servant was so attached to his master, and wife, and family, as to determine to remain in his service for ever, his ear was to be bored at the door post. See Exod. xxi. 6. Hence the prophet Isaiah, chap. l. 5. And in the *latter* passage by a body being prepared for Christ, is intimated that the hand of God our Father was in all the transaction. It was God who set him forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood. Rom. iii. 25.

Was there ever a scripture more plain and express to testify the appointment of God the Father, and the free consent of the Lord Jesus, in thus giving himself an offering for sin? Yes, blessed Jesus! it might be truly said by thee, as Mediator of thy church, and the husband of it, I love my master, my wife, my children, I will not go out free. And as in this place, when neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice could go a step towards the expiation of sin; then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God. Yes! indeed it was written no doubt in the secrets of that book which none was found worthy to open but thyself. It was none but thou, blessed Jesus, that couldst open the book, or proclaim the contents of it; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Rev. v. 2—9. I detain the Reader just to remark that the expression, *thy law is within my heart*, might be rendered thy law is in the midst of my bowels. And indeed so it is rendered in the margin of our old Bibles. By which may be understood that so holy and sanctified was, and is, the whole nature

of Christ, that the holy law of God, and the holy nature of Christ, were one and the same. Precious thought to the believer! Reader! do not forget it. Thy Redeemer's nature was altogether pure. And such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Heb. vii. 26.

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

Reader! do observe two grand things here mentioned. *First*, Christ is the Preacher of his own gospel. Having performed the office of a priest, he is also the prophet of his church. And *secondly*, do observe moreover what Christ preacheth, namely righteousness, God's righteousness. Yes! this was the office to which the Most Holy was to be anointed, when he had finished transgression, and made an end of sin, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and which righteousness was to be unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. Compare Isaiah, lxi. 1, with Luke iv. 18. Compare Daniel, ix. 24, with Romans, iii. 12. And how truly lovely is it, when we hear Christ by the spirit of prophecy in this Psalm declaring, that he hath preached it, that he did not hide it in his heart, nor conceal the Father's loving-kindness and truth from his redeemed, both Jew and Gentile, which are the great congregation; and then turn to the gospel, and behold the Lord Jesus, in the days of his flesh, going about preaching salvation, and when returning to glory, giving a commission to his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark, vi. 56; xvi. 15.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

Some have thought that these are the words of David king of Israel, speaking in his own person, and seeking for mercy in Christ. But certainly there is no authority for the supposition. No one can think so of what went before. Indeed no one ever hath, because the Holy Ghost himself hath determined that they are the words of Christ, as hath been shewn by the parallel passage in Hebrews, x. 5, &c. And as there is

not the smallest change of person, but the continuation of the same speaker, and in the same address to Jehovah, it should seem to be a violence to the words, to apply them to David. And wherefore apply them to David. Not surely because the pleader speaks of trouble compassing him about, and his iniquities having taken hold of him. These things, so far from being unsuitable to the holy Jesus, are the very things which we might reasonably suppose he would speak of, and consequently his holy soul would feel most painful. And when we consider that as our surety he bore our sins and carried our sorrows, how very reasonable is it to expect, that these cries of the Son of God should be at the very time in which he is set forth as a sacrifice for them. Yes, blessed Jesus! to my view it is sweet, it is precious; it is just what a poor sinner like myself would find comfort and encouragement in, the beholding the Son of God borne down with sins not his own, and groaning under a pressure which would have crushed all the angels of light, if they had taken it upon them. Oh how lovely is Christ in this appearance! Surely the very name is as ointment poured forth to my soul! Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Gal. iii. 13.

14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.

17 But I *am* poor and needy, *yet* the LORD thinketh upon me: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

See, Reader, with what confidence Jesus beholds the travail of his soul. His enemies, and the enemies of his church, must be destroyed. This is in the covenant. I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him, Psalm lxxxix. 23. And, Reader, never fail to connect with this victory of Jesus, the sure conquest of his people over all their enemies. Read two promises only, out of numbers which might be brought, in Mark, xvi. 17, 18, and Rom. xvi. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! here look at Jesus with a steady fixed eye, until thou goest forth with all the affections of love, praise, thanksgiving, and every testimony of obedience, after him, and unto him, who so loved thee, as to give himself for thee, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour!

Blessings be everlastingly given by all the redeemed on earth and in heaven, to God the Holy Ghost, for this sweet scripture, explained as it is to the church in another scripture, by which we are enabled, without the possibility of a mistake, to discover to whom the whole applies. We thank thee, O thou blessed Spirit of all truth, for thus glorifying the Lord Christ to our view, and we beseech thee to supply us here below with continual grace, that we may see Christ our beloved thus sweetly set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood. Here would my soul say, as oft as I look to the cross of Christ, here is every poor sinner's strong hold, here is his sure, his only hope. When neither sacrifice nor burnt-offering would atone, Jesus came to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Blessings be everlastingly given by all the redeemed on earth and in heaven to God the Father, for his unequalled love in the gift of his dear Son. Yes! most gracious God and Father, the holy Church, both in grace and glory, adores thee, not only for raising up this holy One mighty to save, but for setting him apart and constituting him our glorious Head, whereby he hath borne our sins, and through thy gracious appointment his righteousness is ours, and thou, even thou thyself, hast said that this is the name whereby he shall be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'

And blessings be everlastingly given by all the redeemed on earth and in heaven to thee, thou holy, blessed, precious Jesus, for thy merciful, kind, and compassionate undertaking. And when neither the blood of bulls nor goats, nor the sacrifices on a thousand altars, could atone for our guilt, thou camest full of grace and love, and by the one offering of thyself, hast for ever perfected them that are sanctified!

Hail! holy, blessed, gracious, undivided Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! May all the redeemed below praise thee, in the same strain of adoration as the church, above, until both churches join in one to celebrate the glories of redemption in an unceasing hymn of love and thanksgiving through all eternity. Amen, Hallelujah, Amen.

PSALM XLI.

CONTENTS.

Here is another gospel Psalm, and from our Lord's own application of a verse in it to himself, and his own circumstances, we are sweetly taught to whom it belongs. The contents are the Lord's attention over him, and man's treachery against him.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

BLESSED is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

Reader, where shall we look, or to whom direct our inquiry, to discover of whom the Prophet here speaks, unless we look to the blessed and merciful Jesus? He did indeed consider the poor, even our poor, lost, ruined and undone nature, when he came to seek and save that which was lost. He remembered us (as the hymn tenderly expresses it) in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever; Psalm cxxxvi. 23. And

how hath Jehovah delivered him who is fairer than the children of men? Grace is poured into his lips, therefore God hath blessed him for ever. Psalm xlv. 2.

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

Still carrying on the recollection of the blessed Jesus as Christ here primarily and principally considered, do we not find in the whole life of the Mediator, while upon earth, Jehovah supporting him. And though we do not read indeed of Christ's bed of languishing, yet we are told by the Evangelist, that himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses; Matt. viii. 17. Hence we are authorized in the general apprehension both of infirmities and sicknesses, to consider his life, like our own, exposed to all the sorrows and sufferings of it, which he placed himself in our law room, and as our Surety and Representative. While we thus behold Christ in the first and principal sense, as set forth in this Psalm, we may then very safely, as the church in him, and for his sake, be entitled to the same blessings and supports as are here promised. But certainly not else. It is of Christ this scripture treats; and then of his church in him.

4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee?

Here we find a single person speaking; and from what follows in the 9th verse, there can be no hesitation to say it is Christ. Will the Reader pause, and refuse this conclusion, because here is an acknowledgment of sin? I hope not. Jesus had no sin of his own, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. But as the sinner's surety, he stood forth with all the sins of his redeemed upon him. He stood, as the high-priest was commanded, on the day of atonement, to lay all the sins of the people upon the scape goat; so Jesus stood with all the burden of his people's sins upon him, and as the Prophet said, the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. As such, Christ might well be supposed, in the name of his redeemed to say, 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee!' Lev. xvi. 21. Isaiah, liii. 6.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

6 And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; *when* he goeth abroad, he telleth it.

7 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.

8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast upon him: and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

These verses, and especially the 9th, serve to throw a light upon the whole Psalm. Reader, pray remark, with me, the several expressions here contained. Christ speaks in the 5th, 7th, and 8th verses, of enemies; and in the 6th 9th of a single one. Now there can be no difficulty to discover to whom these words refer, since Christ himself, at his last supper, expressly declares Judas to be this single person, and, in direct appeal to this very scripture, saith, it was for the fulfilment of it. See John xiii. 18 and 26. And respecting the numberless enemies of Christ, which, as a body, this Psalm hath in view, the gospel is full of proof. Thus the whole council said, *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe in him. It is expedient that one man should die for the people.* John, xi. 47—53.

10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

11 By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

What a lovely example hath the Son of God shewn where his people are to go, and from whom to seek a refuge, in all times of need.

13 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

These words forms a sweet conclusion, not only to this, but all other situations like the one here described. Several Psalms, with a little variation, close the same: Psalms lxxii lxxxix. cvi. And it should seem to be a proper conclusion, both to prayer and praise; for it is becoming at the beginning and close of all our undertakings, in life and death, and to all eternity. Amen,

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let us pause over this Psalm. It will be profitable so to do. Surely Jesus may be seen in it. He was blessed in visiting the sick and needy. He was blessed when, in the debased state of sickness and need, he subjected himself to sorrow for our salvation. He was most

blessed indeed when oppressed with griefs and sorrows; and he was most blessed when, like the good Samaritan, he rescued us from the thievish, hellish cruelty of Satan, who had left us more than half dead when Jesus passed by. And though in the pursuit of those gracious designs he was betrayed both by false friends and open enemies; yet Jehovah pronounced him blessed, and upheld him and carried him through all, and hath now set him before his face for ever. Hail! thou glorious, risen, and exalted Saviour! Men shall be blessed in thee; and all nations shall call thee blessed.

Blessed and adored Redeemer! grant thy people grace to follow thy bright example. Lord, cause us to sympathize with all thine exercised and afflicted ones. Make it our delight and our joy to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Oh! for grace to give the cup of cold water, when we have nothing better to offer, in the name of a disciple, and to love all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

PSALM XLII.

CONTENTS.

In this Psalm we have the devout breathings of the soul towards God, opposed by unbelief and distrust.

To the chief Musician. Maschil for the sons of Korah.

AS the hart panteth after the water brooks,
so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living
God: when shall I come and appear before
God?

The Psalm opens with the view of a soul panting after enjoyment and communion with God in Christ. And the most lively images are made use of to denote the insatiable thirst, and vehement desires of a soul so earnest after God. The hart is beautifully chosen to represent this soul, which, after being chased, by the pursuits of Satan and the world, looks to Jesus alone for those living streams which make glad the city of God. Reader, while we read these words, it would be well to inquire whether our experience bears a correspondence?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night,
while they continually say unto me, Where is thy
God?

What a striking difference is here made between the gracious soul longing after Jesus, and the heart that can take up and rest satisfied with any thing but Jesus. Ordinances will not fill the soul, unless Jesus be found in the ordinances. It is a God in Christ the soul wants; and when this is not experienced, tears will denote the soul's disappointment. And yet those very tears prove that Jesus is still with his people, though, like the disciples at Emmaus, the eye of the soul is holden so as not to know

him. Luke, xxiv. 16. Reader, the tear called forth by grace is like the spiced wine of the pomegranate, Song, viii. 2. If David composed this Psalm, as some have thought, when driven from Jerusalem by the rebellion of his son Absalom, and referred to the taunts of Shimei as he went up the hill of mount Olivet weeping as he went, (2 Sam. xv. 30; and xxxvi. 5—8) still I venture to think, that as this was the very mount, in after ages made sacred by the afflictions of Jesus, we ought to keep in view the master more than the servant, who certainly was in this, as well as in numberless other instances a lively type of Jesus.

4 When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day.

Those are the sweetest remembrances, however mingled with tears, which call back past enjoyments of grace and divine fellowship. What can be more refreshing in a dark hour, when all comfort seems for a season to be withdrawn, than the recollection that in such a place, at such a time, and upon such an occasion, the Lord did manifest himself to my soul? Jacob's Bethel, and Moses's bush, opened sources of relief upon numberless occasions of this sort. Gen. xxxii. 12. Exodus, iii. 2. Deut. xxxiii. 16.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.

The holy mourner seems to have found strength from having given vent to his full soul, and therefore expostulates with himself and his unbelief. What! shall I despond, shall I be cast down, who have found God faithful in all that is past? Will Jehovah be less Jehovah to me than to all his people? Will Christ's suretyship be less blessed to me? has his blood lost its efficacy to cleanse? can his righteousness justify me no more? Oh no! I will believe. I will depend. I have hope and sustaining grace still, though the comfortable views of Jesus's smiles I see not.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

The holy mourner again seems to feel reviving affliction. But the same looking back from Jordan, to the very spot where now arrived, and every step in the path strewed with mercies, again brings up the soul. Mizar bitters, and Mizar sweets, when blended, make a mixture palatable, and more than palatable, to the believer's taste. Reader, depend upon it, the children of Jesus would have lost some of their sweetest views and enjoyments of Jesus, had they never known what difficulties

and crosses the hill of Mizar produced to them. Blessed Lord! those souls are highly favoured of thee, who are most blessed with a conformity to the fellowship of thy sufferings.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

Surely Christ is here. For of whom but him can it be said, that all God's waves went over him. Jonah, as a type of Christ, cried out of the belly of hell. And David typically considered might say the same, but not in himself. Jonah, ii. 2, 3. A deluge of sin, and the vials of God's wrath due to sin, were poured out indeed upon the holy Jesus, as man's surety. But, blessed Jesus! how precious to the souls of thy redeemed is it to know, that many waters could not quench thy love, no, nor all the floods drown it. Song, viii. 7.

8 *Yet* the LORD will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

Every verse seems to change the mourner's situation. Here again he takes comfort. The Lord will give songs in the night, and the day shall manifest his praise.

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 *As* with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

In this confidence he will look up to his rock with joy, and he will look round on the insulting foe with indifference. Doth the foe demand where is now thy God? Where should he be, but always engaged for the defence of his people? Oh! the blessedness of staying upon God in darkness, and trusting in him when the waters of the sanctuary run low. Isaiah, l. 10.

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

Here is a beautiful reiteration of what was said before, and every renewed view of a God in covenant, and every renewed remembrance of a God engaged in covenant, brings with it increasing strength to the soul. I shall praise him now, and I shall praise him for ever. He is, he hath been, and he will be the strength of my soul, and my salvation for ever.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! thou ever living, ever flowing, ever refreshing source, to assuage the thirsty souls of thy redeemed in all their pilgrimage state here below; precious Jesus! be thou to me, as to the church in all ages, a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Thou art indeed in the midst of the throne above, leading thy church to fountains of living waters; but never to overlook or forget thy redeemed in the wilderness below.

No, bountiful Lord! there is enough in thee for all, and nothing can interrupt or cause to intermit even for a moment, thy attention to the thirsty souls of poor sinners. Thou hast said, If any man thirst let him come to me and drink: And, To him that is athirst will I give of the water of life freely. Come, Holy Spirit, and give me that thirst of soul equal to the most vehement desires of the hart for the water-brooks, and cause me to be continually going forth in holy longings after Jesus; and the more he gratifies them, the more may these longings increase, until I appear before the presence of God, and drink my fill of Jesus at the fountain-head of bliss and glory!

And, my soul, I charge it upon thee, this day, cast all thy fears, thy doubts, thine unbelief, cast the whole to the wind; never, never more let these things rob thee of thy confidence in Jesus, neither thy God in Christ of his glory. Jesus hath promised to the thirsty soul a full assuaging of all his longings. Who then will arise to prevent? What shall ever exhaust a full, free, suitable, and all-sufficient Saviour? And if men will not leave the snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of the field, or if the cold flowing waters which come from another place be not forsaken, shall my soul leave Jesus, the rock of ages; or shall the streams which come from the heaven of heavens (which is himself,) be forsaken, or feared, or doubted by me? Oh, my soul! keep a steadfast eye on Jesus. From the depths of thine own unworthiness, weakness, and misery, cry to the depths of mercy in Jesus. Hope thou in thy God, for I shall yet praise him on earth; and by and by eternally praise him in heaven, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

PSALM XLIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is so much like the former, that it appears more like a continuation of it, than a new one. Here are the devout cries of a soul to be led by the Spirit to God, and for faith to rest upon God.

JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

We shall, through grace, take a most effectual method to enter into the spirit of this short but sweet Psalm, if we keep an eye upon Christ while we go through it. If a child of God may be supposed here to rest his cause with God against the ungodly, how much more interesting

is it to consider Jesus as addressing his Father, on the unmerciful and cruel usage of his own people; who, when he came to them as his own, loaded him with scorn and derision, until at length they nailed him to the cross?

2 For thou *art* the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

And here again, while we contemplate God, in all cases of the members of Christ's body, as the God of their strength, all-sufficient and all-effectual to save; we may still, in a more peculiar manner, behold Jehovah as the strength of the Redeemer in the days of his flesh, carrying him, agreeably to his covenant engagements, through all his trials. Psalm lxxxix: 19—21.

3 O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

What a devout fervour is here put forth for the leadings of God's Holy Spirit! And what a blessed object is proposed, for the enjoyment of spiritual light and gracious leadings! Is not Jesus our New Testament altar? And is he not the God of our exceeding joy? Reader, if Jesus be our New Testament altar, as the scriptures plainly testify he is, that sacred name should not be given to any place, however set apart and made solemn for divine service by men. I would call the communion table the communion or ordinance table, or the table of the Lord, but not the altar of the Lord; for Christ alone is the altar, and sacrifice, and everlasting Priest.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

This is a beautiful repetition of what had been said in the foregoing Psalm, in which the humble Petitioner expostulates with his own heart on the unreasonableness of his distrust. He here does what the Lord commanded to be done by his servant the prophet, stirring himself up to take hold of God's strength, to find peace, and comfort, and security in God, and which God saith he shall find. Isaiah xxvii. 5.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! amidst all the exercises of my mind, either from the oppressions of men, the persecutions of the enemy, or the unbelief and corruption of my own heart, let my soul be looking unto thee. Thou

hast been, and still art; the refuge of all thine exercised family, and in thee alone repose is found for every weary, tried, and afflicted soul. And I beseech thee, Lord, by the sweet influences of thy spirit; lead me, and bring me to thyself. Thou art my hiding place, my altar, my sacrifice, my all in all. Most blessed shall I be while I behold myself secretly and mysteriously hid and secured in thy person and righteousness. For what shall come nigh to assault me when thou art my sanctuary and refuge?

Fie, my soul! wherefore didst thou doubt? Who ever put his trust in Jesus and was confounded? Who ever committed himself for acceptance with God the Father to the blood and righteousness of his dear Son, and was sent empty away? Oh! for grace to adopt these precious words, and this well founded resolution in divine strength, which thousands have done before, and thousands have found efficacy in, *Hope thou in God, O my soul, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

PSALM XLIV.

CONTENTS.

We have here the church under a cloud, and in this state appealing to the Lord, in the recollection of former deliverances, for present mercy. It forms an interesting subject, though we are not told to what period of the church it refers, or by whom it was written.

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

WE have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, *what* work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

2 *How* thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; *how* thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

It is one of the best and strongest of all arguments, when pleading for the renewals of divine love, to put the Lord in remembrance of past mercies. It is as if we should say, Shall we despond now, when the Lord hath blessed so often? Shall our hope fail when God's mercies fail not? Reader! think what an additional argument the church hath now to bring on this ground, since God's dear Son came down from heaven. Rom. viii. 32.

4 Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

5 Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.

8 In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

What an unanswerable appeal this is for success in prayer! If God be our king, will he not help and defend his own subjects? And, if we use the same argument in a gospel sense; if Jesus be our Redeemer and hath bought us with his blood, will he not have an eye to his own property? What a charming encouragement the apostle took from hence: Who delivered us (saith he) from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust he will yet deliver. 2 Cor. i. 10.

9 But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.

10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.

11 Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.

12 Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price.

13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

Here is a melancholy state described: and what added to the affliction, the church beheld the Lord's hand in the appointment. Though the Lord's afflictions are always, sooner or later, sanctified afflictions to God's people, yet when the Lord frowns in his providences, the dark cloud is heavier.

15 My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me.

16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

What the church, or an individual of the church, here complains of, is among the painful exercises of all true followers of Christ. When our God is reproached, and when our confidence in him is decided; or when the enemy takes advantage of the exercises of the faithful, and crieth out, Where is now thy God?—these are very sad moments, and put bitterness into the cup of sorrow.

17 All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.

18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;

19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;

21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

The apostle seems to have had this scripture in his view, and referred it to the times in which he lived, when, after pointing out the heavy afflictions the church then endured, he quotes a part of this very passage, Rom. viii. 36. And it is beautiful and encouraging to remark, how contemptuously the apostle speaks of the vain attempts of persecutors to separate from Christ: and what a blessed conclusion he makes, Rom. viii. 37, &c.

23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O LORD? arise, cast us not off for ever.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the earth.

26 Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

These are the strong cries of faith: not that the Lord sleepeth, or is an inattentive spectator to the exercises of his redeemed: He seeth and knoweth all. The great Shepherd of Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. Psm. cxxi. 4. Reader, mark it as a certain thing—The ene-

mies of God and his Christ are never nearer destruction, than when they are most confident of success. Two causes secure this; the Lord's honour, and the safety of his people: and both conspire to produce the desired end. Rom. viii. 28.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, how sweet and blessed is it, in all our exercises, to keep in view the faithfulness of a Covenant-God in Christ. By turning back to the proofs of God's faithfulness to his church, in all ages that are past, and by having recourse to the evidences we ourselves have had of the same, we gather strength to our faith, to form proper conclusions for all that is to come. And oh! how very sweet and blessed it is to exercise faith upon the naked promise of a God in Christ, when nothing remains but the promise. When, as this Psalm saith, the soul is broken in the place of dragons, and we are covered with the shadow of death; then to lay hold of God's own words, his own promises in Christ; and to hang upon what God hath said, knowing what God can do, and what he hath promised he will do; thus giving him the credit of a God, because all the way of the Lord is mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies: this is faith in its best and highest exercises. And when the whole is brought home to the heart in Christ, as the Christ of God; these are the blessed triumphs of faith, and make the soul rejoice, even in the deepest affliction; so that we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Precious Jesus! what everlasting praise must be due to thee, as the author and finisher of our faith, who, through faith, thus enablest thy people to abide by the promises, which in thee are all *yea and amen, to the glory of God by us.*

PSALM XLV.

CONTENTS.

Here is another Psalm of gospel grace and truth, in which the Redeemer of his Church is celebrated in a most illustrious strain of prophecy, as the Husband and Conqueror of his Church. And the Church is also beautifully set forth, as married to her Lord, and adorned with his grace and comeliness.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah,
Maschil, a Song of loves.

The title of this Psalm is the first thing which demands our attention. Some have thought that the word *Shoshannim* means an instrument, and as such is addressed to the chief Musicians of the temple service. But others, and with much greater probability of being right, as it is a Song of loves, and professedly treating of the love of Christ to his Church, make the word *Shoshannim* to mean, Roses or Lilies; thereby corresponding to what Christ himself hath said, *I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley*, Song, ii. 1. And as it is well known that flowers were made use of at nuptial ceremonies among the Jews and this

Song of loves is an *epithalamium*, it should seem that nothing can be more probable.

MY heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

The person writing this Psalm, thus introduceth himself. He professeth to be under divine teaching. Like Elihu, his heart is so full; in inditing this glorious subject, concerning the King, the Messiah, that he is ready to burst. Job, xxxii. 19.

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

Nothing can be more beautiful than this abrupt way of discourse. The prophet sets out with a professed design to speak of the King. But, as if, in the moment he had so intended, the glorious Person, of whom he was going to speak, appeared to his view, he instantly leaves every other consideration, to speak to him himself. And what a rapturous address he makes. He first describes the glories, the beauties, the astonishing loveliness of his person. Though to a carnal eye there was no beauty to desire him, his visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men; yet to an eye truly enlightened, he is the King in his beauty, fairer, as the glorious Mediator, the Head, the Bridegroom, of his church and people, than all the children of men. And, in the Father's view, so greatly beloved, so truly glorious, that grace was poured into his lips. Reader, observe the expression; not simply grace put into his heart, for the holiness and purity of his person, but poured into his lips, that, like the honey, it might drop upon his people; and be for ever communicated to all his redeemed, in an endless perpetuity of all suited blessings here, and glory hereafter. Well might the Church, therefore, cry out, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine, when, in the kiss, grace must be communicated. Song, i. 2. The expression, 'God hath blessed thee for ever,' is a most delightful conclusion to this rapturous verse. Therefore, for this cause, as the glorious Head and Husband of thy Church, Jehovah hath made thee an everlasting source of felicity to all thy redeemed. Men shall be blessed in thee; for there is no blessing out of Christ. All blessings are only blessings as they are in him; thus fulfilling the prophecy, Gen. xii. 3, and confirming the word, Psalm lxxii. 17. Reader, what saith your experience to this precious account of the Lord Jesus? Are you blessed in him? Hath the Lord Jehovah come to bless your soul? If so, depend upon it, it is only in the Beloved. And every one that is blessed in Jesus finds cause to join the apostle in that hymn of praise, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Ephes. i. 3.

3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee.

The prophet having represented the Messiah in the glories and beauties of his person, proceeds to shew him as a Warrior and Conqueror. Before Christ, as the Bridegroom, can possess his bride, the Church, he must rescue her from the captivity of Satan and from the dominion of sin. She is, by nature and by practice, in the bonds of sin and Satan; yea, she is averse to be brought out of either. The Lord Jesus must therefore conquer Satan, rescue her out of his hands, and even rescue her out of her own love of sin, by making her *willing in the day of his power*. Reader, do you know these truths? And are you brought to a saving acquaintance with them in your own experience? Behold, then, the Lord Jesus Christ thus going forth to the holy war, girded with his sword upon his thigh, as the mighty God of Jacob! The sword of our almighty Conqueror is his Word, the Scriptures of Salvation, and which, the apostle tells the Church, is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. And hence the beloved apostle John, when he saw Christ, describes him as having a sharp two-edged sword coming out of his mouth; Rev. i. 16; Heb. iv. 12; Ephes. vi. 17. How this blessed word of God hath wrought in the minds and consciences of sinners, like sharp arrows, the conversion of the world to the doctrine of the cross can best testify: nay, it is exemplified in every sinner whom God the Holy Ghost hath regenerated, and brought over from the bitter enmity of the heart against God, existing in all men by nature, to the love of God in Christ, which is by grace. The world hath in all ages produced, and is still daily producing, instances, to the glory and majesty of Christ, and to the praise of the Father's grace, who maketh poor sinners accepted in the beloved.

6 Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Here we find Christ returned from the holy war, and sat down on the seat of the Conqueror. And we have God the Father speaking to this glorious Mediator, this triumphant king in Zion, and declaring the eternity and righteousness of his kingdom. Reader, do not forget, in this view of the Lord Jesus, that what is here said of him, and to him, is as Mediator: not as God only, but as God in Christ; the union of the manhood with the Godhead, to whom, as Jesus said himself, all power is given, in heaven and in earth; Matt. xxviii. 18. It is of unspeakable importance to preserve alive in the mind this view of Christ's

throne: the felicity, salyation, and everlasting welfare of the whole Church, depends upon it: Rev. iii. 21. And observe what a confirmation of this blessed truth we have in what follows: He loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Of whom but the One chosen out of the people is this declared, to whom God spake in vision, even his Holy One, Christ as man, as well as Christ as God? for it is by the union of both in one person, that he is Christ. Psalm lxxxix. 19. Hence the Spirit, which was given, not by measure, unto him, was poured out upon him above, or for, his fellows; also, that he might be the first born among many brethren, and in all things might have the pre-eminence. What blessed scriptures these are, and how sweetly do they illustrate and explain each other! Hence, in this light, thus beholding Christ as the Mediator, is it to be considered, and in no other could it be said, that God is his God, from whom this anointing came, who hath set him as his King in Zion, and as a Priest upon his throne, and as the Prophet of his people. John iii. 34. Exod. xxx. 30, 31. Psm. cxxxiii. 2. Rom. viii. 29. Coloss i. 18. Psalm ii. 6. Zech. vi. 13. Deut. xviii. 15. 1 Sam. ii. 35. Acts iii. 22.

8 All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

9 Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

How beautiful a description is here given of the glories of Christ's person, in his garments of salvation, and of the loveliness both of the Church, as one collected body united to their glorious Head, and of every individual which makes up the one church of Jesus, both of Jew and Gentile. The sweet smelling garments, no doubt, represent the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make the savour of the very name of Christ as ointment poured forth. Song i. 3. Hence that description of the Church in Rev. xix. 7, 8.

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

This is a tender and affectionate address, to the Church, the Lamb's wife. And if we suppose God our Father thus speaking to the whole body of believers, concerning their union with his Son, as our glorious Husband and Redeemer, it gives a sweetness and strength to all that is said, inexpressibly endearing. Reader, how fit, how just, and reasonable it is, that if God our Father hath given us his dear Son; if Jesus hath purchased us by his blood; if, by the conquests of his Holy Spirit, he hath subdued the natural hatred of our hearts, and brought us over to a voluntary surrender of ourselves to our God and Saviour for ever; we to forget all objects which would thwart his gracious purpose, and so

delight ourselves wholly in Jesus, as Jesus delights in his people. Zeph. iii. 17.

12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.*

Reader, do not overlook this most precious verse. Surely we of the Gentile church can never be too much alive to remark the care of our God over us, that in the relation of so much mercy as this Psalm contains, the part that we poor Gentiles bear in it is carefully noticed and set down. Isaiah xlix. 6. Rev. xxi. 24.

13 The king's daughter *is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.*

Whether the Church be called the Spouse of Christ, the daughter of Christ, or the Sister of Christ, (for these are only so many different terms to point out the several gracious connections into which Christ hath condescended to put himself) they all mean to shew Jesus's love to his redeemed. Song, vi. But under every one of them, the adornings of their persons, being from and in the same apparel, even the righteousness of Jesus, cannot but be all glorious within. It is the hidden man of the heart; that which is spiritual, and altogether of his graces. Hence, in reference to this adorning, both Christ and his Church are represented in Isaiah, lxi. 10.

14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

Reader, do not fail to observe the manner of expression: the Church *is brought*; she doth not *come* of herself. No: she must be convinced, converted, made willing. No one can come to Christ, except the Father, who hath sent Christ, draw him; John, vi. 44. And when she is brought unto Jesus, the wedding-garment she hath is of the king's providing. And though originally hostile to all grace, yet now, being subdued by his love, there is a holy jubilee in the soul: it is with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Reader, if such be the joy when first brought to Jesus, in the day of our conversion, what must it be, in the day of being brought home to his kingdom for ever! How will the realms of heaven resound with hallelujahs, when the whole church of the redeemed, accompanied with angels and arch-angels, shall sing aloud that song, *Salvation to God and the Lamb!*

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

What a vast multitude of souls begotten to Christ will appear in that day! So numerous, indeed, that even the Redeemer himself is represented, under the spirit of prophecy, as if expressing his astonishment, as he did at the centurion's faith in the day of his flesh,—Who hath begotten me these? Isaiah, xlix. 18 to 23. Matt. viii. 10. All the

redeemed of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, are said to be made kings and priests unto God and his Father. Rev. i. 6.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

Thus, as might be well expected, the celebration of such glories in Christ's person, such triumphs in his holy war, and such love in his holy union of his people to himself, are terminated by the Psalmist in declaring, that the name of this glorious King, this almighty, gracious Husband, this blessed Redeemer of our poor ruined nature from Sin and Satan, Death and Hell, and the Grave, shall be sung in his Church, and celebrated among men, as long as the sun and moon endure, from one age to another: and when time shall be no more, the endless subject shall be continued through all the ages of eternity, and *every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let both our hearts pause over the perusal of this divine Psalm; and, so far from hastily dismissing it, let us both seek the continued influences of the Holy Ghost, to keep up an unceasing remembrance of what is here said concerning the person, and the kindness of God our Saviour. Remember, Reader, it is *a song of loves*; and when we call to mind his love of whom it speaks, the loveliness and beauty of his person as he is in himself and the love he hath manifested to us and our fallen nature, O how shall we better testify our sense of that love, than by a perpetual remembrance of him?

Precious Jesus! methinks I would realize to my wondering view, by the eye of faith, thy glorious person as God and man, in one Christ! I would behold thee as here so sweetly described, fairer than the children of men. I would behold grace, not only poured into thy blessed lips, but continually dropping, as the golden drops of the honeycomb, for thy people; and under this view my whole soul should go out, in the most fervent desire, that Jesus would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. And hast thou not, thou almighty Warrior, brought my proud, my stubborn, my rebellious heart, to submit to thy power? Hast thou not made my stiff knee to bend before thee? Do I not this day own thee for my Sovereign, my King, my Redeemer, my lawful Lord?

And art thou not also my Bridegroom? Hast thou not betrothed me to thyself? Hath not thy blessed Spirit made me willing to be thine, and brought me to thee, in thine own garment of salvation, and thy robe of righteousness? Yes, Lord! I call heaven and earth to witness, that it is the one unceasing object and desire of my soul, to forget all, and leave all, and sacrifice all, to follow thee. And oh, Lord, grant, I beseech thee, that my whole soul, and body, and spirit, which are all thine, by gift, by purchase, by conquest, and by grace, and by a voluntary surrender, may be wholly thine for ever. And in the constant enjoyment of thy presence now by faith, O prepare me for the everlasting enjoyment of thy presence in sight; where, among the whole church of thy redeemed, the praises of our almighty King-Mediator, will call up our

intellectual powers in endless joy, and the glory of God and the Lamb will be the church's song for evermore. Amen.

PSALM XLVI.

CONTENTS.

This is a song or Psalm of holy triumph. The prophet exhorts the church to make God in Christ her confidence. A reference is made, towards the close of the Psalm, from beholding the desolations of the earth, to consider the blessedness of those who have the Lord for their God.

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah. A song upon
Alamoth.

GOD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

3 *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled; *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

That blessed scripture in which Jehovah saith by his servant the prophet, that he hath laid in Zion for a foundation, a tried stone, serves to explain the nature of what this verse saith concerning God as a refuge. Until Christ is our foundation we have nothing to rest upon, nor trust in, against the storms and troubles of life. But if Jesus be our confidence we shall ride, as Noah did, tranquil amidst descending torrents, borne up and sheltered by the ark, Christ Jesus. It is said of *Luther*, the great minister and instrument in the Lord's hand of bringing about the reformation, that whenever storms or threatenings seemed to be coming upon the cause of Christ, he used to stir up the minds of the people with calling upon them to sing this 46th Psalm. Isaiah xxviii. 16. 1 Peter ii. 6—8. Gen. vii. 1—16.

4 *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most high.

5 God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

Reader, it is blessed to observe how the scriptures, in various places, open to our view the holy and sacred persons of the Godhead, as the united source of all our mercies. When John saw this river in a vision, which by its streams makes glad the city of God, he tells us he saw it

issuing out of the throne of God and the Lamb; thereby not only intimating that the throne of God and the Lamb is one and the same, but also as plainly shewing that the operations of the grace of the Holy Spirit in watering the church all flow from the same holy undivided Three in One. God the Father is this river, *Jerem. ii. 13*; God the Son is this river, *Zech. xiii. 1*; Song, *iv. 15*; God the Holy Ghost is this river, *John, vii. 37-39*. Reader, do you know in your own personal experience what it is to be washed, to be refreshed, to be kept alive, and renewed from day to day by the sweet streams of this river!

6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

How was this accomplished in the wars of Joshua? *Joshua, x. 12*. How was it in the wars of our spiritual Joshua? *John, xviii. 6*. Reader, how is it now when God the Holy Ghost speaks in the hearts, and to the hearts of sinners? *1 Cor. xiv. 25*.

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

Who that reads these verses and observes what is going on in the earth, but must be overpowered with the conviction, that every thing in the kingdoms of nature and of providence is rendered subservient to that one design, and is ultimately ministering to it, through which the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever? *Rev. xi. 15*.

10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

What a blessed verse this is! And what a blessedness would it induce in the minds of the faithful, if they were everlastingly living under the gracious influence of it. Oh! how would it prompt our hearts to cast all our care upon him that careth for us. Blessed Lord! I dare not pass over the perusal of this kind precept of thine, without looking up and praying for grace to do as thou hast said. Yes! blessed Jesus! I would be still! Knowing that thou art God of thy church, God of thy redeemed, God of the whole earth, safely may we leave all with thee, whether private, public, or personal concerns.

11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Blessed conclusion! Jacob's God is our God! God in Christ the sure refuge of his people for ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! pause and contemplate the happy state of those who have God for their refuge. All the perfections of the Godhead are made over for their security, who have a God in covenant to fly to, in Christ Jesus. The wisdom of God is engaged to guide them. The power of God is pledged to protect them, and his word, and oath, and promises, are all sealed to be every thing they need. Moreover, in Christ Jesus and his righteousness they find strong foundations whereon to plead for the fulfilment of God's covenant assurances. There is a fulness of merit, and a fitness of salvation, to answer every case and situation of the church, which Christ hath purchased with his blood. And the Holy Ghost, in his gracious influences, and breathings, and manifestations, so reveals the love of God to the heart, and so directs the mind into the patient waiting for Christ, that when our souls are living under these united sources of a believer's security, we may well exult with the church and say, Jehovah is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Reader, mark down then for a rainy day, a day of trial, a day of trouble, this song upon *Alamoth*, for God's hidden ones. The city of God shall be refreshed and made glad with the streams of love, and grace, and mercy, which flow from a covenant Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God hides them when he shews himself. They are taken in, and made secure in an impregnable city. The Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it. This city is the city of God. God is in the midst of her. God hath owned her. God will protect her. God will bless her, and God will reign in her for ever. And the inhabitants shall be made glad with the river, the ocean, the sea of divine love. Lord Jesus! give our thirsty souls now to drink of this river, the streams whereof rejoice the soul; and by and by bring us to that kingdom and city which is above, where thou ledest thy redeemed to fountains of living waters, and where thou hast for ever dried away all tears from all eyes. Amen.

PSALM XLVII.

CONTENTS.

In this Psalm the prophet seems to have an eye to the bringing up the ark of God to Zion. But as the ark itself was well understood by the faithful to be a type of the Messiah, surely we may conclude that the one great object of this Psalm which engaged the prophet's mind and pen, was to point to the ascension of the Lord Jesus. And in this point of view it is a beautiful prophecy of a glorious event.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

O CLAP your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

2 For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.

Here is a call from one awakened soul to another, nay, to all the people of God, to all the church of the Gentiles also, yet to be called to rejoice in Christ's salvation. The clapping of the hands implies perhaps not merely an outward token of inward delight; but it means let every demonstration be given, both by soul and body, of what a glorious cause for holy triumph there is in the consciousness of our risen, ascended, and triumphant Saviour.

3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

Two most glorious and comprehensive blessings are assigned for this great joy: the one is, a risen and exalted Saviour, who will subdue all his and our foes; and the other is, he will prepare us a place to follow him. Observe, Reader, what a beautiful correspondence there is between the Old Testament hopes, and the New Testament assurances: read what Jesus himself hath said upon this very subject, John, xiv. 1-3.

5 God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

7 For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

This, if confined literally to the carrying up of the ark, would not be strictly true; for though there were shoutings and the sound of the trumpet at that festival, yet God himself could not be said to have gone up, unless we still apply God's presence to this symbol of it; 2 Sam. vi. 15. In like manner, if we apply it to the ascension of Christ, in which we may truly say, God is gone up, yet upon this occasion it is not said that there was any sound of a trumpet or shoutings among the astonished disciples. But notwithstanding this, there might have been shoutings in the upper world beyond the hearing of mortals. If the sons of God shouted for joy at creation, as we are told they did, can we suppose they would be silent when redemption work was completed? And if at the return of the Lord Jesus to judgment he is to descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, is it not probable that the heavenly regions shouted for joy, when Christ the God-man, returned from the vast work which he had accomplished in our salvation? Job, xxxviii. 7. 1 Thess. iv. 26.

8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

9 The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham:

for the shields of the earth belong unto God : he is greatly exalted.

How beautiful, and especially to us poor Gentiles, is the view, that the Holy Ghost, for the most part, always blends with the relation of Israel's salvation, the interest the Gentile church hath in the same. Sweet thought! they are joined and gathered together, as Abraham's seed, to the same glorious Shiloh. Precious Jesus! hasten the fulness of the Gentiles, that all Israel may be saved, and thou be crowned universal Lord of all. Gen. xlix. 10. John xi. 51, 52. Gal. iii. 28, 29. Rom. xi. 25, 26.

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL! thou glorious, risen, ascended, and triumphant Saviour! Thou art indeed ascended up on high: Thou hast led captivity captive, and hast received gifts for men. Yea, Lord, for me, for many a poor rebellious sinner, that the Lord our God might dwell among them. And now, Lord, help me by faith to follow thee at the right hand of the majesty on high. I know, Lord, and am fully persuaded, that all power is thine, in heaven and in earth. Lord! is it not thy blessed province, and is it not thy glory and delight, now thou art exalted as a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins? Lord, send down all thine ascension gifts, I beseech thee. Do thou rule *in* me, and rule *for* me. Grant me, and all thy church, all the blessings of thy kingdom of grace here, and glory hereafter. Set up thy kingdom in our hearts. Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. And so sweetly constrain all the powers and faculties of the souls of thy redeemed into the holy love, and fear, and delight in thee, that songs of praise, and praises with understanding, may go forth from every heart, both here and for ever to thee, the God of our salvation. Amen.

PSALM XLVIII.

CONTENTS.

The prophet, in a beautiful strain, is here extolling mount Zion. It should seem to mean principally the Zion of Jesus, the gospel Zion. In this spiritual sense it is most lovely indeed. He speaks of her situation; God's relation to her; his love of her, and care of her; and what a terror Zion is, and ever will be to her enemies, while she becomes the present and everlasting joy of her friends.

A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah.

GREAT is the LORD, and greatly to be praised
in the city of our God, in the mountain of
his holiness.

The prophet very properly begins with praising the King of Zion, before he enters upon the praise of Zion. Reader! it is always comely to bless the God of our mercies, before we bless God for our mercies. If we really love the gift, how much more ought we to love the giver!

Jesus, I adore thee for bringing life and immortality to light through thy gospel. But oh! my Lord, how endeared are both, when both are viewed in thyself.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

Beautiful and distinguished indeed is the church, the gospel church of Jesus. Is this Zion, said some of old, whom no man looketh after? Yes! But where are those cities the world hath been running after? Where is Babylon? Where is Nineveh? Where is Tyre? What is become of all the great monarchies of the earth: the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Grecian, Persian, Roman? Alas! not a vestige remains. But glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God. Psalm lxxxvii. 3. Reader! do not, I pray you, overlook the cause. Was Zion lovely in herself? Was Zion great? Was Zion deserving? No! What was it made her glorious? Jesus had fixed his love upon her. And Jesus tabernacled there. Salvation did God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Isaiah xxvi. 1. Reader, have you so considered Zion! He that founded Zion is Zion's protector; Isaiah xiv. 32.

4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

5 They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.

6 Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

All the powers of the world were confederate against Israel, when first God made her a church. And all the powers of the world were confederate when first the gospel was made known. Hell hath been up in arms against it from the beginning. But what a final and decisive answer hath Jehovah given to all the foes of the cross, Psm. ii. 1, &c. The distress of foes, to the gospel of Christ is here set forth under strong images; as the pains of a woman in travail, willing to flee from the sorrow, but unable; and the case of the most stately vessels on the water, whose magnitude and strength become as nothing before the violence of the winds and waves: so all foes to Jesus and his Zion must prove. *The stone cut out without hands* must become a mountain and fill the earth; Dan. ii. 34.

8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

9 We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

10 According to thy name, O God, so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

Here the prophecy and the accomplishment of prophecy the church by faith enjoys and celebrates. The prophets had foretold what God would do for Zion. And, saith the church, blessed be Zion's king, he hath so fulfilled. Reader! think what a vast accession to this testimony ought Zion to give now. If the church celebrated by faith what God would do in the early days; and if in latter ages the redeemed lived to see fulfilled the predictions of prophets concerning the advent, ministry, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and the coming of the Holy Ghost; and if they blessed a promise performing God; what verses of praise ought you and I to give, that now, near 2000 years since Jesus returned to glory, we live to record that promise which he left, that he had founded his church upon a rock, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. May we not take up this language and say, As we have heard so have we seen; God will establish it for ever?

11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

Here the church is called upon, and well she may, to rejoice in her unspeakable felicity.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following.

Strangers are challenged to see if they can discover any tokens like ruin, or want, or misery. No! Zion still flourisheth, and must flourish, and be a perfection of beauty. Her ordinances, her courts, her palaces; these are her bulwarks and ramparts; and above all Jesus her king is in her.

14 For this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death.

What a beautiful conclusion to such a triumphant Psalm. Jesus, that is our God and Saviour now, that hath been our fathers' Saviour; is ours, and will be to the generation following, and to every generation of his seed for ever and ever.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! if these be the blessings of Zion, what a mercy must it be to be a citizen of Zion? It is said of this highly privileged spot, where Jesus dwells, that the Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this and that man was born in her. It is a vast and an important question to know if you and I were born there. I mean by a new birth, which makes us fellow citizens with the saints and of the house-

hold of God. Reader! are we come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God? Do we bow the knee, the heart, the whole soul, in dutiful obedience, in love, in affection, in regard to the king in Zion? Do we speak the language of Zion? Do we love the courts, the house of prayer, the ordinances, the worship of Zion? Is Zion the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth in our esteem? In a word, can we, and do we say; For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. Ye ministers of my God, ye that are watchmen, whom God hath set upon the walls of Zion, see that you hold not your peace day nor night; ye that make mention of my God, give him no rest, nor peace, until that he hath made Jerusalem a praise in the earth. And oh! that all who are citizens of Zion may have the interests of Jesus and his church uppermost upon their hearts, that they may prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy. And do thou, Lord, who art king in Zion, cause thy glory to appear. Be thou thy church's glory; the guide, the protector, the salvation of thy redeemed here upon earth, and their everlasting joy and glory in thy church which is above.

PSALM XLIX.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is much in the style of exhortation. It is full of persuasion to shew the folly and deceitfulness of all worldly dependence. Towards the close, there is a sweet allusion to Jesus, as the brother of his people.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

HEAR this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:

2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

4 I will incline mine ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

The Psalmist demands to be heard in what he had to deliver, on account of its importance; but to conciliate affection, he proposes not to make his subject personal; but, according to the eastern method, he would veil it under the covering of a parable.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

He openeth his sermon with proposing a question, What cause is there to fear on account of wickedness? This seems to be the text of his

discourse. And he proceeds to give a most satisfactory and decided answer in what follows.

6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches ;

7 None of *them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him :

These words are very plain, and speak a truth which every day's experience in the world proves. Every rich man that dies manifests a new testimony, that death is not to be bribed. Neither can one rich man stop the progress of death for his brother. But, doth not this very statement of the inability of riches among rich brethren to redeem each other, seem to point to one who became the brother of the poor in this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, on purpose to redeem them? Reader! do turn to that sweet scripture, and observe what is said on this subject, Levit. xxv. 25, &c.

8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever :)

9 That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

This blessed passage is enclosed in parentheses ; perhaps by way of shewing, not only that it stands totally unconnected with what was said before, of a worldling redeeming his brother, which is a thing impossible, but also to point to him who is indeed a brother, and with whom all things are possible. Surely Christ is plainly here. Dear and precious as the redemption of the soul is, and not to be bought with corruptible things, as silver and gold, yet the precious blood of Christ is a rich purchase and more than an equivalent for the redemption of it; and, indeed, so greatly purchased, and so dearly purchased is it, by this price of Jesus's blood, that it ceaseth for ever; impossible ever more again to be lost, and impossible evermore to need any further redemption. Reader! what a mercy is here. Oh! Lamb of God! what thanks will a whole eternity be able to shew thee, for thy tender compassion to our souls?

10 For he seeth *that* wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

11 Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses shall continue for ever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts *that* perish.

13 This their way *is* their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

This is a sad, but too true picture of unawakened, careless, Christless sinners. How poor, and even like senseless animals for slaughter, is their life. How fearful their end!

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

The Psalmist here draws a fine contrast in the death of the believer to that of the ungodly. His flesh rests in hope.

16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul; and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

20 Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts *that* perish.

What a close is here made to the rich man's pomp! How terrible is death to all such characters! Wherein doth he differ from the brutes that perish? A mere animal life was all that belonged to both: and the worm that feeds on such carcases will only value that which is most corrupt. *Asaph* hath drawn another similar representation of wretchedness, Psm. lxxiii. 17—20.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! while perusing this Psalm, and beholding the death of the rich voluptuary, do not forget that there are poor voluptuaries, as well as wealthy ones, to whom death, whenever it comes, is equally awful. The poor man, who lives without God and without Christ in this world, dies as awfully as the rich. And indeed in one sense he is a greater fool than his rich neighbour; for the man of wealth hath, according to his view of things, something to vaunt himself upon, and to make him put far away from his thoughts the remembrance of death. But for a man to be poor in this world, and to live so regardless of the redemption of his soul as to be poor in the world to come, is one degree of folly greater than his fellow. Reader, how blessed the thought! the redemp-

tion, the costly redemption by Jesus, is alike suited both to rich and poor. Jesus buys all his ransomed at the same price. It was sweetly said, with an eye to this, *The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls*; Exod. xxx. 15. Blessed Jesus; thou hast purchased the redemption of thy people by thy blood. This redemption indeed is precious; and being once made, it ceaseth to need any further redemption for ever. *By that one offering of thyself, once offered, thou hast for ever perfected them that are sanctified.*

PSALM L.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm, like the former, is in the nature of exhortation. It speaks, in the opening of it, as in the person of Jehovah. It reproves the Jews in their mistaken notions of sacrifices; points to the more spiritual services of the gospel; and in the conclusion, shews how the Lord will accept the services of the heart, with an eye to the sacrifice by Christ.

A Psalm of Asaph.

THE mighty God, *even the LORD*, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

The Speaker here is the Elohim-Jehovah; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. What a sublime and magnificent account! The whole earth is summoned. And, no doubt, this is in reference to the gospel days, concerning which the Lord said, by Malachi, that then incense should be offered to the Lord's name in every place with a pure offering. Malachi, i. 11.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

Here is evidently the gospel church. The law was given on mount Sinai: the gospel on mount Zion; Heb. xii. 18—22.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

In few words, but most striking terms, the vast difference is here pointed out between the righteous and the sinner. But observe how reference is made to the sacrifice. And what is this but Christ the great Sacrifice, the only Sacrifice! Heb. 10, 14. And the very inanimate bodies shall be witnesses to the righteousness of Jesus, for God himself gives the decision.

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.

8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before me.

9 I will take no bullock out of thy house, *nor* he goats out of thy folds.

10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Here is a solemn appeal to God's antient people the Jews, on the subject of sacrifices. What language here is, to shew in what light sacrifices under the law ought to have been regarded, and with what view they were appointed. How sweetly is the gospel preached here, even from the law. Gal. iii. 24, 25.

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

16 But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?

17 Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

21 These *things* hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself: *but* I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.

This seems to be a solemn remonstrance and expostulation with the unbelieving and hypocritical Jews, who rested in the means, and totally overlooked, and even despised the end: who, as our Lord told them in his days, tythed mint, anise, and cummin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; Matt. xxiii. 23. The Apostle hath a similar address of charges on his countrymen, the Jews, Rom. ii. 17, &c.

22 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.

Is not this a beautiful conclusion, in a general appeal to every one that hears, from what went before? It forms indeed a solemn and striking inference from the whole Psalm.

23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

If we explain these delightful words with an eye to the gospel church in Christ Jesus, then the sense will be lovely: for this will be to offer God the Father praise, in and through Christ, our great High Priest, our Altar, our Sacrifice. And to such the blessings of the Spirit are here most graciously promised, to lead and to guide into all truth, in beholding, and accepting, and rejoicing in God's rich and free and sovereign salvation by Jesus.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! it is always profitable, by making comparative statements between the law and the gospel, to behold the gracious mercy of our God in the one all-sufficient, all-perfect sacrifice of God's dear Son. Not indeed, that any other sacrifice was, or could be intended to take away sin: for neither the blood of bulls, nor of goats, possessed any efficacy to this end; but were shadowy representations of Him, who was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. But while we here behold the Jews resting in the means, and forgetting the end, taking up with the shadow, and overlooking the substance; let you and I be very jealous over our own hearts as Christians, that we do not fall into the same error. And is there not danger, even now under a gospel dispensation, if we rest in any ordinance, however delightful it may be in itself,

and forget the Lord of the ordinance? If I go to the table of the Lord, and in partaking of that feast upon a sacrifice, I forget that it is the sacrifice of Jesus's body and blood, and not the feast upon it, that is the means of my soul's acceptance with God? And are not all unworthy communicants of this kind? Doth not the Lord speak to all profane, to all self-righteous characters, as in this Psalm? Doth he not solemnly remonstrate, in a yet more especial manner, to such as minister in holy things, if they minister with unclean hands, and without an eye wholly to Jesus: What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? The Lord impress, both upon minister and people, a due sense of these things, that both may so offer the sacrifice of Christ and his righteousness, as that they may thereby glorify God the Father, who hath set forth his Son as a propitiation through faith in his blood; and in their own souls be so sweetly taught of God, as to have clear views, and rich enjoyments of the salvation of God.

PSALM LI.

CONTENTS.

Here is a penitential Psalm, penned by David, as the title expresses it, upon a remarkable occasion; in which we trace the sorrowful workings of his soul in a devout humiliation before God.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions

It is worthy our closest observation, in the very opening of this Psalm, and the subject connected with it, that at least nine months had passed by, after David's falling into the foul crimes of adultery and murder before any remorse seems to have taken place in his mind; nay, so far from it, that when Nathan came to him with a message from God, because the man of God veiled his discourse in a parable, David's heart took no alarm, and though alive to punish the man that had taken his neighbour's lamb, never thought of himself having taken his neighbour's wife, and having also caused him to be murdered. Alas! how doth sin harden? 2 Sam. xii. 5—7. We have here the devout actings of the soul, when awakened by grace to a sense of sin: all that we meet with, verse by verse, serves but to shew the stirrings of a distressed, conscious, guilty soul, in the recollection of his foul ingratitude to God, and his base dishonesty to man.

2 Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

How beautiful these expressions are, if offered with reference to Christ's blood as the fountain there opened for sin and for uncleanness. And observe in what true sorrow for sin consists; an unceasing view of sin, and a self-loathing in consequence thereof.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

This is a striking expression: David looks upon the sin as directly levelled against God. He had injured Uriah, injured Bathsheba, injured, in short, every one that heard the story, in the example he had set; but the great sin was against God. Had he not lost reverence for God, he could not have injured men. David dwells therefore upon this: Against Thee, Thee only, (says he, repeating the words with painful recollection) have I sinned. Here was the sad, sad business. Reader, it is among the truest marks of genuine sorrow, when we detect our sin against the sovereignty of God at every step.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

He here goes back to the source of all sin, in original depravity! What hyssop shall purge this away, what washing of water will make this clean? Oh! how blessed is it to behold Christ, whose blood alone cleanseth from all sin. 1 John, i. 7.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Nothing but a complete pardon can satisfy David. Hide thy face from my sins, heal my bones that are broken by reason of it! What should we do, whither should we fly, were there not a total oblivion for sin, and had not the Lord cast them into the depths of the sea? Oh! the blessedness of redemption by Jesus! Micah, vii. 18—20.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free Spirit.

Pardon alone, without the renewings of the Holy Ghost, will not complete the mercy. Hence, David prays not only to be cleansed, but to be renewed, to be strengthened by the Holy Ghost against any future sins. It is as if David had said, Lord, I see that the want of thy Holy Spirit to restrain those vile affections of mine first led to the sin of adultery, and adultery next led to murder. Lord, I beseech thee, take not thine Holy Spirit from me; take, Lord, whatever else thou art pleased to take, for I deserve nothing but punishment from thee; but, oh! take not thy unspeakable gift, lest I should fall yet more foully. Here, Lord, I must plead! Oh! turn me not away. Reader, there is nothing a child of God dreads so much as the absence of the Comforter. Oh! precious Jesus! remember thy promise, in which thou didst say, He shall abide with you for ever; John, xiv. 16.

13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

It is a blessed mark of real repentance, when, after our recovery, we do not scruple to tell others of our worthlessness, and the divine goodness in raising us up, thus preaching to others what the Lord hath done for our souls. Reader, think what everlasting preachers to this amount hath Peter the Apostle, and David the Prophet been. How hath God in mercy over-ruled their fall to his glory and the comfort of thousands, So Jesus bid Peter, when he should be recovered, to strengthen his brethren; Luke, xii. 32.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O LORD, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Behold, now David's heart is awakened, how the foul sin of murder haunted his guilty conscience!

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Oh! how much gospel is here: surely David had seen and felt the efficacy of Christ's blood, or he never could have learned to think so lightly of the sacrifices under the law.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacri-

fices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Observe how the interests of Zion still lay near David's heart. This was the most solemn moment David had ever seen, when one might have thought his own personal sorrows would have swallowed up the consideration of every other. But no: he remembers Zion in his saddest seasons, as well as in his greatest joy. Reader, how ought you and I to feel for Zion in her present languishing circumstances?

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I look at this man after God's own heart, and tremble in the recollection of what man is in his highest attainments, if left for one moment void of grace. Oh! what an important truth it is, and must be, to be impressed upon the mind, that our poor fallen nature is the same in all men: there is, there can be no difference: a corrupt stock must produce a corrupt generation; and this in an endless succession from father to son. And that the seeds of sin do not produce an equal degree of blossom and fruit in all men, doth not arise from any difference in our nature, but from the preventing and restraining grace of God. Oh! how blessed is it to see this, and to be convinced of it, that we may not only ascribe all the praise where that praise is alone due, but also may walk with such holy fear and caution, amidst the numberless temptations arising both from our own nature and the dangers every where around, as to be always on the watch-tower, and while we think we stand, to take heed lest we fall. And above all, to be for ever looking up for grace from above, knowing that they that are kept are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Reader, let us not dismiss the contemplation of a subject in which we are so highly interested, without gathering from the review, under divine teaching, another improvement, namely, that as the best of men are but men, and cannot keep themselves from falling; so when, from the strength of temptation without, and the weakness of our own powers within, we are at any time overtaken in a fault, it is well to be convinced that no exertions of our own can restore us to the divine favour. David knew this; and therefore, in another of his Psalms, gives the glory to God for his recovery by grace. "Thou restorest my soul (saith he) thou leadest me in the paths of righteousness, for thy name's sake." Hence, therefore, from the Lord let us seek grace, and the renewings of the Holy Ghost, to raise us up when fallen, and to restore to our souls the light of his countenance.

And lastly, and above all, let us remember, and everlastingly keep in view, that all our pardons, all our recoveries after backslidings, our perseverance in grace, our final preservation to God's kingdom, as well as our first awakenings from sin; all and every one is the sole result of God's covenant love in Christ, and the merits of his blood and righteousness. Yes! thou precious, blessed Jesus, thou who art the Lord our righteousness! it is thy Father's merciful engagement to thee, and the efficacy of thy obedience and death, which become the everlasting cause and security of all our mercies. God is a pardoning God to all thy redeemed, be-

cause there is an everlasting acceptableness in thy Person and thy work, notwithstanding our manifold departures, backslidings, and sins. And though those departures wound our souls, though those backslidings daily testify our poor corrupt nature, though those sins plead against us, and Satan is ready to accuse; yet, precious Jesus, thy blood is a *speaking* blood, and speaketh more for us than all that are against us.

Oh! grant our souls the daily, hourly benefit of thy great salvation! Lord, let this be the continued joy of all thy redeemed, that we have redemption through thy blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of thy grace. Amen.

PSALM LII.

CONTENTS.

We have here David arraigning Doeg the Edomite for the murder of the priests, and pointing to God's justice, which must follow. David takes comfort, under such persecutions of the wicked, in the goodness of God.

To the chief musician, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

WHY boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God *endureth* continually.

It should seem that this descendant of Esau, like one of that stock, delighting in persecuting the children of promise, vaunted himself in what he had done in causing the priests to be slain, and when none else could be found who would embue their hands in the blood of God's priests, he became the murderer as well as the accuser of them. See the story as related at large, 1 Sam. xxii. What a sad state was Saul in, to take an enemy to God into his service, and advance an Edomite over Israel!

2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

3 Thou lovest evil more than good; *and* lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

4 Thou lovest all devouring words, O *thou* deceitful tongue.

We shall not lose an atom of this subject, considered as to the persecutions of good men, by the evil in general, nor the sure judgment which sooner or later must follow; we shall not lose sight of the moral and religious improvements arising out of the subject, if, while we consider it in this point of view, we look at it also in a higher and more spiritual sense. Doeg was an Edomite, a descendant of Esau; and in all ages and generations the true Israel of God are exposed to the hatred and malice of all the race of Esau. Was there not the same per-

secution against Christ at his birth, as Saul manifested towards David? And did not Herod send forth and destroy the Jewish children at Bethlehem, wholly with a view to include the new-born Saviour in the number, as this Doeg designed to weaken David's cause, by the slaughter of his friends the priests? Reader, it is the cause of J sus against which Satan vents all his malice, and for the destruction of which he stirs up the adversaries of the cross in all ages. Matt. ii. 16.

5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:

7 Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* strengthened himself in his wickedness.

These are blessed sentiments, expressive of the faith of God's people in the sure destruction of all the enemies of the Church, and the everlasting triumphs of the faithful. Whether they be read in a private personal sense, in reference to every individual, or in reference to the whole body of Christ at large, they are the same.

8 But I *am* like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it*: and I will wait on thy name; for *it is* good before thy saints.

If we read these sweet verses, first with reference to Christ the head of his Church, and then, as the language of faith, from a conscious union with him, as the members of his body, we shall enter into a blessed enjoyment of them. Yes, all and every individual of Christ's mystical body must flourish, must be to his praise, and, with the ever-green verdure of trees, which the Lord's right hand hath planted, bring forth fruit to the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul, pause over the short relation, given in this Psalm, of the malice of the wicked; and, in the instance of this wretched Edomite, behold a representation of all that race. Children of the evil-one enter with delight into his service, and manifest the bitterness of their hatred against the Lord, and against his Christ. Their wages in the present world are the pleasures of sin, the love of the world, the commendation and applause of sinners like themselves, and the profits of iniquity. In the

world to come, where should their station be, where indeed could they desire to be, but with him whom they here serve? Reader, amidst all the groans of the soul, under the remains of indwelling corruption, how blessed is it not to be of this family who persecute the followers of Christ! Lord Jesus, I desire to praise thee in the distinguishing tokens of thy favour, that thou hast taken me into thy service; and if but a hewer of wood, and a drawer of water, O how blessed to be of the household of faith. Lord, keep me near thyself, that I may praise thee for ever, because it is thou that hast done it; and grant that I may wait on thy name, for it is good, before thy saints.

PSALM LIII.

CONTENTS.

Here is a short, but striking account of sin in a natural man's heart, as was given before, in the fourteenth Psalm. The sinner is expostulated with upon the occasion; and the Psalmist takes occasion, from such a state of man's ruin by nature, to pray for his recovery by grace in the salvation of Christ.

To the chief musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David.

THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no* God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: *there is* none that doeth good.

2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God.

3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as* they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

5 There were they in great fear, *where* no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth *against* thee: thou hast put *them* to shame, because God hath despised them.

6 Oh that the salvation of Israel *were* come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

Having already offered an humble comment upon this Psalm, as numbered before the 14th, I think it unnecessary to detain the Reader with going over the same again in this place: the Reader can refer to what was there observed. It is true there is some little variation in one of the verses, but not so materially different as to render a commentary necessary. I shall only therefore just observe, that if we suppose (as we may) the repetition of it, as well as the apostle Paul's quotation from it, was designed to recommend it with the more earnestness to the attention of the church; this may, and indeed it ought to operate in a stronger manner to enforce the important doctrines it contains upon our hearts. And as it points to the natural atheism which is in every man's heart from the consequences of original sin, as the sad cause and source of all our misery; so a deep sense of our guilt and ruin in this particular may, under God's grace, serve no less to endear to us that blessed and only recovery which is in the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord the Holy Ghost grant, from the repeated perusal of it, this blessed effect; and then if Jesus becomes more and more precious in proportion as we feel more and more our need of him, we shall find the same cause as Jacob to rejoice, and as Israel to be glad.

PSALM LIV.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is at the throne of grace in this Psalm, in the exercise of prayer and praise. He cries to God for deliverance from his enemies, and concludes with thanksgiving, in the assurance that his prayer is heard and answered.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

SAVE me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

The title of this Psalm explains the particular trial David was exercised with when he thus had recourse to a mercy-seat. The history of that part of David's life we find 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, and again 1 Sam. xxvi. 1. But while we behold David king of Israel in the historical part connected with this scripture, I would hope that the Reader, by this time, hath seen enough in David's history to consider him as a lively type, in many instances, of David's Lord. Surely the Holy Ghost intended to direct the church, from so much being recorded of this man's history and writings, to look off from him, and to behold a greater than he, as the chief object proposed from these scriptures. And will not the Reader be led therefrom to discover, that in the repeated attempts made on David, by the Ziphims and others, to deliver him into the hands of Saul, there are strong allusions made to the perfidy and baseness of Judas the traitor, and the Scribes and Pharisees, to deliver the Lord Christ into the hands of his enemies? The Ziphims proposed to themselves Saul's favour and a reward: and Judas's language was, *What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto*

you? If we compare 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, 20, with Matt. xxvi. 14—16, keeping our eye upon Jesus as we read this Psalm, we shall trace several things which will serve to keep him and his unequalled trials in remembrance.

2 Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.

The enemies of Christ were both friends and strangers. When he came to his own, his own received him not: and, as the apostles expressed it, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people, were gathered together against God's holy Child Jesus. John, i. 11; Acts, iv. 27.

4 Behold, God *is* mine helper: the LORD *is* with them that uphold my soul.

5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for *it is* good.

7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen *his desire* upon mine enemies.

Reader, do observe how Christ, in the days of his flesh, found support and confidence in resting himself wholly upon his Father: so have the faithful done, so must the faithful do, in all ages. The close and event of all the exercises of God's people come to the same happy issue; they must and will see their desire upon all their enemies.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I make the same conclusion from the perusal of this Psalm, as is here made, and the confidence in this will bear our souls up during the exercises of the passing hour, be they what they may. We shall feel no shrinkings, we shall make no false conclusions in our progress to the end of our pilgrimage, if our hearts are in the mean time *fixed trusting in the Lord*. By a steady, fixed, well-grounded faith on God's rich mercy in Christ, holding on our course, and holding out our assurance, whether the providences of our God seem to frown or look cheerful; by keeping fast hold of God the Father's covenant, and Christ's merit, and the everlasting efficacy of his blood and righteousness, we shall find that God is still our helper, and *the Lord is with them that uphold our souls*.

Blessed Redeemer! give me grace to look to thee, and to call to my recollection thine exercises amidst the false friends and open foes, which in the days of thy flesh surrounded thee. Lord, help me so to consider

thee, who didst endure such a contradiction against thyself, that I may not be weary and faint in mind. And while the *Ziphims* of the present hour harass and distress me, and would deliver my soul into the hand of the enemy; oh! for grace to be looking unto thee, and deriving strength from thee, that I may discover thy gracious hand delivering me out of all my troubles, and making me more than conqueror in thy strength, and in the power of thy might.

PSALM LV.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is still at the mercy-seat, praying for strength against his enemies; and for strength and grace in his own soul. Here are some sweet things in this Psalm, typically considered, which refer to Christ, David's Lord, and also of the enemies of God's Anointed.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David.

GIVE ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

2 Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

This beautiful Psalm will be rendered exceedingly profitable to our souls in the reading, if the Holy Ghost, who hath given it by inspiration for the church's profit, shall, by his divine teaching, give us to see the many blessed things contained in it. As it refers to the personal exercises of the writer, David, it will be profitable; and as it becomes from his instance an example to all the church of Jesus, it will be no less so; and yet, more particularly than either, as it represents Jesus himself in some of the most interesting seasons of his ministry, concerning which there can be but one opinion, that David here was eminently his type. Reader, do observe the expressions in this prayer; and then recollect Christ's cries in the garden, when his soul was so convulsed with agony, that the Lamb of God declared he was sorrowful even unto death. Mark, xiv. 34.

3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

If we consider David's history, it will appear probable that he had an eye to his son, Absalom, as this enemy. If we look at Christ, probably Judas was the foe here intended, with the Scribes and Pharisees.

4 My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

We shall have a lively apprehension of this history of David, if we connect with what is here said of him, his flight from Absalom, when he

went up the hill of mount Olivet; 2 Sam. xv. 14—30. But who that reads the account there given of David going over the brook Kidron, and ascending the Mount, can overlook, or want to be reminded of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, passing the same place in the night before his sufferings and death. Reader! think of the view the Holy Ghost had of this part of the Redeemer's history, when, so many ages before, he represented it in type by David. Think of what Jesus felt in that season, when he was entering the garden to grapple with the powers of darkness! Can any words more strikingly display Jesus's agony, than what is here said under the spirit of prophecy; fearfulness, horror, and trembling? David was in great distress, no doubt, when he fled from his son; but nothing, to a man of his courage, could make such strong expressions suitable to him. I therefore am inclined to think it was of Jesus the words were spoken.

6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!
for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

7 Lo, *then* would I wander afar off, *and* remain
in the wilderness. Selah.

8 I would hasten my escape from the windy
storm *and* tempest.

Beautiful similitude of the dove's flight, to describe the soul's earnestness for quiet! Not to fly as a bird of prey, but as a bird of peace. Blessed Jesus! how suited is this to thee, thou meek and lowly Lamb of God, in all thy dove-like deportment! My soul! dost thou not long to flee away also to Jesus, as thy Noah, thine ark, in whom alone thou canst find rest or peace? Gen. viii. 9. Psalm cxvi. 7. Isaiah, xxviii. 12. Matt. xi. 28.

9 Destroy, O LORD, *and* divide their tongues:
for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

10 Day and night they go about it upon the
walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow *are* in the
midst of it.

11 Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof: deceit
and guile depart not from her streets.

If we look at David in these verses, we see how the distressed monarch pleaded with God to prosper the plan he had laid with his friend Hushai, to defeat the counsel of his foes. He had sent back this man to be with his unnatural son for that purpose. And the prayer here used is followed with another in the history, to turn the counsel of Ahitophel, an enemy of his, but held in great reputation, into foolishness. 2 Sam. xv. 31—34.

12 For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me;
then I could have borne *it*: neither *was it* he that
hated me *that* did magnify *himself* against me;
then I would have hid myself from him.

13 But *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

14 We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company.

15 Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness *is* in their dwellings, *and* among them.

We must of necessity drop David's history in these verses, to attend to an infinitely greater; for surely what is here said by the Spirit of Christ, which was in the holy men of old, is said in prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus. Of Judas, Jesus might truly be supposed thus to speak. Christ had chosen him, as well as the rest, for a disciple, though from everlasting he knew him for the son of perdition. Admitted as he was into the same familiarity as the rest of the disciples, what could more strikingly mark his character? And his death how sudden, how awful! *John*, xvii. 12; vi. 70, 71. *Luke*, xxii. 3—6. *Acts*, i. 16—18.

16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.

17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

18 He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me: for there were many with me.

19 God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.

How precious are these words, whether considered as the language of our Lord in the days of his flesh, or of any of his believing people. They suit all. The evening, the morning, the noon; all seasons, all hours are free for a soul to have access to the mercy-seat of God in Christ. Daniel is eminently spoken of by the Holy Ghost on this account, *Dan*. vi. 10; Peter's house-top was his *proseuche*, his prayer-house, *Acts*, x. 9. Reader, what a sweet thought it is for you, and for me, to keep alive in the soul, that the Lamb is in the *midst* of the throne? *Rev*. vii. 17. No doubt teaching believers, that all around, in every direction, and by every way, there is an avenue open for them. And oh! that our hearts were more alive to go. Lord! quicken us to this service, which is perfect freedom, that, like him of old, we may say, seven times a day will I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments. *Psaln* cxix. 104.

20 He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant.

21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.

22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

Here is another view of the enemies of David; and still more so of the enemies of David's Lord. How smooth were the words of Judas when he said, Hail, Master! and kissed him. But how was the prophecy fulfilled in his end, as a bloody and deceitful man?

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! leave every other subject, and every other consideration, in the perusal of this Psalm, to ponder over the several parts of it, and to contemplate thy God and Saviour as here typically set forth, and prophetically represented. David, king of Israel, was indeed betrayed by false friends, and persecuted by his unnatural son: and good men in all ages have been exercised with similar trials in their pilgrimage state. But what were David's trials, or the afflictions of others, compared to thee, thou patient Lamb of God, when bulls of Bashan compassed thee about, and all thy disciples forsook thee, and fled; when one denied thee, and another betrayed thee?

But chiefly, while I behold David going over the brook Kidron, and walking up barefoot, with his head covered, the ascent of Mount Olivet, let my soul call to mind how thou, my adored Redeemer, didst pass over the same memorable spot in the dolorous night of thy conflict in the garden. Oh! for my soul to take the wing of faith, and fly thither to behold thy sufferings! Was there ever sorrow like unto thy sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted thee in the day of his fierce anger? And chiefly, precious Jesus, let me connect with this view the interest I have in it. Let me recollect that in all this, thou wast the surety, the sponsor, the representative of thy people: thou didst bear the whole for thy redeemed. And did Judas betray thee? did Peter deny thee? did all forsake thee? And so have I.—Didst thou drink of the brook in the way? And shall not I? And as into this brook the filth of the temple sacrifices emptied itself; so, Lord, all my guilt and defilement emptied upon thee; and through all thou madest a way for the salvation of thy redeemed. Precious Jesus! let me have grace to behold thee in all this as my surety, and may my soul pass on through all the trifling persecutions I meet with in this pilgrimage state, with a wise indifference, losing sight of all in the contemplation of thy unequalled sorrows, and reading in every one of them the Holy Ghost's declaration, by his servant the apostle, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,*

PSALM LVI.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is again before the throne in this Psalm. Though in distress from men, yet happy in communion with God. His plea is for the Lord to comfort him, while his enemies buffet him. And in the review of past mercies he finds confidence for future deliverances.

To the chief musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

BE merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine enemies would daily swallow *me* up: for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou most High.

I cannot begin this Psalm without first taking notice of the title. It is addressed to the chief musician. I have already thrown out my views of who this chief musician is. The next object is what it is upon: *Jonath-elem-rechokim*, which some translate the *silent or peaceful dove not nigh*. In the book of the Songs, Christ calleth his church by this name of Dove. Song, ii. 14. The next observation is, that this Psalm is among the Michtams, that is, the golden sayings, such things as were very precious to him; and what could be equally precious to David with Christ, and the things which treat of him? If we keep these considerations in remembrance as we go through the Psalm, I conceive it will make the meditation of it sweet.

The Psalm opens with a general cry for grace in proportion to the enemy's violence. And were not the cries of Jesus strong in the days of his flesh? Did not Jesus, like the dove or the lamb, exercise dumbness, when the foe raged most clamorously? Isaiah, liii. 7.

3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

Reader, do remark how suited this case is to every exercised soul. It corresponds to the case of the Redeemer, and to his church upon all occasions.

5 Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts *are* against me for evil.

6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

7 Shall they escape by iniquity? in *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

Surely we must see Christ here eminently set forth. Not only at his trial, but upon many occasions, we are told they sought to catch him in his words. Matt. xxvi. 59, &c. Luke, xx. 20, &c.

8 Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book?

9 When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.

10 In God will I praise *his* word: in the LORD will I praise *his* word.

11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

What a sweet thought is here suggested of God's remembrance of his people's affliction! It is an interesting figure of speech, of *bottling their tears*: but the sense is, they are remembered. And woe will be to the man that offends one of God's little ones on His account. What are now bottles of tears, will be poured out in the end as so many vials of wrath. But, Reader, think how the tears of Jesus have been treasured up, which he shed for the sins of his people.

12 Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death: *wilt not thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Blessed thought! all the redeemed of God have the vows of God upon them. They are, as the Israelite's house was appointed to be, with the label upon the gate, that every traveller going by might read the inscription, and say, *Here dwelleth one of God's people*: Deut. vi. 9. And as sure as Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith, and is formed in our hearts by grace the hope of glory, so equally sure shall we live before him now in praise, and hereafter dwell with him for ever in glory. Ephes. iii. 17. Coloss. iii. 4.

REFLECTIONS.

How blessed it is to read the *Michtams* of David with an eye to Christ. They are golden things indeed, when they become the medium of opening to our view the Lord as our surety; and when they bring home to our souls the tokens of his love and undertaking for his people. Yes! blessed Lord, thou wert indeed all this, and infinitely more, as set forth in this Psalm, when thou hadst engaged in those suretyship engagements

for thy people. How exposed to the malice of men! how persecuted by the wrath of hell! and how sustaining the just desert of our sins from the righteous judgment of God! But oh! thou heavenly Redeemer, how precious were thy tears in the sight of God! How were they all counted and marked down. And most assuredly, blessed God, all must again be accounted for; and thy people remembered and saved by virtue of thy complete redemption-work, when the enemies of our God and of his Christ come to be recompensed for their deadly opposition to thee, and to thy righteous cause.

Help me, gracious Lord, in thy strength to be strong, and in thy righteousness to make my boast. Let men oppose, let devils rage, and all the enemies of thy great salvation threaten. The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped. I shall still walk before my God in the land of the living; and by and by, in and through Jesus, I shall walk before God for ever and ever.

PSALM LVII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist, still at the mercy seat, finds confidence and comfort. And from hence he gathers strength against his foes.

To the chief musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.

BE merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.

We must not pass over the title of this Psalm, for every part of it seems interesting; and if we regard the writer, David, both as a type of Christ and as a prophet predicting Christ, nothing can be more worthy attention by way of throwing light upon it. If, as hath been before remarked, the dedication of it to the chief musician refers to Jesus, the *Al-taschith*, which signifies *destroy not*, is very important. Destroy not: David must not be destroyed, for Christ is of the seed of David after the flesh. And *Michtam* intimates that this is a golden Psalm, a precious Psalm: and so it is indeed, if read typically or prophetically. And how beautifully do the words of the supplication begin! The repetition is striking. And how did Christ, in the days of his flesh, send forth strong crying and tears! Heb. v. 7. If the Reader wishes to consult the history of David, as the title of the Psalm refers to him, he will find the account, 1 Sam. xxiv.

2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me.

3 He shall send from heaven, and save me *from* the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

These verses, read with an eye to Christ, and to all Christ's seed in him, contain some of the sweetest and most encouraging thoughts imaginable. God the Father promised to carry Jesus through the whole of his vast undertaking: Mine hand shall hold him fast (said Jehovah) mine arm also shall strengthen him; Psalm lxxxix. 21, &c. Hence, not only here but elsewhere, the Redeemer is represented as casting himself upon his Father; I was cast upon thee, saith Christ, from the womb; thou art my God, even from my mother's belly. Be not far from me, for trouble is near; Psalm xxii. 10, 11. And God the Father is represented as acting in this blessed character: He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation; Psalm lxxxix. 26. Reader! never, I beseech you, lose sight of Christ and his people as one, in all this transaction. If we are Christ's, saith an apostle, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. And then we may humbly adopt the same words in all our exercises; I will cry unto God, most high, who performeth all things for me.

4 My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

I beg the Reader to mark this verse, as throwing a light upon this whole Psalm, in proof that it is particularly thus said by the spirit of prophecy in relation to Christ. And if the Reader will turn to the 22d Psalm, verses 16—21, which is notoriously known and allowed to be a prophecy of Christ, he will find the evidence irresistibly confirming.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.

Observe how Jesus breaks out in praise in the midst of prayer. Such, Reader, should be the conduct of all his people. The heaviest exercises in grace can never interrupt the song of praise: 1 Thess. v. 18.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.

How is this verified in all the church's history! Not only in this instance of Saul and David, but also in those of Haman and Mordecai, Pharaoh and Israel, and above all, Judas and the Jews and Christ. Esther, vii. 10. Exod. xv. 9, 10. Acts, i. 16—18; ii. 36, 37.

7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

8 Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

9 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the

people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

10 For thy mercy *is* great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: *let* thy glory *be* above all the earth.

Reader! do not fail to observe how the Psalm ends. It began in sorrow, and closeth in joy. Yes! whatever is founded in faith and prayer, must end in praise. This holds good to all the seed of Christ. And when like Jesus the Sou of David, we stir up our souls to take hold on Jehovah's strength, we shall come off more than conquerors through his grace helping us. And as Christ arose from the dead, and awaked up in his glory; so, every morning, (and with yet more awakened joy the Lord's day morning, which celebrates at every return Jesus's triumph over the grave, as the first fruits of his body) should all his redeemed call upon themselves to awake, and bless the Lord of their salvation right early. And as Jesus declared his determination to praise Jehovah among his brethren, (see Psalm xxii. 22, &c.) so should his redeemed shout aloud in the churches, the salvation of God.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! it is very improving and profitable to observe in the example of David, and other saints of God gone before, how their faith and patience have been exercised, and what grace hath been imparted to them to help them forward in all their seasons of need. And it is intended, no doubt, by the Holy Ghost, in recording the history of their contentions and the blessed issue of them, to animate our minds under our lesser difficulties, that we may be the followers of them, who now through faith and patience inherit the promises. But over and above all this, and infinitely more interesting than all, no doubt, the blessed Spirit intended by these *Michtams* of David, these *Al-taschiths* of inspiration, to glorify the Lord Jesus. Oh! how do all examples sink to nothing while we contemplate him. Oh! how precious to a poor believer under exercises is it to trace his blessed footsteps going before. And oh! how great the strength, the confidence, nay, the joy imparted in the deepest tribulation, when we not only look up and behold our Great Intercessor, who is now at the right hand of power, there appearing in the presence of God for us, as once a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but now holding forth a suited grace to help us in all our exercises. Yes! blessed Redeemer! thy example is lovely, precious, and sweetly accommodating. Thou art every thing, and in all things our glory and the lifter up of our head. Be thou exalted, Lord, in the souls of thy people, as thou art above the heavens, and let thy glory be our joy as thou art glorified above all the earth.

PSALM LVIII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here reprovng unjust judges: he appeals to God against them. He closeth the Psalm with the certain conclusion that God will judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgments unto the people.

To the chief musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David.

DO ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

I refer the Reader to what was offered under the title of the preceding Psalm, for the same will suit equally here. This is another of the *Michtams*. The Reader will do well to keep Jesus and his enemies in view while going over this Psalm. For what is here said, if considered as applicable to David, king of Israel, and his foes, will be found yet more strikingly suited to Christ and his. Indeed, how very apposite and pointed is this apostrophe and appeal, if referred to Pilate and his unjust sentence upon Christ! Compare Matt. xxvii. 24 with 26.

2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

Observe the iniquity is here said to be of the heart.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

4 Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent: *they are* like the deaf adder *that stoppeth her ear*;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

Here are several very striking similitudes made use of, by way of setting forth the awful depravity of the human heart: the perversity even from the womb; the poison of the serpent which is deadly, and the incurableness of it by any human means, under the figure of a deaf adder. The music of the gospel is lost on such characters. No charms in grace to them; no beauty in Jesus!

6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.

7 Let them melt away as waters *which* run continually: *when* he bendeth *his bow* to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.

8 As a snail *which* melteth, let *every one of them* pass away: *like* the untimely birth of a woman, *that* they may not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in *his* wrath.

This appeal to God comes in very suitably after what was before observed. If we accept the expressions as prayers for grace, or the destruction of the irrecoverable foes of Christ, they are very strong and direct. Jesus on the cross graciously prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies. The heart must be broken for sin, before that it can be brought to be in love with Jesus.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say, Verily *there is* a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

Surely these expressions are eminently in allusion to the Lord Christ, both on account of his victories in grace, and his righteous decrees in the judgment that will follow. Washing the feet in the blood of the ungodly, is, in the language of the prophet, having all the Redeemer's raiment sprinkled with the blood of his conquest over sin, and death, and hell, and the grave. So that all must conclude that the Almighty Victor, who hath returned from the spoil, shall assuredly return to judgment, and follow up his triumphs with ultimately rewarding his people, and punishing all that despise a salvation so gloriously accomplished. Isaiah, lxiii. 3, 4.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul, pass over and forget all lesser considerations, while perusing this Psalm, to behold Jesus, thy almighty Saviour, beautifully set forth under these *Michtams* of David. It is true, thou mayest gather much instruction from beholding David's exercises under ungodly judgment, and similar exercises of the church in all ages upon like occasions, as are here represented. But how flat and uninteresting do all these appear, in comparison with the views afforded of Jesus, in his unequalled meekness under unjust judgment? Who that reads of the mockings and scourgings the Lamb of God went through, and at length hears Pilate's unjust sentence, can willingly take off his attention to look at the sufferings of others? Surely all, and every part of the oppressions which have taken place among men sink to nothing, when the judgment-hall of Pilate, and the mount of Calvary, arise in contemplation before us? Every heart feels constrained to take up the prophet's lamentation, and to say, 'Behold and see, was there ever any sorrow like unto thy sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted thee in the day of his fierce anger?'

Precious Lamb of God! help me to be continually not only beholding thy sufferings, but connecting with them their blessed effects. Yes, holy Lord, I would behold thee on thy cross, and I would behold thee on thy throne: and in the united view and contemplation, I would desire grace to keep in mind, what the angels told the wondering disciples, that this same Jesus, who is gone into heaven, will come again to judgment. He will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. Oh! for grace to be always on the look-out, that when thou shalt come, my soul may arise with joy unspeakable to hail thy coming, and in thy righteousness to be found waiting thy approach, that the Lord my righteous Judge may give me at that day the crown of glory, as well as all them that love thy appearing.

PSALM LIX.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here at prayer: the cry is for defence against his enemies, while complaining of their injustice. He closeth in praise.

To the chief musician, *Altaschith*, *Michtam* of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

DELIVER me from mine enemies, O my God, defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

Let the Reader keep in remembrance that this Psalm, like the three former is a *Michtam*, a golden, precious Psalm; and that it is addressed to the chief Musician. See the observations on this title in the fourth Psalm. And if read with an eye to Christ, it is indeed a *Michtam* of David. If the Reader wishes to see its utmost application to the person of David, he will find the part of his history to which it refers, 1 Sam. xix. 11. But who that reads the sorrows of Christ, in the persecutions of the Sauls of his day that arose against him, can leave the gospel to look for the explanation of this Psalm elsewhere?

3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not *for* my transgression, nor *for* my sin, O LORD.

4 They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault: awake to help me, and behold.

Observe, Reader, how determined the point is here to the immaculate holiness of the Lord Jesus! None but Christ could thus plead a faultless conduct.

5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen:

be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

6 They return at evening : they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords *are* in their lips: for who, *say they*, doth hear?

All these expressions, if considered as referring to Christ, carry a correspondence with his complaints in other scriptures. Bulls of Bashan, and dogs from the assembly, beset him around. Psalm xxii. 11 to 21.

8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

9 *Because of* his strength will I wait upon thee: for God *is* my defence.

Here was the grand resource of the Mediator: and here, he hath therefore taught, is to be the security of all his redeemed. Reader, it is blessed, yea, it is doubly blessed, so to do. Isaiah, xxvi. 3.

10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.

What a very sweet verse is this, considered in any, and in every point of view. The God of my mercy shall prevent me! Preventing mercies, or such mercies as go before hand, and before they are asked for or even thought of, or known to be needed, are sweet mercies indeed. Some read the words, hath prevented me, meaning, that the Lord was always in the blessing before the blessing was sought, and surprized the soul in coming even before the soul was prepared to look for it. Others translate the words *doth* prevent me, which is as if a soul was to say, I shall not be anxious for the event of this trial, for the carrying me through it is my God's concern, not mine; he hath promised all I need, and therefore he will do all that is needful.

11 Slay them not, lest my people forget : scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O LORD our shield.

12 *For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips, let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying *which* they speak.

13 Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may not be*: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

The perilous state of the wicked, and the safety of the righteous, is finely contrasted in the view of the ruin of the one, and the everlasting security of the other. But let not the Reader overlook the cause of the righteous man's security, namely, in the covenant faithfulness of Jacob's God. Well might the sacred writer put a *Selah*, particularly, here.

14 And at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

What strong figures are chosen in these verses to point out the restless, wretched, unsatisfying state of the wicked, whose mind is like the troubled sea! Isaiah, lvii. 20, 21.

16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God *is* my defence, *and* the God of my mercy.

How delightfully the Psalm ends in this resolution of the soul. God's power, God's mercy, both come in for a part in the hymn of praise: indeed all the attributes of Jehovah, become so many subjects of adoration, love, and praise; inasmuch as in Christ Jesus, and the salvation by him, they have all taken part, and have been richly displayed. And observe, to whom the song is directed: it is to Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, because all the sacred persons become the united object of praise, as all the persons were concerned and did co-operate in the redemption of sinners. And the Mediator, as Mediator, leads the souls of his people in this hymn, because the church are all blessed *in* him; and *for* him, and *by* him, that church, as well as all things, must consist.

REFLECTIONS.

SEE, my soul, how Jesus, in the days of his flesh, was exercised! Behold the Lamb of God worried by the dogs of slaughter, when the mighty gathered against him, and when, though not for his transgression, neither for his sin, did the enemy find advantage against him. Precious Lord! if thine enemies belched out their slanderous words, with swords in their lips, against thee, thou holy, harmless, undefiled one: if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, well may they be expected to rail against the household.

But wilt thou not be the God of my mercy, dearest Lord, and prevent me! Surely, Lord, thou hast done it! All thy quickening grace, thy renewing grace, thy regenerating grace, converting grace; all, all are

among the preventing mercies of thy love. It was thy preventing mercy that called me, when I thought nothing of thee: it was thy preventing mercy that saved me to the day of my calling: and it hath been thy preventing mercy that hath ever since kept me from falling. In all these, and a thousand unknown, unnoticed mercies, thou hast been the God of my mercy, my Jesus, my Holy One, my Redeemer; and thou wilt be so still. Oh! then for grace to trust thee, to stay upon thee, and to live unto thee, and to thy glory, that he that is the God of my mercy, my life, and my salvation here, may be my everlasting portion, and happiness, and glory, to all eternity. Hail then, thou gracious, blessed Lord God! I will sing of thy power, yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy: a God in Christ is my song, and my loudest notes are too soft and too faint to speak thy praise.

Precious Jesus! let no affliction, no trial, no one event, stop my song, or cause me to hang my harp upon the willow, for nothing can be sufficient so to do, or ought so to do, when once thy redeemed have learnt the song of Moses and the Lamb. Yea, Lord, help me to go on rejoicing in singing of Jesus and his love, of Jesus and his redeeming grace, his blood and salvation. In these sublime hymns of praise would my soul every day, and all the day be employed, and even in death the last note should not cease until the first note had begun in glory amidst that throng, where I shall find myself in the midst, surrounding the throne in for ever singing praises to God and the Lamb, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*

PSALM LX.

CONTENTS.

In this Psalm the sacred writer is led out to a devout acknowledgment of God's hand, both in prosperity and adversity. He takes refuge in God's promises, and in them acts faith with full confidence of victory over all his enemies.

To the chief musician upon *Shushan-edith*, *Michtam* of David, to teach; when he strove with *Aram-naharaim*, and with *Aram-zobah*, when Joab returned and smote of Edom in the valley of Salt twelve thousand.

The title of this Psalm will find great light thrown upon it by a reference to that part of the scripture history, where the events to which the Psalmist alludes are recorded. See 2 Sam. chapters v. and viii. and the parallel history, 1 Chron. xviii. But what I more particularly request the Reader to remark in this title, and above all, is that this Psalm is among the *Michtams*, the golden memorandums, the precious jewels of David. And, Reader, you will find it among your *Michtams* also, if so be the Holy Ghost graciously leads out your soul to eye your David in all his conflicts, and in all his triumphs for you and your salvation!

O GOD, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.

2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.

3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

How blessed is it to eye Christ in such like expressions as these, when we behold him as standing forth the Surety and Sponsor of his church and people? Jesus, as the head of his people personating his spouse, and for her sustaining all the indignation of God his Father's broken law, may well be supposed to speak for himself and church in such terms as these. And as he is called by the Father the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in; Isaiah, lviii. 12. and God the Father had promised to hold his hand in all the accomplishment of these mighty deeds; the prayer of Jesus to the Father for his strength makes this application yet more beautiful and striking. The displeasure of God at sin, the deadly breaches thereby made in the original friendship between God and man, the wine of astonishment in the cup of trembling, the Redeemer is said to have drunk even to the dregs; are all very forcible figures to manifest the greatness of the work the Son of God wrought in going forth for the salvation of his people. Compare Isaiah, li. 17. with Isaiah, liii. 6. and John, xviii. 11. Reader, doth not such views as those scriptures afford, sweetly direct your soul to behold Christ as your Surety, drinking this cup of astonishment to the last drop, when he was made a curse and sin for you, that you might drink the cup of salvation, and be made the righteousness of God in him? 2 Cor. v. 21. Mark, xiv. 33, 34.

4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

Reader, do not hastily pass over this blessed verse. Surely there is to be discerned much of the mind of the Holy Ghost in it. Is not Jesus the banner and ensign which God hath set up to his people? Isaiah, xi. 10. And doth not the church rejoice when Jesus brings her into his banqueting house, and sets his banner of love over her? Song, ii. 4. Yes! almighty God and Father! thou hast indeed given a banner in Christ to all his people. Oh! for grace so to fear thee, so to love thee, so to live to thee in Jesus, that under his banner I may be safe, and, like Moses, look unto Jesus as my altar, and call him *Jehovah-nissi*, the Lord is my banner. Exod. xvii. 15.

5 That thy beloved may be delivered; save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.

Jesus is the beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth. But it should seem that Christ had an eye in this prayer to the church which is his beloved, and in him also the beloved of the Father. Reader, if you take the verse in this sense, and then connect with it what the Lord Jesus Christ said in the days of his flesh, John, xvii. 23. I do not know a

thought which can be awakened in the mind more blessed, more delightful, and full of glory! Cherish it, I pray you, for ever, and carry it about with you wherever you go, to help your mind on to the unceasing love and praise of all the persons of the Godhead. Doth God the Father indeed love the church of the Lord Jesus, even as he loveth him?

6 God hath spoken in his holiness: I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

7 Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver.

8 Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

If the Reader will consult 2 Sam. iii. 18, he will find somewhat like a prediction concerning the very event to which David looks forward now with such confidence of success; and, considering the victory as good as already obtained, because God had promised it, he talks of the division of the spoils. And as David honoured God by faith, so God honoured his servant by the accomplishment of his promises. Moab and Edom and Philistia were all brought under David's victories. But, Reader, while you and I thus behold God's grace and favour manifested to his servants in *temporal* deliverances, let us not overlook, but yet have our minds led forth in contemplating, the still higher subjects of praise in *spiritual* victories by David's Lord. It is God the Father who hath spoken once in his holiness, and even sworn once by his holiness, as if to pledge this glorious perfection for the sure salvation of his redeemed in and by his dear Son, the David of his people, our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, therefore, in the full assurance of victory, which Christ hath already attained, and whereby his people are made more than conquerors in him and through him, every true believer may cry out, I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. Indeed all things are mine. God my Father, with all his promises, is mine; Christ, with all his fulness, is mine; the Holy Ghost, with all his influences, is mine. All are yours, saith the apostle, whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

9 Who will bring me *into* the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

10 *Wilt* not thou, O God, *which* hadst cast us off? and *thou*, O God, *which* didst not go out with our armies?

11 Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

How beautiful are all these things, if seen and read with reference to Christ! The prophet beheld in a vision the Lord Jesus coming up from Edom after his victory, when travelling in the greatness of his strength; Isaiah, lxiii. 1, &c. And observe how sweetly the Psalm ends, in not only ascribing the whole of the victory where alone it is to be ascribed, but exercising faith upon all the eventful consequences of it. The victory of salvation is accomplished; Jesus hath finished it for his people. And he that hath finished it *for* them, will finish it also *in* them. The God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly. The enemy shall be bruised under our feet; but it is the God of peace, and not an arm of flesh, that shall accomplish this victory. Rom. xvi. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! Wheresoever I turn mine eyes, throughout the whole volume of thy sacred word, how precious is it to my longing soul to behold thee set forth by the Holy Ghost, and glorified to my view. Lord, I pray thee, let this sweet Psalm be among the Michtams of my heart.

I will look to thee, O Lord, in all my afflictions. It is right, it is but just, that my God and Father should take displeasure at my wanderings. The land indeed may well tremble for the breaches sin hath made in our poor fallen nature. But look, Lord, I pray thee, to the Man at thy right hand, even to the Son of Man, whom thou hast made so strong for thine own self: look unto Jesus, who for his redeemed hath drunk the wine of astonishment, even until his precious soul cried out in the bitterness of it, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.* Holy Father! was not thine Holy One thus exercised, and made sin for his people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him? Oh! for grace to believe this, and everlastingly to live in the enjoyment of it.

Precious Jesus! thou hast gotten thyself the victory, and thine own arm hath brought salvation. Bring me then, Lord, under thy banner; bring me into thy banquetting house. Help me by precious faith to rejoice now, in the blessed prospect of that glory that shall be revealed. Yea, blessed Lord, let me see myself sitting by faith in heavenly places, in and with thyself. And enable me to exult, as thy servant did of his *Gilead*, and his *Manasseh*, and his *Ephraim*, of my Lord Jesus, and his kingdom, and his power, and his glory. Surely if I am Christ's, then am I Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise. Oh! let me hear thy voice day by day with this assurance, until thou shalt take me home to the everlasting enjoyment of my God and Christ for ever.

PSALM LXI.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is but short, though sweet. The heart is in heaviness in the opening of it, but finds comfort before it closeth. In using it with reference to Christ, it promiseth rich consolation.

To the chief musician upon Niginah, A Psalm of David.

HEAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.

Whither shall a soul in trouble go, but to the Lord? or to whom shall a soul cry, but to him that is able to save? It is blessed to be sometimes driven to straits, that we may know where our resources are alone to be found. The Reader will do well to observe the expression, *from the end of the earth*; meaning that no place is so remote, no distance so great, but what may find access to the mercy-seat of a God in Christ. And the sweetest and most encouraging of all thoughts is, that the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, open alike in every direction, and accessible to every comer. Rev. vii. 17. But what a blessed view is here given of Christ as the Rock. This is plain from what the Holy Ghost instructed the apostle to tell the church, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. Reader, do not overlook this in any overwhelmings you may meet with. There can be no safety for a poor buffeted, wave-beaten, and weather-beaten soul, until he is standing upon the Rock Christ Jesus. And do not overlook that blessed lesson also taught in this divine scripture; the poor overwhelmed sinner must be *led* there, for of himself he can never get there. Gracious God and Father, do thou put me in the clefts of this rock, that Jesus may say to me, O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs. Exod. xxxiii. 22. Song, ii. 14.

3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, *and* a strong tower from the enemy.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.

Are not all these well known (and may I not add, Reader, well proved, in your soul's experience) characters of the Lord Jesus? Is not Jesus the hiding place, and the covert, and the strong tower, and security, of all his redeemed? Pray look at those sweet scriptures: Isaiah, xxxii. 2. Psalm, xviii. 1, 2, &c. And, Reader, while Jesus thus appears as the only sanctuary of his people, let you and I pause and ask each one his own heart, Can we adopt this language? Do I really abide in Jesus? and do I truly trust in him for the whole of my life and salvation? John, xv. 4.

6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life: *and* his years as many generations.

7 He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him.

8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

We must wholly drop all thoughts of David king of Israel in this precious portion of the Psalm; for of none could the Holy Ghost speak in language like this, but of Jesus, who is Jehovah's King in Zion before God for ever. Here we behold him, concerning whom the angel spake, when announcing his incarnation, the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Luke, i. 32, 33. Hail! thou almighty King of kings, and Lord of lords! Oh! may the knee of my heart be always bent before thee. Phil. ii. 10, 11,

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Lord Jesus! let the reading of this sweet Psalm be so accompanied with thy grace, that it may incline my soul to be cleaving closer and closer to thee, my God, in all the exercises of my warfare. Surely, Lord, it is good to be brought low, nay, to be overwhelmed in myself and all surrounding circumstances, if, from the multitude of oppressions, my soul is constrained to see thy blessedness, and to have my heart more earnestly directed towards thee. And oh! thou holy, blessed Spirit, do thou, I beseech thee, most gracious God, lead me amidst all those waves which would overpower me; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. Jesus is my Rock, where, among the inhabitants, I would for ever sing. In him I would rest; on him I would for ever dwell: to him would I daily perform my vows, and make mention of his righteousness, even his righteousness only. And as I would come to thee, thou ever full and ever gracious Saviour, as I came the first day, poor and needy, so let the continued supplies of thy grace only endear thee the more, and make me the more sensible of my wretchedness without thee. Be thou, indeed, all in all, and as thou art the all of every thing that is blessed to thy people, so be thou all my blessedness, and all my joy, and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

PSALM LXII.

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In this Psalm here is a twofold subject: encouragement held forth to the faithful, in the assurance of God's love; and discouragement to the unbelieving, in the assurance of God's displeasure. It forms altogether, though short, yet a blessed view of divine faithfulness, in proving, what the prophet in after ages was commissioned to tell the church, that it should be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked.

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David,

TRULY my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

Whether we behold Christ in the first place, or David, as a member of Christ, in the next point of view; or whether we consider the whole body of Christ in any of the exercised members of Jesus in his body, which is the church, as we read these words; still in every sense they will be blessed to our meditation. Christ had an eye to the support of the Father in all his sufferings. Psalm, xxii. 19. Psalm, lxxxix. 20, &c. The words imply a *silent*, patient waiting. So all God's people should manifest their sure dependence, for *he that believeth shall not make haste*; Isaiah, xxviii. 16. Reader, if you and I peruse these precious words with reference to Christ, think what a double blessedness is in them, not only in having an interest in Christ's salvation, but Christ himself for our salvation!

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as* a tottering fence.

4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. *Selah.*

Here is a beautiful breaking off of the subject, but in reality carrying on the same glorious confidence, in this striking remonstrance with the enemies of God and of Christ. It is as if the soul in her triumphs exclaimed, How utterly fruitless, ye followers of sin, must be your attempts against the man settled in, and united to, the God of his salvation. All your efforts to cast him down are alike vain; but ye yourselves, like a wall out of its perpendicular, and whose foundation is in the dust, must assuredly fall, and be buried in your own ruin.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him.

6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.

Reader, do not fail to remark how quickly the soul of the faithful returns again to the God of his confidence. We may spare a moment to admonish the ungodly, but our own joy must not be long broken in upon; we are to hold fast, and, like the dove of Noah, return back to the ark, even Christ Jesus, the sole joy of our salvation. And, Reader, do observe further, how the expressions of this holy confidence are repeated, and with every pleasing variety, that may denote the comfort of the heart. Pause, and ask yourself, Are such views of Christ, your views of him? Do you know him in those covenant characters? Is Jesus your rock, your salvation, your defence?

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour

out your heart before him : God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.

He now addresseth the people of God, as he had before expostulated with the ungodly. And the sum and substance of his advice is, to proclaim the certainty of their interest in a covenant God in Christ, from the evidence of his faithfulness. Not only to a *general* trust, but a constant, special, particular trust; not only now and then, but at all times, and upon all occasions. And not only to a trust, but an acquaintance with the Lord; nay, to pour out the heart, to tell the Lord all that passeth in the soul. Reader, do not overlook the *Selah* of this sweet precept: pray observe it, and may the Lord give us both grace to perform it.

9 Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, and men of high degree *are* a lie; to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Here are additional reasons urged for our firm reliance on the Lord, because all other trusts must deceive, and prove vain. And the Psalmist takes an instance, in proof, from the deceitfulness of riches. If men of the world would but keep in remembrance the solemn words of Christ, how contemptible would then appear that folly which is directed to the gaining of the world, with the loss of the soul? Oh! what a dreadful sentence must that be, when heard by the dying sinner; *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* Luke, xii. 20. Mark, viii. 36, 37.

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O LORD, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

What particular reference the Psalmist hath to God's speaking, is not said; but surely never did the Lord give a more decided evidence of his power, than in speaking in and by his Son in the redemption of sinners. God's word, and God's oath, and both in Christ, are those immutable things which poor sinners have as a strong consolation to flee unto, in the blessed assurance of redemption by Jesus. Heb. vi. 17, 18.

REFLECTIONS.

Oh! the blessedness of having a God in covenant to trust in, and that God ever to look up to, and to lean upon, in and through a Mediator, who hath, by his perfect obedience and death, completed the salvation of his people. My soul, art thou so looking to him, so depending upon him, as to make him thine only rock, thine only defence and salvation?

Manifest then the firmness of thy trust, in a silent, patient, submissive waiting. Recollect at all times, that the Lord's time of deliverance is the best time, and learn to say upon every occasion of trial, He will come, he will be found of them that seek him; for the Lord waiteth to be gracious, he hateth putting away, he resteth in his love. I will trust, and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Oh! ye sons of men, who know not my God, what think ye must be the final issue of despising such great salvation? Oh! think, before it be too late, what a tottering foundation ye rest all your hopes upon? Surely the rock of the ungodly, is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. Oh! kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

PSALM LXIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm contains the devout breathings of the soul. If we read what is here expressed as the language of Christ, and in him of his church, it will be blessed indeed. David's feelings in the wilderness of Judah, very plainly prove what God the Holy Ghost graciously designs the use of this Psalm to be in the church in all ages, to express the suitable breathings of all the redeemed after a God in Christ, as their only joy.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is:

The Holy Ghost hath here given us some of those sweet and precious words which the people of God are commanded to take with them, when they turn unto the Lord; Hosea, xiv. 2. Reader, what words shall you and I take with us, when we come before the Lord, but the very words which God hath furnished us with in his holy word? What can a poor sinner say to the Lord so properly and so profitably, as what the Lord hath first said to that poor sinner, in the person of his dear Son Jesus Christ? Do not fail to remark, what a rich cluster of the most precious things are contained in this short verse. You see, the pious soul doth not think it enough to call God the Elohim, but his soul's chief joy is, that this God is *his* Elohim. God in covenant, God in engagements; in short, to sum up all in one, God in Christ; for this includes every thing the soul can desire, or is capable of enjoying, in time or in eternity. Reader, it is blessed thus to look up to God, and doubly blessed when we know our right of appropriation in him as *our* God. And, see what a wilderness is capable of producing, when the soul is drawn out in such sweet enjoyments. Who would not wish to be in a wilderness with Jesus

alone, when wilderness-frames are capable, through grace, to bring forth such wilderness-enjoyments? Happy David! when Judah's wilderness thus opened such rich communion with thy Lord. So found Paul in his prison; and so felt John at Patmos. See these scriptures, 1 Sam. xxii. 5; Phil. i. 19, &c.; Rev. i. 9, &c. Reader, do not dismiss this verse, before you have asked your soul, whether you know any thing of those thirstings and longings, which are here described, for the sweet enjoyment of God in Christ?

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

Here is set before us, what is the first and earnest longing of every devout soul, namely, a sight of God in Christ, and the enjoyment of God in Christ; for these two make up the sum total of happiness, both in this life, and that which is to come. This was what Moses so earnestly longed for, when he prayed to see God's glory: and this was what he enjoyed when the Lord made all his goodness pass before him, and proclaimed himself the Lord, the Lord gracious and merciful; for God's glory is his goodness in Christ; Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19. Reader, have you so seen God's goodness, in the face of Jesus Christ? 2 Cor. iv. 6. My soul! I charge it upon thee, this day, that nothing short of this be ever allowed to satisfy thee. It is delightful to see the power and glory of God in the sanctuary, in the church, in the ordinances, and in the scriptures of truth; but until Christ is seen as that sanctuary, that church, that ordinance, that scripture, in short, the marrow of all, we rest in the means without the end. Precious, precious Jesus! it is thou that art the sanctuary, the altar, the sacrifice, and the one ordinance of heaven for poor sinners.

3 Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Every verse in this beautiful Psalm is a pearl, because every part and portion of it points to Jesus. Whether we hear Christ during his wilderness-exercises thus express himself, or whether David, as one of his redeemed, during his persecutions, or the Church in any of her afflicted members; in either case, or altogether, how fully do these words convey the universal sentiment which runs through and pervades the whole body! What can satisfy an awakened soul but God, who is the life and portion of the soul? Thy love (saith the church, speaking to Christ) is better than wine. And so it is indeed. For though wine may comfort the afflicted, yet it cannot give life to the dead. But Jesus's love hath given everlasting life to sinners who were dead in trespasses and sins. Song. i. 2; Ephes. ii. 1.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

Reader! do not overlook the Lord Jesus here. As the great and almighty Aaron of his people, he lifted up his hands to bless God for the people, and to bless his people in God. And while viewing Christ in this priestly service (which, remember, is an eternal priesthood), let our hands, our hearts, our whole souls be lifted up to bless a covenant God

in Christ; and that, not only for the hour, for the day, but for the whole of life. Precious Lord! I would say, for myself and Reader, mercifully grant that our whole lives may be praising lives, and that when the last praise is closing upon our dying lips of the body, the soul may go on and continue the ardent hymn until we arrive to join the hallelujahs before the throne of God and the Lamb! Rev. vii. 9—12.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips:

This is a blessed verse, if read with reference to Christ. As God the Father declared himself to be well pleased in his Son's mediation; so Christ is said to be well pleased in finishing the work the Father gave him to do. Nay, Jesus himself said (so delighted was he with the sons of men as their Redeemer sent by the Father,) that the law of God his Father was within his very heart; or, as the margin of our Bibles reads (with the greatest propriety) within his very bowels; that is, incorporated in the very nature of Christ. Prov. viii. 30, 31. Psalm xl. 8. And as Christ is said to be satisfied in soul when praising God for redemption-work, so all his people feel and enjoy an interest in all that belongs to Christ, and God's favour in Christ. Reader! pardon me, if I entreat you to pause and ponder over the very weighty doctrine contained in this short verse. Are you so satisfied with the full and complete salvation wrought out by the Lord Jesus as to seek no other, nay, to despise every other, and to praise God for this his unspeakable gift by his dear Son, with joyful lips? Oh! it is a blessed thing for the soul of a poor sinner to go to the throne of God in Jesus's name, and to tell God that the one sacrifice of his Son, and his obedience unto death, was, and is, fully equivalent to all the wants of Christ's church. Coloss. ii. 9, 10.

6 When I remember thee upon my bed, *and* meditate on thee in the night watches.

It is blessed, at all times, and in all places, to remember God. But many precious souls are so much tossed about by day that they have in their evening meditations frequently to complain, when looking back upon the past, how little they have been occupied in seasons of communion. Reader! do you know what it is to take an hour from the slumbers of the night to think of Jesus, and to commune with him? Do you know what it is sometimes to be as it were awakened by the Lord Jesus for this blessed enjoyment? Do you know what the prophet meant when he said, *He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned?* Isaiah, l. 4: which, though I confess it is spoken with reference to the Lord Jesus himself, may yet be applied, without violence to the words, to his people in him. And I do not think I should err, if I added my belief is, that many a follower of Christ could bear testimony to the same, in having been awakened in the night season, when no eye seeth but him that seeth in secret, and the whole world hath been gone to rest, that Jesus might give them an opportunity of communion with him, and he with them. See those scriptures, Rev. iii. 20; Song, ii. 14.

7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

What are those wings, under the shadow of which the soul of the believer rejoiceth, but Jesus, represented by the cherubim which shadowed the mercy-seat? Was not this representation in the old church the propitiatory? And in the new, is not God said to have set forth Christ as a propitiation, through faith in his blood? Compare Exod. xxv. 18—22, with Rom. iii. 25.

8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

There is a delightful connection between this verse and the former. The soul which hath found a God in Christ his help, will certainly follow hard after the same, and indeed desire larger manifestations. Reader! is this your case? Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? If so, saith the apostle, *to whom coming*, 1 Pet. ii. 3, 4. (faith is not a single act, but a continued act), always coming, always seeking larger, fuller, greater, deeper enjoyments of the Lord Jesus; hanging upon him, cleaving to him, not letting him go without a blessing; like the apostle Paul, or the patriarch Jacob, or Moses, from well knowing the largeness of Christ's heart and his love to his redeemed; not as though we had already attained, or were already perfect; but forgetting things behind, and reaching forth towards those which are before, to press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. See Gen. xxxii. 26. Deut. x. 20. John, xv. 4. Philip. iii. 12—14.

9 But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy *it*, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

10 They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes.

Though we may allow a view to be taken of David's own history in those words, for Saul, and the other foes of David, which did perish by the sword, (1 Sam. xxxi. 4) yet we must look farther to behold their full meaning, in the everlasting destruction of the enemies of Jehovah, and of his Christ. The Son of God hath already read the very words which shall be pronounced in the day when he returneth to take possession of his kingdom.: *But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.* Luke, xix. 27.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

How very beautifully the Psalm concludes. Jehovah's King, Jehovah's Anointed, must reign: all enemies must be subdued. Jehovah himself is engaged to this, and the Messiah's everlasting kingdom must prevail. And as this will be to the eternal glory of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so will it be to the joy of the Adonai, the Mediator, the glorious Head of his Church, and to all his people. But the triumphs of the redeemed in Jesus will be accompanied with the final and complete overthrow of all the enemies of God and of his Christ; for they shall fall

to rise no more; every mouth of them that speak lies will be stopped while every tongue of the redeemed will confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

R E F L E C T I O N S .

MY soul! do not dismiss thine attention to this precious portion of God's word, until thou hast gathered from it, as the bee from the sweetest flower, the many divine instructions it holds forth to thy meditation. Behold in it what an entertainment of the richest provision the Lord can afford and satisfy his redeemed with, even in a wilderness situation, when he can spread before them so plentiful a table as his own divine presence alone furnisheth. Surely here may be seen to the full the truth of that scripture, that he maketh the wilderness to blossom as a rose. What though thou art in a wilderness state, and surrounded with wilderness dispensations, if Jesus be with thee, and Jesus be thy portion; if thou canst call him thy God, and the God of thy mercies, will he not be to thee all that thou canst need, and all that thou canst desire? Pause, my soul, and count over thy right and claim to this covenant God in Christ. Art thou not his by creation, by redemption, by the conquests of his grace, the purchase of Jesus's blood, and the right of the Father's gift to his dear Son? And is not God the Father thy Father in Christ Jesus, by adoption and by grace? Is not Jesus thine by his betrothing thee to himself, and by the voluntary surrender of thyself to him in a oneness never to be dissolved? Hath not the Holy Ghost given thee the earnest of Jesus's love, and manifested that all he hath is thine, in taking of the things of Jesus and shewing them to thee? Oh! then live up to thine high privileges. See to it, day by day, that the devout breathings of this Psalm speak thy very language. Do thou, my soul, be sending forth an earnest cry for the God of thy life, and of thy salvation. Tell Jesus, that nothing can satisfy thy longings and thy thirstings but himself. Tell him that his ordinances are sweet, and the courts of his house are lovely; but unless the King be there, and unless thou canst hold the King in the galleries, there is nothing can give thee joy. Oh! thou holy One, thou lovely One, thou Lord our righteousness! let my desire be increasing every hour towards thee; let my love be always upon thee; let all my enjoyment be in thee, all my satisfaction from thee; and be thou the all in all to me, while I remain in the present wilderness-state, until thou shalt bring me home to the everlasting enjoyment of thyself for ever. Amen.

P S A L M L X I V .

C O N T E N T S .

This Psalm is very similar to many that we meet with. It contains the cry of an awakened soul against the enemies of his salvation, in which is contained an assurance of deliverance, from the well known character of a covenant God, and a well-grounded dependence upon him.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David.

HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer: pre-serve my life from fear of the enemy.

2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

The Reader will hardly need the aid of a commentator to direct his mind principally to the person of Christ, as being the persecuted soul here complaining. The enemy here spoken of is one special character defined to be so. And Christ's personal conflict was with him. And who can overlook the Jewish counsel before whom Christ was arraigned, when he stood before Pilate? Matt. xxvii. 1. While we always remember to keep alive in our minds the unequalled sorrows and afflictions of Jesus, we may then, without any injury to the word of God, consider also the sorrows and afflictions of his people as set forth by them.

3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

That the Lord Jesus is here alluded to by the Holy Ghost, is evident, for none but Jesus could ever come under the appellation of the *perfect*. The Reader will not want testimonies in how many instances Christ was thus spoken against in the days of his flesh. Mark, xiv. 65.

5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward *thought* of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.

Here are marked the deep-laid schemes of the wicked. And when we read the history of Christ's trial, and mockings, and scourgings, the preludes to his death; who but must see the great and sacred Object, to whom the Psalmist, under the power of the Holy Ghost, pointed?

7 But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

I have not interrupted the progress of these verses, in order that the Reader, after having finished the perusal of the whole, may mark their connection. There is a beautiful climax of order in the relation. The wicked are described as planning their schemes in secret: who shall see them, who shall know their contrivances? None but God. He shall not only see, but punish them; yea, out of their own mouth their villainies shall be discovered. And the consequence shall be, that the righteous shall see the final issue and rejoice, and ascribe the whole glory to God. How strikingly was this displayed in the case of the Jews after our Lord's crucifixion, in the destruction of themselves and their beloved Jerusalem! How frequently is it manifested in private life, when, after the long persecution of the faithful by the ungodly, the Lord suddenly appears for the defence of his servants! And how fully and completely will the whole issue of the divine providence be manifested, when Christ shall appear to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe! While the church shout their songs of victory, Satan's everlasting destruction will form a part in their remembrance before the throne. The song is already given to the church, and will be sung in full chorus in the great day of God: *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.* Rev. xii. 10, 11.

REFLECTIONS.

How truly blessed it is to have a covenant God to fly unto, amidst all the reproaches of the enemy, and the malice of every deadly foe which lies in wait to deceive. But oh! how truly blessed is it to behold Thee, thou excellent pattern and exemplar of our nature, in all the conflicts thou, the Lord of life and glory, wast called to pass through, when thou didst condescend to endure such a contradiction of sinners against thyself, lest we should be weary and faint in our minds. Methinks I hear thy voice still vibrating in my ears, oh, thou meek and harmless Lamb of God, when thou didst cry out under the heavy load, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* Thou wert indeed a worm, and no man, in their esteem; nay, the very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people. Never, oh never, blessed Jesus! let me lose sight of thee, while passing on the heavenly road. Give me to mark thy footsteps by the tracing of thy blood as I go on! and let me say, See, here the Redeemer trod, when, like his people, he walked through this vale of tears.

Oh! ye mistaken enemies of Jesus! short are your triumphs, and sure your misery. The God of our salvation sees all your conduct now; and shortly, very shortly, will he shoot at you with a swift arrow. Death is near, very near: and the Judge is at the door: then will be fully shewn the difference between *the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.*

PSALM LXV.

CONTENTS.

This is a lovely Psalm: the sacred writer celebrates God's praise; points out the blessedness of God's chosen; and shews both their temporal and spiritual mercies.

To the chief musician, A Psalm and Song of David.

PRAISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

This Psalm opens with a peculiarity of expression, which merits our attention in a more than ordinary degree, because we do not find any phrase so strong to the great point the Psalmist had in view, in any other part of scripture. Praise waiteth for thee; or as the Chaldee renders it, All praise is silent before thee; meaning that the highest exaltation men or angels can put forth is so low beneath the subject, that it is as if nothing were said. The waiting for God means, no doubt, waiting the Lord's time, the Lord's acceptance, the Lord's mercy, to look graciously upon it. And where is it that this praise waits? In Zion, at Jerusalem. For there alone, in Christ, can either the person, or the offerings of the people be accepted. Sweet and precious thought! It is only in Jesus, who is the way, and the truth, and the life, that we can come to God. He hath made us accepted in the beloved; John, xiv. 6; Ephes. i. 6. And what an encouraging scripture is that of the prophet, to bring our praises to our God and Father in Christ Jesus, in which the Holy Ghost hath said—*The people shall dwell in Zion, at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.* Isaiah, xxx. 19. Reader, do not fail to remark from this sweet verse, how suitable it is in the Lord's people to wait upon him without distraction of thought, and in silence to be prepared for the visits of God's Holy Spirit, before we offer the Lord either our prayers or our praises. How striking is the Lord's direction to this amount! *Keep silence before me, O islands, and let the people renew their strength; let them come near—then let them speak.* Isaiah, xli. 1. Habakkuk, ii. 20.

2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Here is the immediate act of prayer, and praise in consequence of God's answering. If praise waiteth for God, he will not suffer his praying people, or his praising people, to wait long. Well may all flesh come to him, who is the creator of all flesh: and well may all cry unto him, who expressly saith, *It shall come to pass, that before my people call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* Isaiah, lxv. 24.

But before we dismiss both these verses, I would have the Reader connect them, and then observe, whether the former doth not look with an eye of reference to the Jewish church, and the latter to the Gentile? Jerusalem shall not be the only spot from whence praise shall ascend; but *in every place* (saith the Lord) *incense shall be offered unto my name,*

and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts. Malachi, i. 11.

3 Iniquities prevail against me: *as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*

Here we arrive at the chief subject of this praise, which waited for God in Christ's church at Zion, namely, redemption by Christ's blood. For what shall purge or wash away iniquities, but the blood of the Lamb? Reader! do not fail to remark the blessedness here expressed, that when iniquities prevail, when sin cries for vengeance, the blood of the Lamb cries for mercy. Oh Lord! let praise for ever wait in Zion for thee, thou sin-pardoning God, who hast cast away the sins of thy redeemed in the depths of the sea! Well may we cry out under the sense of it, *Who is a God like unto thee?* Micah, vii. 18, 19.

4 *Blessed is the man whom thou choolest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*

Methinks, I could spend hours on this precious, precious verse, and when I had pondered over the sweet contents of it again and again, it should still be opening new subjects of praise. Reader! who can this man be that is here said to be blessed, but the God-man, the Wisdom-man, Christ Jesus? For who but He ever engaged his heart to approach unto Jehovah? Or whom did Jehovah choose to approach unto him, but the man God's fellow? Examine some of those very blessed scriptures, which explain this most glorious doctrine, before you prosecute the other parts of this verse: Psm. lxxxix. 19; Heb. i. 6, &c. Jerem. xxx. 21; Zech. xiii. 7, &c. And while we thus behold Christ Jesus, as the man of Jehovah's choice, to approach unto him as our surety, our sponsor, our representative; shall we not be satisfied with the greatness of his salvation, and feel the full enjoyment of that unspeakable promise, *Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed?* Reader! what saith your heart to these things? Will you not join issue with this precious verse, and say, Blessed is the man, blessed be the God-man, the glory-man, Christ Jesus, the elect, the beloved, the chosen of Jehovah, whom God the Father causeth to approach unto him as the glorious Head, and Redeemer, and Mediator of his people? Yes, we shall be satisfied, yea, abundantly satisfied in him, and with him. Yes, thou Holy One of God! thou, even thou alone, shalt choose our inheritance for us, whom God our Father hath chosen to be our Redeemer. Psalm xlvii. 4.

5 *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.*

Here every child of God can join issue in attesting the truth of this scripture in his own experience. Say, what was the heart occupied in, when God the Spirit first visited the soul? Not in seeking God; not in

desiring God; not in thinking of God. *Not by works of righteousness* (saith the apostle) *which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us.* Titus, iii. 5, 6. And when the Lord first awakened the soul, and all the terrors of God's broken law stood open to the sinner's view, how terrible then appeared the apprehension of the wrath to come. But all this was in righteousness, even in the display of the righteousness of Christ Jesus. Wonderful things indeed, my soul! when, by such a gracious process of mercy, the Lord Jesus Christ was brought home to thine heart, and formed there *the hope of glory!* Wonderful also indeed in the destruction of all those enemies which would have opposed thy salvation. Isa. lxiv. 3. And, my soul! never lose sight of the assurance such past testimonies of divine favour afford for all future expectations of the fulfilment of divine promises in Jesus. The God of thy salvation was, and is, and ever will be, the confidence of all the redeemed to the ends of the earth, and their everlasting joy in heaven for ever. Oh! for faith in lively exercise, to make use of this well-grounded hope in Jesus upon all occasions of trial.

6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; *being girded with power.*

7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

While we accept these scriptures as confirmations of God's sovereign power in the kingdom of nature, let us read them also, as the Holy Ghost hath graciously given them, in this and other passages of his blessed word, as confirmations of the same in the kingdom of grace. How sweet to this purpose (to mention no other) is that precious passage of the prophet, wherein the Lord saith *the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed*; but neither Jehovah's kindness, nor his covenant of peace, shall be removed from Jesus, and his people in him. Isaiah, liv. 10.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

This is a sweet verse, if read with reference to Christ: looking at him as the morning and evening sacrifice set forth under the law, and reading God's covenant of the perpetuity of morning and evening, seed-time and harvest; these things become very refreshing to the soul. Well might the church, therefore, under these impressions, record the faithfulness of the Lord. Pray look at those scriptures in proof: Numb. xxviii. 3—8; Gen. viii. 20—22; Lam. iii. 22, 23. And what are the tokens at which those that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth are said to be afraid, but the manifestations of salvation by Jesus? When sinners are awakened, and saints refreshed, these tokens excite in every looker-on astonishment and surprise: so said the prophet should be the effect, Isa. xli. 5.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, *which is*

full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

12 They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

I have not broken the thread of the subject in these verses, because the whole, taken together, forms a most beautiful description of the divine bounty in those several productions of nature. The blessings of the Lord in fruitful gifts and seasons to the earth, and to the inhabitants of it, are delightfully set forth. And as Moses taught Israel to expect the perpetual return of those things, so the continued enjoyment of them should call forth blessings and praises to the almighty Giver. Exod. xxiii. 16. But the subject is heightened to a more sublime degree of enjoyment, if, looking beyond the gifts of God in the natural world, we accept those scriptures as descriptive of his spiritual-bounty in the world of grace: and we meet with numberless passages in the word of God, to prove that the Holy Ghost evidently intended that the church should so receive them. The wilderness of our nature is said to blossom as the rose, when the Lord visiteth our earthly minds with the dew of his blessing; and when Jesus comes down, like rain upon the mown grass, on the dry and thirsty souls of his people. The year is indeed crowned with the Lord's goodness, when the year of his redeemed is come, and the Lord pours out of the effusion of his Spirit from that river whose streams make glad the city of God. Oh! the blessedness of looking up to a covenant God in Christ, when the clouds drop fatness, to see all our mercies *from* whence they flow, *through* whom they come, and *in* whom they are indeed blessed. Yes, blessed Jesus! *men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed.* Isaiah xxxv. throughout; Psalm xlvi. 4; Psalm lxxii. throughout.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul, I charge it upon thee, by the outgoings of the morning and the evening, that in those constant recurrences of day and night, thou wait in the silence of the most awakened meditation, for goings forth in praise and prayer, in humblings and rejoicings, before the mercy-seat of God in Christ. Say, my soul, canst thou really, truly, heartily, sincerely, adopt this language—Praise waiteth for thee, my God, in Zion? Canst

thou look up to thy Jesus, and say, Oh! thou that hearest prayer, to thee do I come?

Blessed God and Father, help me to adore thee, to love thee, to praise thee, for thy gracious choice of Jesus as my Surety. Never, surely, heavenly Lord, didst thou manifest thy grace and love to our poor fallen nature by any act of mercy equal to that, in which thou didst set up thine Holy One to approach unto thee as our glorious Mediator. Oh! for grace to choose him whom God hath chosen, to love him whom God hath loved, and to trust him with our salvation, into whose almighty hands God the Father hath committed all his glory. Lord, make this, I beseech thee, a daily evidence of my interest in Jesus, and of my walking with him. Then, Lord, shall I be satisfied with the goodness of thine house. Precious will be thy sabbaths, thy word, thine ordinances, thy people; all, all that belong to Jesus, will be precious to my soul. Yes, my soul will sit down at the fountain-head of enjoyment, in feasting upon the body and blood of my Lord; thy covenant grace, thy love, thy righteousness, will be a perpetual feast of fat things while here below, until thou shalt call me from the church below to the church above, to the everlasting enjoyment of thy presence in glory for ever.

PSALM LXVI.

CONTENTS.

Here we have a song of praise, both for the public mercies of God to his church, and the private manifestations of the same to every individual of it.

To the chief musician, A Song or Psalm.

MAKE a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands :
 2 Sing forth the honour of his name : make
 his praise glorious.

In every point of view the employment here enjoined is of universal concern. All lands, all nations, all kingdoms, the whole earth, every individual, can, and ought to find subject of praise. But when a nation, or people, or an individual; can sing the song of redemption, Jesus loved me, Jesus saved me, Jesus gave himself for me; what high notes of praise are then swelling the song. Reader, can you join in this chorus? Can you sing the song of Moses and the Lamb *now*? Do you hope ere long to sing that song among the glorified above, which no man could learn but the hundred and forty and four thousand redeemed from the earth? Rev. xiv. 3.

3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name.
 Selah.

If we read these verses with reference to the great work of redemption wrought upon the heart of a sinner, how very decisive are they of

the covenant promises made to the person of the Redeemer by the Father, concerning the certainty of his success: *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.* See Psalm cx. throughout; Psalm cxiv. throughout: Psalm xlv. 3—5.

5 Come and see the works of God: *he is terrible in his doing towards the children of men.*

6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

The Psalmist is here inviting the people to peruse the account of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. And evidently the Holy Ghost intends this ministry of his servant to be directed as a means, in his almighty hand, to consider in that history the spiritual deliverance of God's Israel from the Egypt of sin, and death, and hell, by the glorious victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, Reader, let us come and see the works of our covenant God. Here let us behold how the sea and floods of sin are dried up, and a passage opened for poor, redeemed, ransomed believers in the blood of Christ. Heb. x. 19—21.

8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

10 For thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.

12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place.*

Well may every redeemed soul join issue in this service, and call upon every one in union with Christ to bless a covenant God in him, and to make the voice of his praise to be made known. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, is peculiarly demanded when praise is made general; Psalm cvii. 1, 2. But God's people are an exercised people; and it is needful they should be so. The Lord said, (and all his redeemed find it to be so) *I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried.* But, blessed be God, the event is certain, and not doubtful. Though they pass through the fire, and through the water, Jesus is with them.

Many waters cannot quench his love, neither can all the floods drown it. They shall be brought forth into a wealthy place, even to the everlasting enjoyment of Jesus; and he will cause them to inherit substance, and will fill their treasures. A covenant God hath said, *They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.* Zech. xiii. 9. Isa. xliii. 2. Song, viii. 7. Prov. viii. 21.

13 I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings:
I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth
hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fat-
lings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bul-
locks with goats. Selah.

It is sweet and profitable to go up to God's house, under the leadings of God's Spirit, at all times, and upon all occasions; and it is doubly sweet when, after sickness or detention from God's ordinances, we are permitted once more to enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Reader, have you known what it is to be kept back by various causes; to have pined for the enjoyment of ordinances; and at length to have been blessed in the renewed privilege? Psalm xlii. 1, 2. But how vast are our advantages over our elder brethren in the old church. They went up with the burnt-offerings of the temple service, the legal sacrifices of the blood of rams and other beasts: and although these were offered (when offered properly) by faith with reference to Christ; yet, blessed be our God! we draw nigh in the blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot. We have the substance; they had but the shadow. Precious Lord! thou art indeed become an High Priest, and by thine own blood thou hast entered, once for all, into the holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Heb. ix. 11, 12.

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I
will declare what he hath done for my soul.

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he
was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD
will not hear me:

19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath at-
tended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away
my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

If we consider, in the first place, David's Lord as the preacher here, these verses will be very blessed to our view. How was Christ exercised in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from

death, and was heard in that he feared? Heb. v. 7. And who so eminently as Christ could adopt this language? Who but Jesus could say, that iniquity had not been regarded in his heart? Of whom but Christ could it be said, the Lord hath heard, because there was no iniquity in him? And if we read the passage as referring to the church, or any individual of the church, we can only make application of it as considered in Jesus. Reader, can you invite the people that fear God, to come and hear what the Lord hath done for *your* soul? Can you tell them of Jesus, of his grace, his mercy, his love, his salvation, and your interest in him? If so, you will be able to close the Psalm in the same words as David. The Lord is indeed blessed when our prayers do not turn back unheard and unanswered; and when Jesus, the first-born in the womb of mercy, nay, the whole sum and substance of mercy, even mercy itself, is looking upon us.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, while the Holy Ghost is here calling upon all lands to celebrate the praises of Jehovah, say what part can you, from a heart-felt satisfaction, bear in the song? Can you bless God for creation? So can the various characters of the earth. Can you bless God for providences? So can the Turk, the Jew, the infidel, the heretic: they can boast of their lands and vineyards, the fruitfulness of their soil, and the salubrity of their climate. Surely the Christian hath higher notes to sing besides these; and while he blesseth God as a God of creation and providence, he ought to bless him in louder strains of thanksgiving and love, as a God of redemption and grace.

Precious Jesus! let these be my notes: let my morning song, and evening hymn, while celebrating the nether springs of divine bounty, publish and proclaim the upper springs of grace and salvation; and all in thee! It is thou, Lord, that hast brought the glad tidings to thy people. It is thou alone that wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Let this be my song of rejoicing all the day; and may I have grace to sing forth the honour of thy name, and make thy praise to be glorious.

And oh! ye ransomed souls, ye who fear, and know, and love, my God! come hither, and hearken to my relation of his mercy. I was brought low, cast out, and ready to perish: Jesus saved me, Jesus loved me, and will love me! Oh! put your trust in him alway, ye people: pour out your hearts before him; hang upon him; cleave to him; and never give over your humble suit until he hath heard and attended to the voice of your prayer, so that you can, and do cry out, as all the faithful gone before you have done, *Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*

PSALM LXVII.

CONTENTS.

The church rejoices in the love and favour of her Lord, and desires that the same blessings she enjoys in her beloved, may be the happy portion of both Jew and Gentile.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song.

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. Selah.

Is not this prayer an answer of faith to the blessed precept of Jehovah given to Aaron the high-priest? Numb. vi. 22, &c. If we read this scripture with reference to this injunction, nothing can be more interesting, for then it becomes the exercise of faith on God's promises in Christ. It is as if the church with one voice should say, Hath the Lord Jehovah appointed our almighty Aaron to bless his people? Is Jesus still exercising this high-priestly office? Doth God our Father bless and keep his people? Doth God the Son make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us? And doth God the Holy Ghost lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace? Then, Lord, hear thy church while exercising faith in these promises, and do thou be merciful to us, and bless us, and do as thou hast said.

2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Observe how blessed are the effects which follow God's mercy, and the shining of his countenance upon the soul. The church of our elder brother, the Jew, is praying for the conversion of her younger sister, the Gentile church, and desiring that the salvation by Jesus may be as universal as it is great. And we may suppose, with great propriety, that this is spoken, partly in a way of prayer, and partly by way of prophecy of what will be accomplished. The Lord had said, that in him, that is in Christ, should all the families of the earth be blessed. And here the church is looking forward to it, and longing to see it fulfilled. Gen. xii. 3.

3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

Gospel mercies demand gospel praise; and whenever the name and power of Christ are known and felt, praise will burst forth from every heart and every tongue.

4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

The prophet had foretold that the nation and kingdom, which would not serve Christ, should perish; Isa. lx. 12. But the same prophet had it in commission to tell the church, that so blessed should be the advent of Christ's kingdom, and such the prosperity of the church, that strangers should stand and feed their flocks, and the sons of the alien should be their plowmen and their vine-dressers. So that in the contemplation of those auspicious events, the nations should be glad, and sing for joy, the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. Isaiah, lxi. 5.

5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

The call on the people is again repeated, to rejoice, like the repeated hallelujahs of Heaven. He that hath once sung to the praise of Christ's

redeeming love, will everlastingly sing to it, and make it his every-day song.

6 *Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*

The earth, with all her blessings, shall be sanctified to the church in her use of them; for by the fall thorns and briars only were to be her product; but now in Jesus all is sweetened, sanctified, and blessed. And the foundation and security of all these mercies are in the covenant relationship between God and his people. If God be our God, our own God in Christ, we may be well assured that he will give us his blessing: having given us his only begotten Son, will he not with him freely give us all things? Reader, let you and I convert these sweet words into a prayer, then act faith upon it, and be assured that the blessing will most certainly follow. *From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.* Isaiah, xxiv. 16.

7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

REFLECTIONS.

IN the contemplation of the blessings contained in this devout hymn of the church, methinks, Reader, I would have your soul go forth, as I pray the Lord lead forth mine, in praising and adoring the God of all our mercies, for the sweet view here given of the harmony and love of the Jewish church towards that of the Gentiles, in so ardently desiring the advent of those blessed consequences of her conversion to the knowledge and enjoyment of the Lord Jesus. Surely it will be a glorious church, a blessed church, an harmonious church, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be completed, and the Deliverer shall arise out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Lord, I would pray, hasten the happy hour: God be merciful to us, and bless us: let thy way be known upon earth, thy saving health unto all nations. Bring, Lord, thy church, both Jew and Gentile, into one fold, under one Shepherd, and let the whole redeemed be gathered unto our glorious Shiloh, that God in all things may be glorified in Jesus Christ.

And, until this blessed æra arrive, and Christ's kingdom come, let us look up, and daily pray for these vast blessings. God hath said, For these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. Be gracious, Lord, I would say, in making thy way known through the earth, and thy saving health in salvation-blessings among all nations. And oh! thou almighty Aaron! thou great High Priest and Melchisedec of thy church and people! do thou bless us in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit! May God the Father bless us, and keep us! May God the Son make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us! May God the Holy Ghost lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace! Amen.

PSALM LXVIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is full of gospel from beginning to end, as the authority of God the Holy Ghost fully shews, Eph. iv. 8. It was composed, pro-

bably, at David's removing the ark from the house of Obed-edom. And as the ark was well known, and well understood in the church, to have been a type of Christ, we may well suppose the mind of David had this in view in all he celebrates.

To the chief musician, A Psalm or Song of David.

LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

If the Reader will consult Numb. x. 35, he will find that the invocation with which this Psalm opens is the same as Moses, the man of God, used ages before, at every removal of the ark in the journeys of the Israelites. Probably it was a devout prayer used in the church upon all occasions of this sort; and therefore the patriarch David, as well as the people, were well acquainted with this divine method of seeking the presence and power of a covenant God to precede them in all their undertakings, as well as in all their religious exercises. And who can doubt but that the eyes of the faithful, as the eyes of one man, were looking to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the ark represented? Reader, think what views our fathers in the *old* church had of the same Jesus whom we adore in the *new*! And shall we not call upon our glorious Head to arise and go before us upon all occasions, and precede us in all that we put our hand to? Oh! had we but faith to do this, how would all the enemies of our salvation, and of our God and his Christ, flee before us! Isa. liii. 12. Deut. xxxii. 30. But when we have paid due attention to this striking verse, in reference to the historical part of it, the beauties of it will meet our souls in a yet more exalted point of view, if we read it as referring to Christ's triumph over death and the grave. Then indeed did Christ arise and scatter all his foes; then it was that he first taught the church to look beyond death and the grave, by going before us, as our forerunner to the upper regions of the blessed, to open the way to the true Canaan, and the Zion of glory, which is above. Hail! thou risen and exalted Jesus!

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

Here are two strong similitudes made use of, to represent the fleeting transitory continuance of all the enemies of our Christ. Smoke may for the moment seem to eclipse the sun; and wax, from its hardness and adhesive nature, may form an obstruction: but both must instantly give way before the light and heat of the sun's beams. So Jesus, when he appears, makes every enemy fall before him.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

What a beautiful contrast is here drawn between the righteous and the wicked! And what a blessed thought it is, to consider in whom that righteousness is found, which, from its unchanging nature, must be an everlasting security! Isa. liv. 17.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: ex-

tol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation.

6 God setteth the solitary in families; he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

Reader, do not fail to observe in what an endearing point of view the church is called upon to triumph in her covenant God. *First*, in his glorious incommunicable name JAH, self-existent, and in himself the Author and Source of all the covenant-blessings he hath given and promised. *Secondly*, in his covenant character, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; by which he stands engaged to be the Father of our fatherless and ruined state in Adam. And *thirdly*, in the fulfilment of what he hath promised to our glorious Head; of which every poor sinner brought out of darkness and the shadow of death is a confirmation. The Lord Jehovah doth in effect say to the person of the great Head of the church, whenever he quickens a sinner, *By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water*; Zech. ix. 11. Well may every redeemed soul sing praises to God; yea, sing praises to his name! And still more when contemplating the distinguishing nature of the mercy. Is it not the name-sake of Jehovah which is made the cause and motive of every covenant mercy? Ezek. xxxvi. 22.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: *even Sinai itself was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

Here is a magnificent description, though in few words, of that great event which the church in all ages desires to keep in remembrance, namely, God's presence and movement in a pillar of cloud by day, when he went before Israel in the wilderness, together with the solemn and awful appearances at Mount Sinai. Never, surely, did the history of mankind furnish the like. Several of the sacred writers of the Old Testament refer to it, as denoting the love of Jehovah to his people: Such as Moses's dying blessing, Deborah's song, and Habakkuk's prayer. Deut. xxxiii. 2. Judges, v. 4, 5, Habak. iii. 3, &c. But while we admire and adore those tokens of divine love, let us not overlook the spiritual mercies which, in allusion to the times of the gospel, those manifestations shadowed. Is not Jesus now going forth, in the marches of divine grace, through the whole of the wilderness dispensation of his redeemed? Are not his people still coming up out of it, leaning upon Jesus? Hath Jesus brought them out of Egyptian bondage, and doth he bring them into wilderness dispensations? Still he is leading them by a right way to a city of habitation, and going before them through all the borders of it.

The enemy may say of us, as the Egyptians did of our fathers, The wilderness hath shut them in; and our rebellious and unbelieving hearts may sometimes be discouraged, as our fathers were, by reason of the way: but Jesus will bring us through a new and living way, even his blood. We are not come indeed to the mount that burned with fire, and to blackness, and darkness, and tempest; but we are come to mount Zion; to God the judge of all; to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling! Blessed be God the Holy Ghost, for teaching his servant the apostle so to explain the superiority of the gospel state over the law. Reader! do not forget to look at those sweet scriptures, Song, viii. 5; Psalm cvii. 7; Exod. xiv. 3; Heb. x. 19, 20; xii. 18 to 24.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

What is this plentiful rain, which Jehovah sent upon his inheritance, but Christ himself? He, it was said, should come down like rain upon the mown grass; Psm. lxxii. 6. And when Jesus comes to a church, to a land, to a people, to an individual, what gifts and graces of the Spirit doth he bring with him, to bless, and refresh, and make happy? Reader! observe the expression, *to confirm* the Lord's inheritance. Yes! the gift of God's dear Son is a confirmation of all covenant-promises. Hence the Lord made both the wilderness and Canaan, with types only of gospel mercies, to blossom as a rose. Hence the Lord sent the quails, and the manna, and the milk and honey, as so many tokens of divine favour, and as a pledge of the everlasting riches of the Lord Jesus, in the enjoyment of whom Jehovah would confirm his covenant with Abraham for ever. Gen. xii. 3. In the faith of this, the Patriarchs lived and died, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and embraced them: and thus in the overflowing goodness of the Lord, the Lord manifested his love to his poor. Heb. xi. 13.

11 The LORD gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it*.

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

If we read these triumphs in a spiritual sense, with reference to the preaching of the everlasting gospel, the subject will be infinitely heightened above that of the mere history. The Lord indeed gave the word to his servants, who in his name, and by his power, drove out all their enemies; and hence we find Joshua, and others, going forth in the Lord's name, to victory. But the word which Jehovah gave in this place eminently means his word of salvation by Jesus Christ. Hence, when prophets, apostles, and evangelists, went forth preaching the word, the Lord confirmed that word by signs following: great were the effects of it indeed; not only earthly potentates and kings fell under it, but all

the power of the enemy. And what is it now, but the same? Devils (said the apostles) are subject through thy word, blessed Jesus; and so may the faithful still praise him. Luke, x. 17.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, *yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was *white* as snow in Salmon.

In allusion to the state of Israel while in Egypt, while they were building houses for Pharaoh, they were considered as the most abject of slaves, and it is probable that they had no couch, or resting place, but lay down by night, after their work was finished, among the rubbish of their labours: hence they are said to have been, like worthless dirty vessels, lying among the pots. But when brought out of slavery, and established in their kingdom, as in the days of David and Solomon, these were golden days to Israel; compare Exod. i. 11 to 14; 1 Kings, x. 27. But I pray the Reader to look further still, to the *spiritual* sense of this scripture. Doth not our Lord Jesus Christ in effect say to every soul of his redeemed, when brought to himself, Though thou wert cast out to perish, and in thy lusts and affections wert covered with the rubbish of idolatry; living as without God and without Christ in the world; yet now that thou art brought nigh in my blood, thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. Song, iv. 7. So the apostle views the presentation which Christ makes of his church to himself, Ephes. v. 26, 27.

15 The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan; an high hill *as* the hill of Bashan.

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? *this is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.

The hill of Zion, though beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth, became so for no other reason but because the Lord chose it for himself, and to place his church there. For as to the greatness of it, or the extent or loftiness of it, there was no comparison between Zion and the numberless other hills around. And was not this a beautiful similitude to the humble appearance of Zion's king? There was no beauty when we should see him, that we should desire him: as it was said of Zion by the enemy, so was it said of Zion's Lord. Is this Zion, whom no man seeketh after? Jeremiah, xxx, 17; Psalm xlvi. 2. Reader! do not overlook the instruction this scripture holds forth now; for Christ's church is as much despised, even by many who call themselves Christians, in the present hour, as in the day when this Psalm was written. But, sweet the thought! Here, saith the Lord, will I dwell for ever.—See that rich string of promises, Psalm cxxxii. 13 to 18.

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels; the LORD *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the holy *place.*

This gives us a lively idea of the ministry of angels. We know but little of their employment; but the word of God affords much account concerning them. They are deeply engaged in prying into the mysteries of redemption. They attended the great Redeemer upon numberless occasions during his ministry upon earth, and attended him to grace his triumph when he returned to glory after redemption-work was finished.— And we are told, that they will make a part in the Mediator's train, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. And they are said to be ministering servants sent forth to minister unto them that are heirs of salvation. But how they succour the faithful, or how their services are now exercised in the church, scripture doth not inform us. See those passages, 1 Pet. i. 12; Matt. iv. 11; Luke, xxii. 43; Matt. xxviii. 2; Acts, i. 10, 11; Heb. i. 14.

18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men: yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among* them.

This is the verse of verses, which serves as a key to unlock the sacred treasury of this whole Psalm. And the Holy Ghost himself is his own commentator. By his servant, the apostle Paul, he hath taught the church how to apply it to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ; Ephes. iv. 8, &c. Hence, by comparing these scriptures, and looking up for his divine teaching, who is the almighty Author of both, we are admitted into a blessed apprehension of the things here recorded, concerning Christ. Reader! do observe, in what words the thing is spoken of, *thou hast ascended*. Whereas this was written by the spirit of prophecy, at least a thousand years before Christ was born. But to His almighty eye, before whom things past, present, or future, form but one object, the event is so sure, that what he hath counselled must stand, and be as certain as if finished. The ascension of the Lord Jesus is the subject here contemplated; but the whole of Christ's triumphs over death, hell, and the grave, together with his exalted state at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, is included in this hymn of praise. Psm. xlvii. 5, 6, 7. Precious thought to the believer! Jesus, thy Jesus, thy Surety, the Captain of thy salvation, hath led captive the devil and all his host, that led thee captive, and hath destroyed for ever the dominion of sin and the grave. Hallelujah! I desire the Reader, in comparing this verse with the parallel one, in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, to observe the variation of expression. It is beautifully diversified, as if God the Holy Ghost would have the church take notice of each particularly. David's expression is, *Thou hast received gifts for men*: the apostle's phrase is, *and gave gifts unto men*: Both of which, strictly and properly speaking, Christ did. For he *received* from the Father, as Mediator, all he *gave* to his people: for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; that of his fulness all we might receive, and grace for grace. These things were in the covenant agreed on between the glorious Persons, that Christ should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. And the apostle throws further light upon the subject in explaining what those gifts are, and how they were bestowed, when he saith that he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors

and teachers. And, Reader! do not overlook what to you and me, personally considered, becomes the sweetest part of the verse: Jesus received these ascension-gifts for the rebellious; *yea*, saith the Holy Ghost; as if the blessed Spirit would put a special emphasis upon this part of Christ's gifts: *yea* they were, and are, for the *rebellious*. Then, Reader! why not for you, why not for me? Lord Jesus! grant them to both, if it be thine heavenly will; that thou mayest dwell in our hearts by faith, and be formed there the hope of glory! One observation more on this glorious verse: In the margin of some of our old Bibles, the translators have retained, what the original Hebrew will fully allow, that those gifts received were not only *for* men, but he received them *IN the man* Christ Jesus; that is, in his human nature, which he had taken into the Godhead. And we know, that in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Oh! precious, precious thought: How hath Jesus honoured our nature! And how hath Christ endeared himself to us, in coming so near to us, that we might be brought near to him! John, xiv. 20; xvii. 23.

19 Blessed *be* the LORD, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits*, *even* the God of our salvation. Selah.

20 *He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from death.

21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, *and* the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

Who that contemplates the divine love, especially as manifested in the verse going before, but must break out, with the church, in this short but sweet hymn of praise? The Lord not only gives us benefits, but *loads* us with them, and this not only now and then, but daily: and he that is our God now, will be our God for ever. All the issues of life and death are with him. Oh! let the enemies of our Jesus tremble at these truths, and kiss the Son, lest he be angry; for if his wrath be kindled, *yea*, but a little, they shall perish. But blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Psm. ii. 12.

22 The LORD said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *my people* again from the depths of the sea:

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies, *and* the tongue of thy dogs in the same.

In allusion to the bringing the church out of Egypt at the first, the Lord here speaks of bringing the church again, with a far greater deliverance, from the depths of danger, by the triumphs of redemption in Christ his chosen. And here is an allusion also to the feet of Christ, or the *heel* of Christ being bruised in the contest. As in the former verse

the *head* of the enemy's hairy scalp was said to suffer. See Gen. iii. 15; Isaiah, lxiii. 3.

24 They have seen thy goings, O God; *even* the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after; amongst *them were* the damsels playing with timbrels.

26 Bless ye God in the congregations, *even* the LORD, from the fountain of Israel.

27 There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their counsel, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali.

28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, *till every one* submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people *that* delight in war.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

Is not this a similar address, from the Father to the Son, to what we meet with, Psm. xlv. 6, 7, and which the Holy Ghost hath explained Heb. i. 6—9? And if so, what a glorious view doth it afford of God the Father's delight and glory in the salvation wrought by his dear Son? What holy triumphs are here shewn to be our Christ's? Observe how the Jewish church, with her several tribes, are set forth as coming to Christ; and how the Gentile church, with Ethiopia and the Isles, (why not our Britain included?) as looking unto Jesus for redemption. Reader! pray oblige me by reading to this effect, Isaiah, xix. 18, to the end.

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the LORD; Selah:

33 To him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is* in the clouds.

35 O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy

places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed be God.

How very applicable and suited is this hymn of praise, for all the redeemed upon earth to use, after the review of such unspeakable mercies as this Psalm hath recorded! Who can withhold the just tribute of praise, among all the kingdoms of the earth? Heaven is indeed the place of unceasing joy, and thanksgivings to God and the Lamb: but until we arrive at that blessed place, every tongue, every heart, every faculty of soul and body, should be called forth in the song of redemption. Who that contemplates the sovereign majesty of Jehovah, his glory, his power, his supreme honour and holiness, but must be lost in amazement, to think of the condescending manifestations of his grace, in the person and offices of his co-equal, co-eternal Son! Well may we cry out, Blessed be God! blessed be God, for Jesus Christ!

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! pause over what thou hast read in this divine, this gospel Psalm. What though David sang the invocation in it, to thy God and Saviour, at the bringing up the ark, yet was it by faith in Jesus, who is himself the true ark of Jehovah, and on whom his glory rested. And do thou sing aloud his name and righteousness, as the ark of thy salvation, in time and to all eternity. Depend upon it, my soul, all thine enemies must flee before thy Jesus; for He, thy risen and exalted Saviour, is gone up on high; he hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for his people; yea, for the most rebellious, as thou hast been, and still art, even for thee; that the Lord thy God might come and dwell with thee, and, according to his promise, make his abode with thee. Do thou bless him then, my soul, who daily loadeth thee with benefits. Do thou praise him, who now goeth before thee, as he went before his people through the wilderness, as he fed them with manna, and sent a plentiful rain upon his inheritance, so doth he come down as showers upon the mown grass, who was, and is the living bread, the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven; and was, and is the life, and portion of his people, both then and for ever. Hail! thou almighty Redeemer! Blessed for ever be thy name! Thou hast not only published and proclaimed thine own, and thy Father's will for the salvation of sinners; but thou hast spoken the word, and great hath been the company of them that published it, as sent by thee. It is thou, blessed Jesus! which hast sent down the Spirit, and given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ! And now, blessed Lord! do thou bless the labours of those whom thou hast commissioned, and make them abundantly useful, in publishing thy name, thy grace, thy love, thy finished salvation, and thy glory; until *we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Amen.

PSALM LXIX.

CONTENTS.

Here is another gospel Psalm, not of David's troubles, but of David's Lord. The references made to it, in many parts of our Lord's life by himself, and both then and afterwards by his servants the apostles, decidedly shew to whom it belongs. Take it in one collected point, and it sketches many of the outlines of Christ's passion, from his birth to the cross. Like the 22d Psalm, it begins with a view of Christ in his abasement and sufferings, and ends with the relation of his exaltation and triumphs.

To the chief musician upon Shoshannim, *A Psalm* of David.

SAVE me, O God; for the waters are come in unto *my* soul.

2 I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

We here behold the Head of the church in his unequalled sorrows, and for which we hear him crying out, *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour!* John, xii. 27. Well might the church, when contemplating the love of her Lord, cry out, *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it!* Song, viii. 7. Yea, blessed Jesus! neither all thy personal afflictions and sufferings; the vials of thy Father's wrath against sin, when thou stoodest forth as the sinner's Surety; nor all the floods of corruption which had broke in upon human nature as a deluge; neither the reproaches of the ungodly; nor, what is most painful to be borne, the baseness and ingratitude of those thou camest to redeem; all, all together could not quench thy love! Oh! love of God that passeth knowledge! Oh! for grace to love him, that hath so astonishingly loved us.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.

What a blessed verse is here! Amidst all the opposition and contradiction of sinners against himself, Jesus manifested that character, by which Jehovah had pointed him out to the church by the prophet; *Thou shalt be called the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of the paths to dwell in;* Isaiah, lviii. 12. But what was it Christ restored? Nay, all that was lost. Adam, by sin, had taken away God's glory, and his own glory and happiness. He had robbed God of his glory, God's law of its due, himself of God's image and of God's favour. Sin had

brought in death, spiritual and eternal; and he, and all his descendants, stood tremblingly exposed to everlasting misery. All these, and more, Jesus restored. As man's Surety and man's Representative, called to those offices by the authority of Jehovah, the Lord Christ restored to God his glory, and to man God's image and favour; and having destroyed sin, death, hell, and the grave, he restored to his redeemed a better paradise than our nature had lost! Hail! oh, thou blessed Restorer of all our long-lost privileges.

5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

See how Jesus takes to himself our shame! Yes! Lamb of God, when thou condescendedst to be made sin for us, who knew no sin, it behoved thee thus to suffer, and thus to complain.

6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

Reader! is not this a sweet prayer of Jesus, that none of his redeemed may ever take shame at his cross, but rather glory in it? And observe how the cause of the Father is pointed at in all that belonged to redemption by our adorable Lord; because with God the Father all the grand concerns of redemption originated. John, x. 17, 18.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

10 When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.

12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I *was* the song of the drunkards.

Oh! how precious are these words of our Christ! And how were they all fulfilled in his own sacred person! When he came to his own, his own received him not. And was not Jesus treated worse than a stranger, when, though their law commanded them to remember the heart of a stranger, yet of Jesus, their Brother after the flesh, they said, *As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is?* John, i. 10, 11. Deut. x. 19. John, ix. 29. Christ's zeal for his Father's honour was so manifested in the temple, that the disciples were struck with it, and

immediately remembered this very scripture; John, ii. 17. And the reproaches Christ sustained, the Holy Ghost, by his servant the apostle Paul, directly applied to him in a plain scripture, Rom. xv. 3.

13 But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O LORD, *in* an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

If we compare this verse with Isaiah, xlix. 8, what a beautiful light will they throw upon each other.

14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy loving-kindness *is* good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

18 Draw nigh unto my soul, *and* redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.

19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries *are* all before thee.

20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none.

21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Reader! if you are much acquainted with the evangelists' accounts of Jesus's sufferings in the garden and on the cross (and if you are not, it is much to be wished that you were) you will see how all these expressions refer to those solemn seasons. Oh! how expressive are they of the sorrows of Jesus! Behold and see, was ever any sorrow like unto his sorrow, with which the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger? Lament, i. 12. I am inclined to think that David, king of Israel, as a prophet, was purposely commissioned by the Holy Ghost to compose such expressions as these, which we meet with both in this and other Psalms of his, for the special use of the Lord Jesus in the day of his

flesh. And I am also farther inclined to think, that as in no part of our Lord's sufferings God's honour and glory were more magnified than when Christ bore shame and reproach, as the sinner's Surety; Christ particularly referred to the vast recompence made, by way of reparation, when he said, *Thou hast known my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour.* Sweet consideration to the soul of the believer! I stay not to make any additional observations concerning those situations of Jesus, which the prophet here describes of his broken heart, the desertion of his friends, and the offered gall and vinegar; the Reader will not fail, I hope, to recollect that the reproaches and taunts of the Jews, while Jesus hung on the cross, the desertion of all his disciples in that hour of sorrow, and the sufferings of Jesus not being finished until this last prediction was fulfilled, in the giving him the gall and vinegar to drink; all so strikingly belonged to the Lord Jesus, as that they could belong to no other, and plainly manifest it is of him alone the prophet speaks.

22 Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

26 For they persecute *him* whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

We may accept these verses as so many expressions of prophecy, which were literally fulfilled, as our Lord elsewhere predicted, in the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem, about forty years after the ascension of the Lord Jesus. Luke, xix. 41, 44. It is impossible to read these scriptures, and then turn to the present state of our elder brethren the Jews, but with the most painful concern. Surely the Lord hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes that they shall not see, and ears that they shall not hear. If the Reader be disposed to meditate on this solemn subject, he will find that the Holy Ghost hath furnished sufficient matter for it, Rom. xi. throughout. And who that doth contemplate the same, but must find his heart drawn out to join the apostle in that part of it, and convert it into a prayer, that the time may be hastening when the deliverer shall come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

Here is another engaging portrait of Jesus. And who of his redeemed but must love him, both on his cross and on his throne?

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox *or* bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see *this*, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

Christ had an eye to the glory that should be revealed, in all his sufferings. So saith the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, when he calls upon his people to be looking unto him, Heb. xii. 2. And hence the two great leading points of prophecy concerning Christ, as our glorious Head, were of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow; 1 Pet. i. 11. Reader! it is blessed when a believing soul can take up the words of his adorable Head, and hath a well-formed and well-grounded assurance that he is of the seed of Christ, which shall inherit his holy mountain for ever. See Isaiah, lxxv. 9, 10.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! I hope the Lord the Spirit hath given you to see Jesus in this blessed scripture; and that while reading the word your heart hath been warmed with the Spirit's manifestations of Jesus. Oh! it is sweet, it is blessed, it is indeed most blessed, to see Jesus the great Restorer of that which he took not away. Never, dearest Lord, never let me lose sight of thee as my Surety, on whom the Lord Jehovah hath laid all mine iniquities, and from whom he hath both demanded and received the full equivalent for all my transgressions. For by virtue of this only can I look up now for acceptance, or hereafter for everlasting life. And grant me, oh! thou Restorer of all we have lost, grant me to see that the favour of God, the image of God, the love of God, and fellowship with God, thou hast procured for all thy people by thy blood and righteousness. And oh! let the heavy displeasure of my God against those who rejected the Lord of life and glory, cause me to behold the severity

of God, while I contemplate his goodness. Hasten, Lord, in thine own time, deliverance to Jacob. Arise, thou great Restorer of the ancient paths to dwell in, and turn away ungodliness from thy people. Bring both Jew and Gentile into one fold, one church, one salvation; and reign thou, and rule thou, the One glorious Lord, in thy kingdom of Zion for ever. Amen.

PSALM LXX.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here at his devotions, in the exercise of faith. He speaks of his situation as trying, and of the insults of his foes; but casts himself upon the faithfulness of his God.

To the chief musician, *A Psalm* of David, to bring to remembrance.

MAKE haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul; let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, Aha.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

5 But I *am* poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

I include the whole under one view, both on account of its shortness, and also because we have already gone over it in the *five* last verses of the 40th Psalm, to which therefore I refer. Perhaps the title of this Psalm is on this account called *to bring to remembrance*. The same mercies were prayed for then, and the remembrance is made of them now. It is one of the sweetest offices of the Holy Ghost to act as the remembrancer of the Lord Jesus. And when he graciously doth this, in bringing to our forgetful minds the past tokens of his favour, what a blessedness is wrought in the heart! John, xiv. 26. The several parts of this short Psalm are all interesting. Here is the cry of the soul to God; the earnestness of that cry, in the haste the soul wishes the Lord to manifest in deliverance. Here is the cause of the vehemency of supplication, in the malice of the enemies. Here is the assurance of deliverance, in the exercise of faith: while a soul can call God his help, he may be assured of a speedy rescue. And here is the consolation in which the faithful soul reposes, that all true seekers of the Lord will be found triumphing in the Lord, and continually rejoicing in hope. If we read the

whole of this short Psalm with reference to Christ in the days of his flesh, it will be very sweet in the believer's enjoyments. The sure triumphs of Jesus, and all his church in him, will put the same hymn in every heart: *Let God be magnified.*

REFLECTIONS.

IT is always profitable in our soul exercises, to behold Christ in his sufferings; and when we go up to the mercy-seat, always to have our eye fixed on the great Intercessor. What a relief to the soul, under temptations, trials, difficulties, and the like, to look at him who, when here below, felt the whole force of such things, on purpose that, having suffered being tempted, *he might know how to succour them that are tempted.* To this effect is the apostle's advice; *for consider him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your mind.* Heb. xii. 3. And certain it is, that nothing affords equal consolation, under the several sorrows of life, as the conviction that Christ himself, when upon earth, was *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.* Blessed Lord! help me ever to keep thee in remembrance: let me by faith behold thee going before, dignifying the tribulated path by thy bright example! And oh! for grace to hear thy gracious words, as if addressed, not only to thy more immediate disciples, but to all they represented, *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

PSALM LXXI.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is without a title, which is not very usual. Perhaps, being intended for general use, it was on that account omitted. It hath much the same strain as the former, for it professeth sure confidence in God, and therefore concludes with an assurance of finally rejoicing in God.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

If we are on the look-out for Christ while reading this precious Psalm, we shall not be long before we find him, if we are brought under the divine teaching. It is God the Holy Ghost who graciously exerciseth this province; and to him let our eyes be directed. John, xvi. 14. And do we not discover Jesus in these verses? To whom but Jesus did the Father give commandment to save? And of whom did Jehovah speak but Christ, when holding forth those precious promises that he would deliver him, because he had set his love upon him; and that he should tread upon the lion, and the adder, and the young lion and dragon, to trample them under his feet? Reader; if there be a question arising in your mind concerning the certainty of this doctrine, read the whole 91st Psalm throughout, and see whether any but the sinner's Redeemer can be the theme of it.

5 For thou *art* my hope, O Lord GOD: *thou art* my trust from my youth.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise *shall be* continually of thee.

Of all the subjects to arrest the tenderest affection of the true believer, Jesus's incarnation, and Jesus's condescension in the years of childhood, are among them. Here is an identical person spoken of, peculiarly and specially to be regarded. See Psalm lxii. 8—10. Oh! Reader! it is blessed to behold Christ in his word. Every day, and all the day, would I so desire to see him. This, indeed, is the one only sight my faith desires in the present life. For this is giving credit to God's word. And where the Lord gives grace to a poor sinner to honour his word; the Lord will surely honour and reward that faith.

7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou *art* my strong refuge.

There is a beautiful correspondence in this verse between the experience of the believer and his glorious Head. If David was made an outlaw, and hunted as a partridge upon the mountain; if David's Lord was for a sign every where spoken against; so is the follower. The prophet had said that Joshua the high priest, the type of Christ, and his fellows that sat before the Lord, were *men wondered at*; and the apostle follows up the same doctrine, when, speaking of the faithful, he saith, *the world think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.* 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. Luke, ii. 34. Zech. iii. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 4.

8 Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise, and *with* thy honour all the day.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me; and

they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,

The last of these verses serves as a clue to explain the others in reference to Christ. Recollect the taunts of the Jews, when the Lord hung on the cross, when they said, *He trusted in God, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him now, if he will have him*; Matt. xxvii. 43. And the burden of sorrow Jesus sustained had caused such a premature appearance of old age, that though but little more than thirty years old when he entered upon his ministry, the Jews spoke of him as near fifty, John, viii. 57.

11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

13 Let them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my hart.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, *and* thy power to every one *that* is to come.

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, who hast done great things; O God, who *is* like unto thee!

20 *Thou*, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side

22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee, and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

I think it would be wrong to break the thread of this most beautiful address, and therefore I have preserved it entire. In any, and in every sense, whether we behold it as the words of Christ, or of David, or of any other follower of Jesus, the doctrine is the same; Christ and his righteousness, Christ and his salvation, are the righteousness and salvation of Jehovah. *My righteousness* (saith Jehovah) *shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation*; Isaiah, li. 8. And elsewhere Christ is said to be Jehovah's salvation, *unto the end of the earth*; Isaiah, xlix. 6. And what a blessed confirmation is this to the faith of the believer! Christ and his Father are one, in will, design, worship, salvation, and glory. Oh! Reader! may the Lord grant that you and I may feel truly interested in this divine truth, and manifest whose we are, agreeably to the words of the prophet: *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength, even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Isa. xlv. 24, 25.

REFLECTIONS.

LORD Jesus! may I always find grace, while beholding thee going before thy people in all the exercises to which our nature is called, to follow thee on, thou perfect pattern, in all that is amiable and lovely, until I arrive, in thy strength and righteousness, to dwell with thee and in thee for ever. Blessed be thy name! I do behold thee in this sweet Psalm, while acting as our Representative and Surety, and fulfilling all righteousness for thy people, leaning upon the covenant-faithfulness of thy Father, and trusting in him for every suited support through all the periods of thy undertaking. And as God, thy God and Father, had given commandment to save thee, and given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy way; so I see, blessed Lord, that to this promise as to thy rock and fortress, thou hadst recourse in every time of need. Precious Jesus! give me grace to learn from it to whom I am to look, and from whom I am to expect aid, whenever the enemies of my salvation encompass me around. And surely I shall find grace equal to my need, and as my day is, my strength will be. Tell me, O Lord, as thou

didst thy servant the apostle, that thy grace is sufficient for me; and that thy strength is made perfect in my weakness. Yes! thou almighty Redeemer! I will humbly adopt thine own words, and in thy grace and strength say, *But I will hope continually; yea, I will praise thee more and more. My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation, all the day long; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in thy strength, O Lord God, and I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* Amen.

PSALM LXXII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is intitled a Psalm for Solomon; but under that title we are taught by the divine word that it is a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus; and a greater than Solomon is here. It is indeed, take it altogether, a most beautiful description, typically considered, of the reign of the Lord Jesus, and the prosperity of his church, as to be accomplished in the times of the gospel.

A Psalm for Solomon.

GIVE the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

I cannot but suppose that David himself was conscious that the Holy Ghost was speaking in him, and by him, concerning that blessed Fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, which he knew God had sworn to him with an oath, that he would raise up to sit upon his throne: and therefore, with all the natural affection he had for his son Solomon, he perfectly well understood that all that is here said of the king, meant king Messiah, and him only. And if we read this Psalm wholly as referring to Christ, it is indeed most blessed. But if we allow it to have any secondary reference to Solomon, David's son, we sadly enervate the scripture, and pass by the reverence wholly belonging to our God. Acts, ii. 29—31. Reader! my desire is to consider David as uttering these last words of his under the blessed inspiration of God the Spirit; and in this view is not this first verse, a prayer which God the Holy Ghost puts into the mouth of the church and every true believer, both under the Old Testament dispensation, and in the New? Our fathers prayed ardently that God the Father would send his King, his Holy One, and set him upon his throne in Zion; and what doth the church pray for now, but that, since he hath come and finished redemption work for his people, he would exercise his blessed reign in his people, and rule and govern in their hearts, the great and everlasting Lord of all! Hail! precious King, Lord Jesus! may thy kingdom come! may thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

The prophet having with an eye of faith, beheld the advent of the Redeemer, goes on, under the same spirit of prophecy, to describe the blessed auspices of his reign. I would observe, once for all, while going over this divine Psalm, that our reading of it will be more profitable, if

by grace we feel ourselves enabled to convert the prophecy into a prayer, and then act faith upon it. As, for example: Doth the Holy Ghost, by his servant David, say, "He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment?" Lord, I would say, do thou give thy people grace to see thee thus carrying on thy righteous judgments, that since the Lord hath founded Zion, the poor of thy people may trust in thee! Isaiah, xiv. 32.

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

Isaiah had a similar commission, in speaking of Jesus and his gospel as the peace of God in Christ, when he declared that the very feet of them who were the preachers of it were beautiful; Isaiah, lii. 7.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

By the same judgment and justice with which the Redeemer's reign shall be distinguished, while his poor and needy shall be upheld and blessed, his and their enemies must be destroyed. *He shall take out of his kingdom all that offend.* An awful consideration, if duly pondered, to all the enemies of the cross, and which scripture decidedly declares; Matt. xiii. 41.

5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

Here is a verse, which, if needed by way of confirmation, is enough to cast for ever to the ground all the childish ideas which some may have taken, as if this Psalm had any reference to Solomon, king of Israel. The whole reign of David's son was not more than forty years; whereas that throne, which the angel told Mary, the Lord God would give to Jesus *should be for ever, and of his kingdom there should be no end.* Luke, i. 32, 33.

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers *that* water the earth.

Every verse is descriptive, more or less, of the glories of Christ, and of the sure success and blessedness of his government. What a lovely instance is this one! *He shall come down as rain.* How? Upon the dry and parched ground of his people's hearts. And how doth the rain descend? Silent, sometimes, and unperceived; so the graces of the Spirit from the Lord Jesus come down upon our unthinking unprepared hearts: and with violence at others, when the Holy Ghost, like full refreshing showers, cleanseth away the filth of our uncleanness. Isa. iv. 4. Ezek. xxxiv. 26. But we must not stop here, in admiration of the beauty of this scripture. Jesus shall come down as the rain, because, as another prophet speaks, the shower *tarrieth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men*; Micah, v. 7. Jesus himself, with all his blessings, is the free, unmerited, unexpected gift of the Father. Therefore Christ is the *sent*, the *sealed* of the Father, as the rain and the dew of heavenly extraction. Hence the Lord from the whirlwind demands of

Job, *Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew?* Job, xxxviii. 28. Reader! do you know what it is to be refreshed with Jesus in his visits, as rain upon the mown grass? Do you see the Father's gift in Jesus? And do you know what it is to be continually waiting as the thirsty earth for the coming showers, in a constant abiding dependence for those visits of divine love? Happy the man that is so taught by God the Holy Ghost!

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

This verse very sweetly and properly follows the former, for where Christ comes down on a nation, or a people, or family, or any individual; all the blessings of mercy and peace will follow. *From whence come wars (saith an apostle) and fightings among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts, which war in your members?* James, iv. 1. Men would literally break their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, if Jesus lived and reigned in the hearts and minds of the people. Oh! for more of Jesus in this Christ-despising day, in which we live.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

The prophet having spoken of the blessedness of Christ's reign, here describes the extensiveness of it. Jesus is indeed the universal Emperor and Lord of heaven and earth. He saith himself, "All power is mine;" and he hath the keys of hell and death. Matt. xxviii. 18. Rev. i. 8. So that from the wilderness and from the city, from the one end of the earth unto the other, all nations, kingdoms, and tribes, shall serve him. He will gather his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. Mark, xiii. 27. Reader! it is blessed when our own hearts can bear testimony to these truths; when conscious that from the wilderness of our own fallen nature, and from the natural enmity of our hearts, we are come up, and brought over, to bend the knee of allegiance and love to this almighty Lord.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and *him* that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and

violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

Here are some of the gracious acts of this almighty Sovereign in his reign of grace: he will save his poor and needy. They are the purchase of his blood, and therefore they shall be precious in his sight: *No weapon formed against them shall prosper.* Blessed consideration! and yet more so from the assurance connected with it, that *their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord*; Isaiah, liv. 17.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

Here is another evidence of the perpetuity and everlasting duration of his kingdom; and another of the blessed consequences of it, in the prayers and praises continually and daily presented to him, and presented for him. Believers shall look up to him for all the graces of the Spirit, and for unceasing communion with him, and the enjoyment of him. Sinners upon earth and saints in heaven shall have continued access to his throne; and in his life his people shall live. He hath said himself—*Because I live, ye shall live also*; John, xiv. 19. But how are we to understand that prayer is to be made for him? Every one doth this who is asking the blessings of redemption of the Father in his name, and for the spread of his name and gospel. And is not prayer made for him continually, when, in the ardency of faith, the church devoutly prays, Lord, hasten thy second coming, and *be thou as a roe or the young hart upon the mountains of spices*? Song, viii. 14. Yes!, thou blessed Holy One of thy people, will not all, whom thou hast called and justified freely by thy grace, long for thy coming, who have presented to thee, what in thy sight is infinitely more precious than the gold of Sheba, their souls and bodies *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service*? Rom. xii. 1.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

Here is an elegant figure to represent the fruitfulness of the gospel of Jesus, the seed of which, though but like a handful, or as the grain of mustard-seed, shall spring forth and produce such abundance, that *a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.* Isaiah, lx. 22.

17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.

The prophet cannot close the wonderful account of Jesus and his kingdom without once more (as if to draw an everlasting line of distinction between him and all earthly potentates) speaking of the eternity of

both, and that in him, and him only, all nations shall be blessed. There is not a blessing out of Christ: so that to obtain happiness, it is indispensibly necessary to win Christ, and to be found in him. So the apostle expressed his desire; and so every true believer finds it. Philip. iii. 7. 9.

18 Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things.

19 And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

No wonder the Prophet, after such a review as this Psalm records, of the person and glories of Christ, should break out in such an acclamation of praise to Jehovah Elohim, the God in covenant, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Who but must bless God for Christ, and bless God in Christ, that duly contemplates these rich and unspeakable mercies? Reader! shall not you and I join in the devout anthem? Yes! if we know Christ, and have learned to know our original want of Christ, when in a state of nature; and now our all-sufficient security and blessedness in Christ, if in a state of grace. Here every redeemed soul will join issue, and cry aloud, Blessed be God for Jesus Christ! Blessed be the Lord God for salvation! Let every thing in heaven and in earth bless and praise God for his unspeakable mercy in Jesus. Let the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen! Let all say Amen, and Amen will I say. And let all set their seal to it of God's truth and mercy, Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are answered, and so ended as being fulfilled. Similar to this expression are the words of Christ upon another occasion; *the things concerning me* (said Jesus) *have an end*, that is, a *design*; Luke, xxii. 37. And every true believer in Christ, like David, would wish to close all with a hearty Amen, that this kingdom of Christ may come, and all the blessed ends of his salvation be accomplished. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

HERE let me pause, my soul, and contemplate thy King and God in the glories of his person, and in the blessedness of that reign which shall have no end! Truly, blessed Jesus, thou art a King, both as one with the Father, God over all, blessed for ever; and as the Mediator, the Head of thy church and people, to whom the Father hath given all power in heaven and earth. It is thy sole right, both by inheritance and by gift, to govern thy church, which thou hast purchased to thyself by thy blood! And oh! how blessed thy government! How mild, how just, how equitable, how true is every thing in thy kingdom. Thy poor subjects, gathered from the ruins of a fallen nature, shall be saved, shall be blessed, protected, and made everlastingly happy in thee and by thee! Not all the refreshing dew of falling showers can come down with an influence so genial, as thou, by thy Spirit, wilt refresh the souls of thy re-

deemed : and every blessing in thy spiritual kingdom here, and thy kingdom of glory hereafter, shall be suited to the greatness of thy power, and the glories of thy person. Men shall be blessed in thee ; and so universal and everlasting shall be thy reign, that all nations shall call thee Blessed. Hail, then, thou glorious, eternal, almighty Lord ! Oh ! give my soul a place in thy kingdom ! Let me daily see the goings of my God and King in his sanctuary ! Acknowledged as thine, both by the Father's gift, and thine own purchase, and the conquests of thy grace ; Lord, help me to call thee mine by an everlasting union to thy person, and an interest in all thy redemption ! then shall my soul continually exult in the same hymn of praise as all the faithful gone before have done ; and the first and last of my hosannas shall be—*Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever. Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.*

PSALM LXXIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is engaged, in this Psalm, in a subject which hath called forth the astonishment of pious minds in all ages of the church ; namely, the seeming prosperity of the wicked, and the afflicted state of the godly. The Prophet describes (somewhat at large) the trial, and then tells us where alone he found the explanation of it, in the sanctuary of God.

A Psalm of Asaph.

TRULY God is good to Israel, *even to such as are of a clean heart.*

Nothing can be more beautiful, as well as just, than the certain truth this verse contains : the Prophet lays it down for a maxim, at once fixed and incontrovertible, that whatsoever shall arise, or seem to arise, in the circumstances of the world, the great Judge of all the earth doth right ; and is, in a special and distinguishing manner, good to Israel. They are clean in heart, being washed in the blood of Christ, regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and have those blessed promises which God the Father promised in the covenant of redemption ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25—28. We find the Prophet reasoning on the same subject as *Asaph* ; Jerem. xii. 1, &c.

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone ; my steps had well nigh slipped.

3 For I was envious at the foolish, *when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

The Psalmist here opens the subject which had so much tended to stagger his faith. It appears, the question which arose in his mind, and gave him such uneasy thoughts concerning God's providence, was, if God loves his people, as we know he doth, whence is it that bad men prosper, and his beloved are exercised with such sharp and trying dispensations ?

4 For *there are* no bands in their death: but their strength *is* firm.

5 They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men.

6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them *as* a garment.

7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression: they speak loftily.

9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them.

11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches.

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

He here draws the outlines of the prosperity of the wicked: they have all carnal enjoyments, the good things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things put forth by the moon: they have plenty of corn, and wine, and oil; they chant to the sound of the organ; they send forth their little ones to the dance, but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Nay, what appeared to the prophet's view as still more astonishing, they seemed for the most part to die in peace; no bands, no pangs, no difficulties in their death: and though strangers to Christ, strangers to God's covenant love in him, strangers to the new-birth, and all the work of God the Spirit on their hearts; they died as much at ease as if all the promises of salvation were their own. This view puzzled and perplexed the prophet's mind, and for awhile he was at a loss to explain it. Reader! do the same things appear in the world now? Oh yes! Every day's experience demonstrates such things, and to an enlightened eye they carry their own reasoning and confirmation with them. What a striking picture hath Job drawn of such in his days: but after he hath drawn it to the life, and sketched their features to a nicety, he gives the finishing stroke when he describes them, after spending their days in wealth, *as in a moment going down to the grave!* Job, xxi. 7—13. See also the prophet's representation of the same, Amos, vi. 3—7. When you have paid due attention to these scriptures, turn to the gospel, and read some of the unequalled words of Jesus and

his apostles on the same subject ; and if God the Holy Ghost be your teacher, you will rise to a degree of enjoyment unknown to all such worldly characters. Indeed, that one passage alone of Christ is a volume in point, John, xiv. 18—20. To this subjoin the apostle's account of God's people, Heb. xi. 33, to the end.

15 If I say, I will speak thus ; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children.

16 When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me ;

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God ; *then* understood I their end.

18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places : thou castedst them down into destruction.

19 How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment ! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

20 As a dream when *one* awaketh : *so*, O LORD, when thou awakest, thou shall despise their image.

21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

22 So foolish *was* I, and ignorant : I was *as* a beast before thee.

Reader ! do mark what it was which the Lord blessed to the mind of his servant : namely, his visits to the sanctuary. It is in God's house that we are brought acquainted with God's ways. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant ;* Psm. xxv.

14. Depend upon it, the faithful, constant, diligent, and humble waiting upon the Lord in his ordinances, reading his word, and drawing nigh in Jesus to the mercy-seat ; these are the methods God is pleased to honour, in bringing souls acquainted with himself and his dispensations.

23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee : thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth : *but* God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish : thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 But *it is* good for me to draw near to God :

I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

It were a pity to separate these verses, and the devout and happy frame which appears through the whole of them. Reader! what a thought is that one, *Nevertheless I am continually with thee!* An union with Christ gives this everlasting abiding *with* him, and blessedness *in* him. It is impossible to be otherwise than happy while Jesus Christ is our portion. All grace is secure from this principle; for while the Head exists, the members must exist no less. *Because I live ye shall live also;* John, xiv. 19. Heaven itself, but for Jesus and the constant flow of righteousness and glory in him, would cease to be heaven. Our souls could be no longer happy or righteous but as those supplies flow into our souls and keep them alive in him. So that the everlasting need of Christ, as the Head of his church here below, to supply grace, is evident from hence; and the everlasting need of Christ, as the head of his church in glory, must be the same also; and hence, Reader, think how eternally and unchangeably precious must Jesus be, both for earth and heaven, to become the perennial and overflowing fountain of life, and light, and peace, and happiness, and glory, to his whole church, in time and to all eternity. Oh! precious, precious Jesus, do thou make me to see that *I am continually with thee, and that thou art holding me by thy right hand.*

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! gather from this blessed Psalm all the instructions the Holy Ghost intended the church should derive from it, and look up and pray that it may be made blessed in the Lord's hand to teach thee how to draw proper improvements from the Lord's providences which are going on continually in the world, and with which the Lord is pleased to exercise his faithful also. May Jesus bless it to this end!

In the *first* place, my soul! do, as *Asaph* did, put it down as a truth, which no outward circumstances can for a moment give occasion to call in question, *Truly God is good to Israel*, whatever afflictions Israel is exercised with; and the Lord cannot but love his redeemed which he hath purchased with his blood, whatever calamities they labour under, while the wicked and the ungodly seem to prosper.

In the *next* place, learn to look at all exercises of God's people, in the seeming prosperity of the wicked, and their triumphs over the righteous, as so many means in the Lord's hand for bringing about the greatest good. *By these shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.* The Lord is invariably pursuing one plan of mercy, love, and grace, to his people: *That the trial of your faith (saith the apostle) being much more precious than gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ!* Blessed process, when sanctified by grace! It weans from the world, from creature-comforts, creature-confidences, all self-exalting thoughts; and brings the soul humble, low, and submissive before God. Above all, it endears Jesus, proves the importance of his salvation, and makes him increasingly precious day by day.

Lastly, learn to see love at the bottom of all, in the blessed conformity

the people of God are hereby brought into, to the person and pattern of Jesus. *Whom he did foreknow* (saith an apostle) *he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son—that he might be the first-born among many brethren.* And what prophet, what apostle, what martyr of Jesus ever lived in the prosperity which *Asaph* describes in this Psalm? Rather let it be asked, what prophet, what apostle, what martyr, who was most eminent in God's service, but was most eminent also in suffering? Nay, what was the Prince of prophets, but *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?* Blessed then be the Lord for those marks of sonship and adoption, by which the faithful are eminently known! Oh! for grace to take joyfully reproaches, afflictions, necessities, for Christ's sake; that when *most weak in ourselves, we may be most strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Precious Jesus! be thou my portion, and bring me into a holy conformity to thee, in all things, that thou mayest be my joy, my happiness, and my all, both now and for ever. Amen.

PSALM LXXIV.

CONTENTS.

There is somewhat of history in this Psalm, as referring to the desolations of the church; probably concerning the devastation made by the Chaldeans. The Sacred Writer laments the sad event, and commits the cause unto the Lord.

Maschil of Asaph.

O GOD, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever? *why* doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?

This Psalm hath a mark put upon it, namely, *Maschil*, by which is meant, *a Psalm of instruction.* And the great object, it should seem, intended by it, is, that instead of poring over our own difficulties, or looking into ourselves to seek redress from them at any time when they bear hard upon us, we should be looking unto God. Sweet is that call of Jesus; Come unto me!—Look unto me!—Behold me, behold me! Matt. xi. 28; Isaiah, xlv. 22; lxxv. 1.

2 Remember thy congregation, *which* thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

It is blessed under afflictions to be enabled to remind God of his covenant love and engagements. Pleading with God on this ground is blessed pleading. Reader! can you explain that paradox; the humblest believer is the boldest pleader. Yes! for he that hath seen most of Christ, and his covenant blood and righteousness, hath seen most of his own unworthiness void of Christ. And therefore he that is humblest in himself, is strongest in Christ.

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations: *even all that* the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.

4 Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns *for* signs.

5 *A man* was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.

6 But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.

7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled *by casting down* the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground.

8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

9 We see not our signs: *there is* no more any prophet: neither *is there* among us any that knoweth how long.

10 O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?

11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck *it* out of thy bosom.

12 For God *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

The pleading soul here takes up many strong and unanswerable arguments to plead with God. He first sets out with reminding Jehovah, that the anger God hath manifested is against his people. Now, saith the prophet, should God's anger continue for ever against his own redeemed? Whom should a father regard, if he regards not his own children? And whom should a God in covenant regard, if he regards not his redeemed? He *next* reminds God of his purchase. Mount Zion is the gift of the Father to his Son, the purchase of his Son's blood, and the palace of his kingdom. Think, Lord, then (saith the prophet) upon thine inheritance which thou hast purchased, which thou hast redeemed, and whereon thou hast dwelt. He *next* tells God what the enemy hath done, and how he hath triumphed. And will the Lord be silent while his people are oppressed, and the enemy rejoiceth? He *next* laments the loss of ordinances, and the want of prophets to explain to the people what the mind and will of God is concerning these heavy afflictions. And *lastly*, the prophet throws himself and people upon God's faithfulness and covenant mercy for an assured deliverance: O

God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Reader! if we read this Old Testament gospel by a New Testament interpretation, it will appear most abundantly sweet and precious. Doth the enemy tempt, harass, reproach? Is our God apparently silent at a mercy-seat? Are ordinances unprofitable, and do we go heavily all the day? Oh! how blessed is it then to look to Christ, and the everlasting efficacy of his blood and righteousness, and to lean upon these, and plead them before the throne, reminding our God and Father of his oath and promises. Psalm lxxxix. 30—35.

13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, *and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*

15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.

The Holy Ghost evidently intended by these sweet and precious verses, to teach the church, in all ages, how to adopt such arguments, in all our dealings with God, when under trial. The best thing I can say to my God in Christ, is, what my God hath first said to me. In past experience, the truest and best confidence is found for future exercises. Hence the church reminds God what great things had been done by him in times past for his people: he alludes to the triumph of Israel over Pharaoh at the Red Sea; and how, in a time of drought in the wilderness, afterward, the Lord caused the rock to give out water to refresh the thirst of the people. Now, saith the prophet, shall not God give the like deliverance to his people at all times, and upon all occasions? Are not all past deliverances so many tokens and pledges of future ones, when needed? But what is meant by the Lord's breaking this leviathan, this monster, Pharaoh's head, and giving him for meat to the people in the wilderness? No doubt, the sense is, that the glorious interposition of the Lord, in a moment of such danger, became as food to the faith of the people upon all after-trials. Whenever the church was brought low, they were to recollect the events of the Red Sea, and feed by faith upon God, and his assured promises in Christ. Reader, do not overlook your personal concern in those sweet scriptures. Did God break the monster's head then, and will he not bruise Satan under your feet shortly now? Did the rock follow Israel, and was that rock Christ? And will not Jesus follow thee, go before thee, and bring thee through every difficulty? Oh! how blessed is it to read the Old Testament saints' experiences in a gospel dress, and see our own interest in the whole of them.

16 The day *is* thine, the night also *is* thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.

Here is a beautiful acknowledgment of God, in his works of nature and providence, who had before been adored in his works of grace: and perhaps in allusion to the Lord's appearing for his people in times of danger, when in the wars of Joshua, and in that of Deborah and Barak, the Lord arrested the course of nature, and caused the sun and the stars to fight for Israel. Joshua, x. 12, 13; Judges, v. 20. It is probable also, that the Lord is here reminded of his covenant engagements to his people, that he who is faithful in sending the regular return of day and night, summer and winter, will be faithful to all his covenant promises. Gen. viii. 22. The Lord himself makes an appeal to this, by way of confirmation to his people's faith, Jerem. xxxi. 5, 36.

18 Remember this, *that* the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and *that* the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude *of the wicked*: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.

The prophet, here appealing for the church's safety, makes use of an additional argument, namely, God's own honour and glory. For who is blasphemed, but the Lord? Whose name is abused, but the Lord's? Reader, do not fail to remark the strength of this plea. Moses and Joshua both had recourse to this, as their last and chief resource. See two or three beautiful examples; Exod. xxxii. 11—13; Numb. xiv. 11—21; Joshua, vii. 6—9. And what is the whole glorious design of redemption by the Lord Jesus, but for the glory of Jehovah? Ezek. xxxvi. 32. Rev. v. 9.

20 Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

Here is the great charter of a poor sinner's plea. It is as if the soul said, Look, O Lord, unto Jesus! Behold, O God, our shield! See the Lamb in the midst of the throne! Oh! blessed argument! God himself manifesting grace to the soul, in putting a plea into a poor sinner's heart, of God's own providing: Psalm lxxxiv. 9. Rev. v. 6. Gen. xxii. 8.

21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.

God had said, For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; Psalm xii. 5. Well then, saith the church, in answer to this promise, Let not the oppressed return ashamed; let the poor and needy praise thee.

22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.

23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the

tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.

The prayer closeth with a repetition of the two very powerful arguments; God's own cause, and the malice of the enemies. As if the church should say, It matters not what becomes of us; but, Lord, thine own glory is concerned in our salvation: arise then, O Lord our God, and, for thine own cause bless and deliver thy people.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, behold in this Psalm, the best and strongest arguments for the church to plead in sad times, namely, God's great name, and the security of his own honour in the salvation by Jesus. Let the enemies of the church seem to triumph as they may, with a high hand; and though they but too often derive success to their cause from the unworthiness and backsliding of the Lord's people; yet their triumph is short, and the church's down-falling not long to be continued; God will be gracious for his name's sake, and will make his mighty power to be known. The Lord will have respect unto his covenant: God hath taken his people into covenant relations with himself; he hath received a ransom for their deliverance, from their glorious Surety; he hath engaged for their salvation; and he will fulfil it. Oh! precious consideration, amidst all the Pharaohs of the present hour, and all the remains of indwelling corruption, under which the people of God groan.

Precious Lord Jesus! it was thou that didst break the head of Leviathan in pieces! It was thou that didst divide the sea before thy people, to make thyself a glorious name! It was thou that didst supply thy people through all the wilderness dispensation, in cleaving the hard rock, and in drying up mighty waters! Oh! do thou now, blessed Jesus, perform all that is needful for thy redeemed: for thou art the same Jesus yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Break down, and break through, all the power of the enemy, and make thy people more than conquerors, through thy grace helping them. Be thou, Lord, the all in all to them in every situation and circumstance; for then thy poor and thy needy will never go away ashamed, but will sing aloud praises to thy name.

PSALM LXXV.

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This appears to be a Psalm of praise. The soul, rejoicing in the covenant interest of God his Saviour, while he praiseth God, corrects the ungodly, and speaks with holy confidence of what the different ends shall be to the righteous and to the wicked.

To the chief musician, Al-taschith, a Psalm or Song of Asaph.

UNTO thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.

The Psalmist loves to dwell upon the precious name of the Lord. And when we consider the honour due to this holy name, and the regard the Lord hath in all ages manifested towards it, we may well join issue with the Psalmist in celebrating it. See Ezek. xxxvi. 22. And this is the very argument the Psalmist useth for mercy, Psm. xxv. 11. Is not this wholly on Christ's account? and was not Jesus meant in that scripture, Exod. xxiii. 20, 21?

2 When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly.

3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

The former verse is evidently the language of the church, for it is in the plural, *we* give thanks; but here it is changed to one person, *I*. And who so likely to be represented as the great Head of the church? Indeed, the close of the passage determines it; for who but Christ supported the whole fabric of our nature, when sin had dissolved all its powers? Reader, is it not always blessed to look to Jesus? How delightful, to this purpose, is the language of the Holy Ghost by the apostle, when, having ascribed creation to the Lord Jesus, he ascribes to him the whole of providence also, *in upholding all things by the word of his power*; Heb. i. 3.

4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn.

5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak *not* with a stiff neck.

6 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

7 But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Jesus proclaims grace to the humble, and destruction to the proud. Reader, our nature by the fall is truly ignorant: and next to the absolute ruin of our nature by sin, the most awful effect of Adam's apostacy that we have to lament, is, our ignorance. Oh! for grace to look to him for help, and light, and instruction, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Coloss. ii. 3.

8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring *them* out, and drink *them*.

I do not presume to say what this cup is, nor to what the whole allusion is designed: perhaps it means a mixture of what God's people are appointed to drink in soul exercises, and in providences. And perhaps

it means that the people of God shall drink of the blood of the Lamb. But one thing I beg to remark, that Jesus, when he came forth as the sinner's Surety, drank of the cup of trembling to the dregs, while his people have given to them the cup of salvation, that they may call upon the name of the Lord. Sweet is that precious scripture to this point, Isaiah, li. 22, 23. John, xviii. 11.

9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; *but* the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

The Psalm ends, as it began, with ascribing glory to God, as God in covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The horn of all earthly power must be broken, but Christ, the horn of salvation to his people, must be exalted. Dan. vii. 21, &c. Luke, i. 68, 69.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Jesus! thou art the name of Jehovah to poor sinners, for all that is fair, and lovely, and engaging, is found in thy name. Lord! (may the church of thy redeemed well say) *to thee do we give thanks; yea, unto thee do we give thanks.*

But how shall we sufficiently adore thee, O thou Lamb of God, that for us thou didst take the cup of trembling, and drink it up to the very dregs, that thy people might take the cup of salvation, and obtain redemption in thy blood! Was it for creatures such as we are? Was it for me, even for me, O thou gracious benefactor, that thou didst condescend to be made sin, and a curse, that I might be made the righteousness of God in thee? And didst thou die, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God? Oh! for grace to live to thee, who hast died for me; and henceforth to know nothing among men, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Oh! Lord! help me, as often as I look at thy cross, to connect with it this gracious view, Jesus drank the cup of trembling, that I might drink the cup of salvation: Jesus groaned on the cross, that his redeemed might triumph in death. The Head took all the sorrows and stings of death, that the members might have none to feel: Christ's soul was full of horror and darkness, that their souls might be full of joy and light. Help me, Lord, often to commemorate this love unequalled at thy table. Yes, I would take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord: I would pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people; yea, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord. Amen.

PSALM LXXVI.

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This is a thanksgiving hymn. It was probably composed upon the occasion of some remarkable victory that the Lord manifested to the church over her enemies. Some have gone so far as to determine it to

have been for the triumph, in the days of Hezekiah, over the Assyrians; 2 Chron. xx. 28. But this is but conjecture. The Psalmist celebrates the glory and majesty of Jehovah, eminently shown in his church; and, in the close of the Psalm, exhorts the church to a suitable reverence and godly fear.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

IN Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

2 In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.

The prophet, in the name of the church, is here triumphing in the consciousness of the divine presence. Well indeed might Israel say, *He hath not dealt so by any nation; Psm. cxlvii. 20.* Distinguishing mercies are the sweetest of all mercies. The sun that enlightens, and warms, and makes fruitful the earth; and the rain, and the dew, and the air; these are all blessings; but they are not distinguishing, for they visit all the world. But God's statutes and ordinances are peculiar to his Israel. Reader, since Israel revolted, and the gospel is given to us poor Gentiles, think what distinguishing mercies Great Britain hath been favoured with? Oh! for grace to see, and for hearts to acknowledge the vast privileges!

3 There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

The best comment on this verse is the apostle's general observation, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Jesus is both a Sun and a Shield; and no weapon formed against his people can prosper. Rom. viii. 31.

4 Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.

If this be an address to the church, it is a lovely and a just one: Zion is glorious and excellent in her Redeemer's view; Song, i. 15. But the cause of all this loveliness is from himself. Ezek. xvi. 14.

5 The stout hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

These verses serve to illustrate the subject of the whole Psalm, in reference to the occasion on which it is supposed to have been written. If it relates to the destruction of *Sennacherib's* army in the night, by the destroying angel, the circumstance is here mentioned in great beauty of language. But we may without violence, and indeed with much improvement, consider the spiritual sense of it as relating to the sovereignty of God over sinners. How often doth the Lord arrest them in their course, and convert the very weapons they were bringing forth against

himself and his people, as means in his almighty hand for the promotion of his glory? See that illustrious instance in point of Paul's conversion, Acts, ix.

7 Thou, *even* thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?

8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,

9 When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

Here are strong and sublime intimations of God's greatness, and of the weakness of all power when opposed to him. Reader, think what that sovereignty will be, when the Lord shall come to judgment, and when *he will take vengeance on them that know not God, nor obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Thess. i. 8.

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

This is a most beautiful verse, and contains a most important doctrine indeed. We easily conceive how the Lord can make all his divine perfections to set forth his glory; but when he maketh the very wrath of man and the malice of his enemies to promote that end, and to produce the very reverse of what they intend; this more signally displays the divine hand. We have many illustrious examples in the word of God in proof. The cruelty manifested by the brethren of Joseph, in selling him for a slave, was made by the Lord to minister to his praise, in the preservation of all the house of Jacob; Gen. xlv. 7, 8. So again the wrath of Haman against Mordecai laid the foundation for the Lord's praise in the ruin of Haman and the exaltation of Mordecai. Esther, iii. 5, 6; also chap. vii. 10. But above all, that glorious instance of the death of Christ, which the malice and wrath of the Jews accomplished, will prove the ground of everlasting praise, from the millions thereby redeemed, to all eternity! Acts, ii. 36. Hence we should learn, that the Lord will make use of so much of the malice of his and his people's enemies as shall subserve the purposes of his own glory and their welfare; and the remainder of that wrath, like the waves of the sea, he will keep back. So the Lord said to the proud invader, Isaiah, xxxvii. 29. Reader, never lose sight of this.

11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: *he is* terrible to the kings of the earth.

These are the natural and just conclusions of what was said before. If God be so great, and so gracious, oh! seek his favour and his love! Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way.

And how are these arguments heightened in the view of the rich, and free, and sovereign salvation which God hath manifested towards the spiritual Israel, in the finished work, and offices, and person of his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? Psalm ii. 10—12.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul, thou hast been looking at the happy state of Israel, when living under the divine presence, and beheld the blessedness of having the Lord Jehovah in the midst of his Zion, to comfort and to strengthen her. There, indeed, as the prophet saug, *the glorious Lord was unto them as a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein no galley with oars from the enemy could go, neither any of their gallant ships pass by*: for if the Lord himself was the river and streams of his people, surely upon all the glory was there a defence. And are the advantages of God's people less now? No, in no wise. If in Judah God was known, and his name was great in Israel, is not God truly known in Him and by Him who sprang out of Judah? And hath he not made himself truly known in and by the revelation of his dear Son? Hath not the name of Jehovah been made great and gracious also, since Jesus came and proclaimed, in his own and his Father's name, salvation to poor sinners in his blood and righteousness? Was the tabernacle at Salem glorious when the *Shechinah* was manifested there, and God's dwelling known to be in Zion by these marks and testimonies? And are these mercies less, or rather, are they not all abundantly heightened, since Jesus came down and tabernacled in our nature, and fulfilled the promise which John heard: *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* Oh! thou precious Lord Jesus! it is thou, that hast brought us truly acquainted with God, and art not only come nigh unto us, but hast brought us nigh by thy blood. There, indeed, in thy tabernacling in our flesh, didst thou break the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle; for in our nature, and for our salvation, thou hast destroyed all the powers of the enemy, and thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. Hail! thou blessed and victorious Friend of poor sinners!

PSALM LXXVII.

CONTENTS.

The church is here evidently under exercises. Some mighty foes come against her, and her resource can only be found in her God. The Psalmist thus speaks of his confidence, confesses that God's ways are dark and mysterious, but a happy end shall be to all his appointments.

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph.

I CRIED unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

I venture here, as in many former instances, to believe that, under the spirit of prophecy, the man of God is particularly describing His cries and supplications, who, in the days of his flesh, we know, offered them up, and, though a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Heb. v. 7, 8.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the LORD; my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

Every verse tends more and more to confirm the foregoing observation: *Being in an agony* (saith the evangelist), *he prayed more earnestly, and the sweat of his face was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* Luke, xxii. 44.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

There is somewhat very singular, and, at first reading, very strange, in these expressions. Doth the remembrance of God, as a gracious covenant God, tend to increase affliction? Surely every remembrance of God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, must have a blessed tendency to give comfort. What is it then? I venture to consider these words as referring to Christ, who, as the sinner's Surety, was looking forward to the conflicts of the garden and the cross: there Jesus had a baptism to be baptised with, in the contemplation of which he was straitened, until it was accomplished. God's justice upon the sinner, and God's holy law avenging itself upon the sinner's Surety, might well be supposed to induce such afflictions in the mind. See the evangelist's account, Matt. xxvi. 38; Mark, xiv. 34.

5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

Jesus spent whole nights, we are told, in prayer to God. No doubt the love of God to Israel, through all the eventful pilgrimage of his church's warfare, occupied his holy mind. It is blessed, in our present exercises, to look back and compare them with former deliverances, either in our own instance, or the instances of the church.

7 Will the LORD cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

10 And I said, This *is* my infirmity: *but I will remember* the years of the right hand of the most High.

These are blessed inquiries, and all tend to lead the soul to God, and to induce the happy issue in which the questions end. No, God hath not cast off his people whom he foreknew. God *hath* not, God *will* not. He hath spoken peace to Israel, and he will not unsay it. Then it is our infirmity, and not the want of God's faithfulness, that induceth complaints of all kinds. It is blessed to hang upon God, as a covenant God, when all things are dark and discouraging. The word, the oath of Jehovah, sealed in the blood of the covenant, are enough to still the soul under the sharpest exercises of faith.

11 I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

13 Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary: who *is so great a God as our God?*

14 Thou *art* the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

15 Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

Here is a devout reference to the history of the church in past times: and very ample are the pages in that history to give comfort to a troubled soul, when the Holy Ghost, as the Remembrancer of Christ, takes down the sacred volume, turns to the many blessed passages of God's faithfulness there recorded, and helps the soul to believe the truths of God, and make application of them to his own case and circumstances. Those subjects are eminently useful, which typically represent that far greater deliverance than the rescue of the sons of Jacob and Joseph from Egyptian bondage, even our spiritual deliverance from sin and satan, and death and hell, by the glorious salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

17 The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: *thine* arrows also went abroad.

18 The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven:

the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

19 Thy way *is* in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

What a beautiful and sublime manner of expression is here, in the waters *seeing God*. The prophet hath a similar thought: *Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? Was thine anger against the rivers? Was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?* Habak. iii. 8. The Reader will, no doubt, perceive that both these references are to one and the same subject, Israel's deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea. But what a flood of glory pours in upon the subject, when we read in that solemn transaction the fullest representation of our everlasting deliverance from all the Pharaohs of hell and destruction, through the red sea of Christ's blood! Here Jesus made a way indeed for his ransomed to pass over, when he went forth for the salvation of his people. Heb. iii. 13. Isa. li. 9—11. The clouds pouring out water, the skies sending out a sound, the thunders and the lightnings accompanying God's deliverance of his people from Egypt, and through the wilderness, their history fully explains: Exod. xiv. 19, &c. But the gospel sense of these passages comes home with a tenfold beauty and strength to the believer's heart, when he marks, through the whole of it, Jesus vanquishing all the powers of hell, destroying Satan, and bringing in an everlasting victory in *the sea of glass*, that all his redeemed might sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb; Rev. xv. 2—4. Surely in the contemplation of this subject every redeemed heart will join the beautiful and pious language of the man of God, and acknowledge that, though the ways of God are dark and hidden, like his paths in the sea, yet Jesus hath led, and Jesus doth lead, and Jesus will lead his people, whom he hath saved from their sins, and bring them home to himself as his glorious flock, the jewels of his redemption-crown, to himself and the Father in glory for ever.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, ponder over the weighty contents of this blessed Psalm. Do we see Christ in it? Did Jesus so cry in the days of his flesh? Did he accomplish salvation for his people, when he bore their sins and carried their sorrows? Oh! then, let us delight to trace his footsteps amidst all the dark and hidden providences with which we may be exercised. Depend upon it, he is bringing all his redeemed by a right way to a city of habitation. He that led his people like a flock safely through the wilderness, by the hand of Moses and Aaron, is never inattentive to his people now. They may be exercised, they may be cast down; but they shall not be cast off, nor forgotten by him for ever. Let us do as the writer of this sweet Psalm did; under our sharpest trials, let us call to mind the days that are past, and the years of God's faithful dealings with his people in ancient times; see whether we cannot

find exercises, with which the faithful were brought to the test, similar to our own. This will help us, by the Spirit's sweet application of it, under numberless occasions. Faith will revive in the review. The soul will say, Was Jesus faithful then, and will he not be faithful now? He mightily delivered his people under their distresses, and is he not Jesus still to me under mine? Doth he not rest in his love? Doth he not hate putting away? Set up, my soul, this day, this very day, thy Ebenezer afresh. Hitherto the Lord hath helped. Though I cannot see at all times my path clear, yet let me see, Lord, thy faithfulness at all times the same. Ere long I shall see thy glory. Hallelujah! Jesus lives, and Jesus reigns: all shall be well. Thou art then the God of my salvation, on thee will I lean, and to thee will I come, and in thee let me be found now and for ever.

PSALM LXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm, as the title sets forth, is a Maschil, that is, a Psalm of instruction. It contains, in an historical method of relation, God's gracious dealings with Israel as a people. In reading it the believer should have an eye to his own history, to mark the parallel between Israel and himself.

Maschil of Asaph.

GIVE ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

This verse opens by way of preface to call up the attention of all concerned. It was the usual method observed by the prophets and messengers of the Lord, to proclaim their commission by the divine authority, and as such to demand respect. Isa. i. 10. Prov. viii. 1—6.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old.

I beg the Reader's attention to what is here said, and, by way of rightly explaining it, to turn to what our Lord himself saith; Matt. xiii. 34, 35. Have we not authority from hence to believe, that what Asaph saith in this Psalm, he delivers by the spirit of prophecy, as in the person of Christ? And as a farther confirmation, may it not be observed, that what are parables and dark sayings, unintelligible to the wisdom of this world, are plain sayings to the children of the kingdom? Matt. xiii. 13—17.

3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

Was not the gospel preached to our fathers in type and figure, as it is now in sum and substance? See Heb. iv. 2; Gal. iii. 8.

4 We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of

the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

How lovely is it to behold, even from the days of the patriarchs, the care and attention with which the fathers handed down the testimony they had received concerning the promised seed. Hence we find Abraham telling Isaac, and Isaac Jacob, and Jacob, when dying, holding forth to his children, the blessing of redemption by Christ, upon which their own souls had lived, and with which they were most familiarly acquainted. Gen. xlix. 1; 1. 24.

5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.

6 That the generation to come might know *them*, even the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children.

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

I venture to believe, contrary to the opinion of most commentators, that the *testimony* in Jacob, and the *law* in Israel, here spoken of, had a reference to a much higher subject than the law on mount Sinai. Surely that testimony and that law was Christ himself, who is both the word and the testimony, and the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. And seen in this point of view, it is most blessed indeed to behold Asaph singing this gospel Psalm with an eye to Christ. Here the latter generations indeed were most highly interested, and the children which were yet unborn. And, as the apostle very sweetly saith, the gospel which was preached to Abraham, and the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul. Hence, therefore, this was the grand subject, and this the glorious theme, that the children which should be born should arise and declare. Gal. iii. 16, 17. To this one point, therefore, ministered all the ordinances, types, sacrifices, and offerings in the old church; and every observance of them pointed to Jesus: they were a shadow of good things to come, but the body was, and is, Christ. Coloss. ii. 17.

9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.

10 They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law.

11 And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.

13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.

14 In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.

16 He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

We need only refer to the history of Israel in the wilderness, to discover to what particular period of the church the prophet in these verses refers. Perhaps, as in several other parts of scripture, Ephraim, as one of the tribes of Israel, is put for the whole. Jerem. xxxi. 20; Hosea, xi. 8. But when the Reader hath paid all due respect to this interesting passage, considered as an history, I beg to call his attention to a subject, suggested from it, of an infinitely higher nature. Did the Lord lead Israel through the midst of the Red Sea? Did he go before them in a cloud, and give them drink from the rock? And are we not told by the Holy Ghost, that a sacramental design was in all these things? It is indeed expressly said, in so many words, that believers were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and that that rock which followed them was Christ. And what a sweet thought is it, that, while we read the church's history in this remote and distant period of it, the same, in reality, is going on now; for Christ is still present with his church and people; he goeth before his redeemed, whom he hath brought out of spiritual Egypt in the cloud of his Holy Spirit, and causeth them to have blessed enjoyments of his presence, by his visits and his protection. I pray the Reader to consult the whole of the first eleven verses of the tenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, in this place.

17 And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.

18 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

19 Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

20 Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

Here we have a full representation of Israel's unworthiness, as the preceding verses gave us a short relation of God's mercy. Reader, had you and I been present when, at the lifting up of the rod of Moses, water issued from a dry unpromising rock, could we have thought it possible that Israel would have again doubted God's power or his love? Pause.—Are we better than they? What hath not Jesus done for you, for me, for all his church and people? And do we not find rebellious murmurings, unbelief, and a thousand instances of a corrupt heart, breaking out continually? Oh! precious, precious Jesus, what would become of me, or what should I do with this wicked heart of mine, had I not thy perfect righteousness to trust in, and thy blood to cleanse me?

21 Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel.

22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

The history of this event is recorded at large, Numb. xi. 1. But beside the history, I earnestly beg the Reader to keep his eye steadily upon the sacramental design of the whole. The despising here spoken of, concerning Israel, is evidently the taking up slight views of Christ. That portion of scripture which the Holy Ghost gave the church, by Paul, decidedly explains this; 1 Cor. x. 8—10.

23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven;

24 And had reigned down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.

25 Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.

Our Lord's discourse (John, vi. 31—33) throws a complete light upon this passage, considered with reference to the typical and sacramental design of it, and plainly shews that it was the slight that the Israelites manifested by unbelief of God's method of salvation by Christ, in which the greatness of their sin consisted.

26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.

27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust,

and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.

28 And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.

29 So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;

30 They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,

31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.

32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.

33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.

What gracious instructions are read to us in these verses! See, my soul, how unsuitable and self-destroying would prove thy desires in numberless instances, if the Lord, in anger, granted them to thy impatient request. And as in Israel of old, so in Israel now, if chastisements do not soften and bring the heart *to* the Lord, they tend to harden and carry it farther *from* him. Oh! what a mass of evil is in our poor fallen nature! Well might the prophet declare the heart to be deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and that none can know it. Jerem. xvii. 9.

34 When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God.

35 And they remembered that God *was* their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.

37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.

The history of Israel fully shews this. While under the divine chastisements, oh! how seemingly earnest they sought the Lord: but when the rod was taken off, they returned every man again to his evil way. But, Reader, was Israel singular in this? Whose heart is free from the same reproach? Precious Jesus, how blessed here again, as in every other view, is thy perfect soul-justifying, and sin-atonement righteousness, to my meditation. Where should I look for help, if I had not thee to flee unto?

38 But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not: yea, many a

time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

39 For he remembered that they *were but* flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

What precious views are these of covenant love and covenant faithfulness: and how they all run up to the fountain-head of all our mercies, in the everlasting, free, spontaneous, and unchangeable love of God in Christ to a nature like ours, that is crushed before the moth!

40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, *and* grieve him in the desert!

41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

42 They remembered not his hand, *nor* the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

43 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:

44 And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.

45 He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.

47 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.

48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.

49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them*.

50 He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;

51 And smote all the first-born in Egypt; the chief of *their* strength in the tabernacles of Ham:

Here, by way of remembrance, the prophet carries back the subject to the period of the church's deliverance at the time of the Egyptian bondage, and gives some of the striking examples of the Lord's dealings with their oppressors, by way of shewing his mercy to them. Reader, it is one of the most blessed offices of the Holy Ghost, when, as the Remem-

brancer of Christ Jesus, he turns back at any time the leaves of our own experience in the deliverances that are past, and which the Lord hath brought us through, to bring our forgetful hearts to a proper recollection of his grace and our undeservings. The Lord recommends this to his people, and it is always profitable, Isa. li. 1.

52 But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, *even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.*

55 He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:

57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

Here a sweet contrast is drawn, in the view of divine love and compassion, notwithstanding human ingratitude. The sacred writer takes up the subject in tracing the history of the church even into Canaan, and shews that even here, in the land flowing with milk and honey, as well as in a wilderness, a corrupt and fallen nature carries about with it its corruptions still. And what doth the whole of such representations of our nature teach, but the same as we are taught now, that *all have sinned, and come short of God's glory*; and that *by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified before God*. Oh! how precious here again is the contemplation of Him who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And oh! how rapturous the thought, that he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:

60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* he placed among men.

God may be said to hear when the cry of a sinful land comes up before him for judgment. So in the case of Cain's murdering his brother: *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.* Gen. iv. 10. And as in judgment, so in mercy; when the Lord would heal a barren land, made barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, he is said to hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth. The earth wants the rain, and crieth to the heavens for it; but the heavens cannot send it, until the Lord commands. Hosea, ii. 21, 22. God's forsaking Shiloh is an awful example of what sinful nations, *professing*, but not possessing, godliness, may tremble to behold. The covenant in Christ is eternal; but the gospel, which proclaims that covenant, is as a candlestick in God's house, a moveable, that may be taken from one nation and given to another, for the wickedness of a land or people. Lord, grant, if it be thine heavenly will, that this our sinful land may never, never lose the light of thy divine word to the latest posterity!

61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.

63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.

64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.

65 Then the LORD awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder part: he put them to a perpetual reproach.

67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:

68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.

69 And he built his sanctuary like high *palaces*, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

70 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:

71 From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

72 So he fed them according to the integrity of

his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

The history of the church is pursued through all these verses. But we must look farther than the history, and particularly in the close of the Psalm, which ends with a view of David as the chosen of God to the throne of Israel; behold the Christ, the chosen of God, of whom David was a type, as set forth in these features of character. It is Jesus, who is the great Shepherd of Israel, who was all along pointed at, as leading Joseph like a sheep; and he, and he only, as the one who could carry the lambs in his arm, and cause them to recline in his bosom. Yes, blessed Jesus! it may be truly said of thee, that thou hast fed them, and that thou dost still feed them, according to the integrity of thine heart, and guidest them by the skilfulness of thine hand: for thou art still the Lamb in the midst of the throne. Thou art feeding the church above, and leading them to fountains of living waters. And thou art watchful of thy church below, from whence thou art bringing them through the wilderness, and in the mean time preserving them, so that they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of thine almighty hand. Lord, give me to see that thou art *my Shepherd, and I shall not want.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let us make a solemn pause over the perusal of this most interesting Psalm. And when we have taken a careful survey of its precious contents, let us beg of God the Holy Ghost, the almighty Author of it, to give us grace so to read, and so to improve it to our own use and benefit, that his gracious design may be accomplished, in having caused it to be *written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

And to this end, Lord, we would pray that we may have a clear and distinct apprehension of the sacramental design of thy grace all along intended from the church's history. Didst thou bring thy people by thine own power, and with a stretched out arm, from Egypt? Didst thou lead them through the wilderness, manifest thy grace to them all the way, and finally settle them in Canaan? And hast thou not, by the sovereignty of the same wonders in redeeming love, brought thy church now out of spiritual Egypt, and art thou not leading thy people home to thyself in the everlasting Canaan, which is above, through all the wilderness dispensations with which they are exercised, while thy presence is ever with them, and thine arm conducting them along in safety?—Were thy redeemed blessed with the visible symbols of thy divine presence, the pillar of cloud going before them by day, and the pillar of fire protecting them by night; manna from heaven for their food, and the rock to give water for their thirst? And dost thou teach us that these were so many sacraments, types, and figures of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, shedding his illuminating, guiding, protecting grace; the manna of heaven, even Jesus the living bread, and the rock, even Christ the living water, to supply every need? Oh! Lord, grant, we beseech thee, that our souls, like the Israelites' bodies, amidst the dust of a wilderness,

the serpents and scorpions of a sultry soil, may thirst with a vehement thirst, as the hart for the cooling streams, panting, longing, and looking to Jesus, the only one to assuage the thirst of our souls. Didst thou, blessed Jesus, in the day-time lead them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire; oh! then, give us to see that thou art still with thy church, still loving, still protecting, still feeding, and wilt never leave them nor forsake them, until thou hast brought them home unto thyself, that *where thou art there they may be also*. And do thou keep us, Lord, from the awful examples here set before us. Oh! for grace to believe the record God hath given of his Son! and, above all sins, preserve us from that dreadful, dreadful sin of a Christ-despising generation! May we never tempt Christ; never doubt either his power to save, or his willingness to redeem; nor murmur, as some of them murmured, lest, like them, we be destroyed of the destroyer; but with an eye to thee, in all thy rich dispensations, view thy sacramental designs in all the eventful history. Yes, blessed Jesus! our desire is to thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. May we eat of the same spiritual meat, and drink of the same spiritual drink; yea, may we drink deep into the full assurance of that blessed truth, that we are now, by faith, as much as the church of old, drinking of that spiritual rock that followed them, convinced that *that Rock was Christ*.

PSALM LXXIX.

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The church is here described as under great affliction. The burden of the complaint is to this effect; the Psalmist looks up to the throne for deliverance, and makes use of the strong plea of God's faithfulness for his support, and expresses his dependence on the divine mercy.

A Psalm of Asaph.

O GOD, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.

3 Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury them.

4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

It is not distinctly marked, by any parallel part of the history of the church, to what period this desolation refers. As the prophet Jeremiah, who lived and ministered in the church about the time of the Ba-

bylonish captivity, hath a parallel passage in his prophecy, it is probable that the Psalmist alludes to the Chaldean army; compare Jerem. x. 25, with the sixth and seventh verses of this Psalm. But whether this be so or not, the pious humble believer may, in a spiritual sense, but too often find cause, from the assaults of sin and Satan, to lament at a mercy-seat the desolating power of the enemy. Reader, well it is for the faithful, that Jesus and his righteousness are of everlasting and eternal worth.

5 How long, LORD? Wilt thou be angry for ever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

This forms a sweet prayer. The Holy Ghost puts a number of those *how longs* in the heart of the earnest praying believer. The kingdom of God is taken by violence.

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place.

Many of the prayers we meet with of this kind are more to be considered in the form of prophecy, than of imprecation: they meant to say that God will pour out the vials of his wrath upon prayerless persons and families, agreeably to his divine declaration, Psm. xi. 6.

8 O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

These prayers are evidently dictated by the Holy Ghost, because they are founded on God's promises. See Isaiah, xliii. 25; Ezek. xxxvi. 22.

10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? Let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is* shed.

Here is another most glorious argument for the church, or the sinner, to take to the mercy-seat; and furnishes another testimony that it is dictated by the Spirit of God. Joshua, vii. 6—9.

11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;

Here is a blessed additional prayer of faith. Are not all sinners, as sinners, appointed to death? But when the Lord puts a cry and a sigh in their souls for sin, and directs the eye of faith to the blood and righ-

teousness of Jesus; what are these but so many earnest of the Spirit? Ezek. ix. 4. Psm. lvi. 8.

12 And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O LORD.

13 So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever; we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

What is here spoken by way of prayer, is also to be considered as the language of faith. The Lord will recompense the wrongs of his people upon their enemies; and the Lord will secure the salvation of the just: they are his redeemed, and whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye. Sweet consideration! Jesus knoweth them, owneth them, and will bless them, for they are his. And all his sheep must pass again under *the hand of him that telleth them.* Jerem. xxxiii. 13. John, x. 27, 28.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do not fail, from the perusal of this short but sweet Psalm, to remark how the church hath been exercised from age to age, and what a correspondence there is, and ever hath been, between the faithful in their experience all the way along. Yes! blessed Jesus! the exercises of thy people are among the earthly inheritance to which they are born, and to which thou hast begotten them: these are the spots of God's children; the marks of their sonship. Oh! for grace to discover, by these certificates, to whose family we belong.

Reader! see to it, that thy cries for deliverance are founded on the same plea: it is all in Jesus, the inheritance of his redeemed, the portion of his chosen. Every prayer is directed to the God of salvation, and every plea for mercy is founded in God's covenant-mercy, as it is in Jesus. And oh! for faith to depend on covenant-faithfulness, while pleading covenant-grace and covenant-promises. Yes! blessed Redeemer! all is founded in thine everlasting righteousness, and the eternal efficacy of thy blood; by virtue of which the name and faithfulness of Jehovah becomes pledged to his people, and their redemption is for ever secured. Hail! almighty Lord! *thou hast sworn once by thy holiness, thou wilt not lie unto David.*

PSALM LXXX.

CONTENTS.

Here is another of the records of the day of Jacob's troubles. The church is still at the mercy-seat, and adopts similar arguments in prayer to those which were made use of in the foregoing Psalm, namely, God's love to his people, and their interest in him.

To the chief musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth, A Psalm of Asaph.

GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, shine forth.

This first verse is the key to the whole Psalm. Who is the Shepherd of Israel, but Jesus? Uniformly, through all the word of God, this is the well-known character and office of Christ, as Christ. Of him it is specially and particularly spoken; of him it is specially said, that *he should feed his flock like a shepherd*. He was promised under that character by the Father, Isaiah, xl. 11. So again, the Lord saith by another prophet, *I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd*; Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Hence Christ takes to himself this very name, John, x. 11; and the church desired Jesus, as her Shepherd, *to tell her where he fed his flock*; Song, i. 7. I dwell the more particularly upon this, because, though it is generally known and confessed, yet believers have too few actings of faith upon the person of Christ in his sweet offices and characters, as distinguished from God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost: for though there be many precious offices in which God the Father hath condescended to put himself, and in the enjoyment of them it is the privilege of the believer to be everlastingly engaged; yet it is in a peculiar and special way that redeemed souls are to behold Christ as their Head, their Shepherd, their Husband, their Surety, their Brother, their Advocate, and the like. I venture, therefore, to believe that this Psalm opens with a cry to Jesus, as Jesus, the church's Shepherd. And surely it is he that hath all along led Joseph and his people like sheep; surely it is he which sitteth between the cherubim, for God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and he it is that shines forth when God the Spirit shines in the heart, *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. v. 19; iv. 6.

2 Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come *and* save us.

3 Turn us again, O God; and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

These tribes, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, are probably put for all Israel. As if the church begged that Christ's favour to his people should be as conspicuous, as the pillar of cloud had been in the camp before all Israel.

4 O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?

5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

7 Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

These are most blessed tokens, and highly expressive of grace in the

heart. And the prayer, being again repeated, plainly shews from whence alone the church looked for both the work of true prayer and faith, and the answer.

8 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

9 Thou preparedst *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars.

11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

12 Why hast thou *then* broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?

13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

If we read this in allusion, first, to the old church dispensation, and then again spiritually to the new, and the Holy Ghost condescends to be our teacher, we shall find rich instruction in the beautiful similitude here adopted, of the church represented by a vine. Christ is the Vine, so he himself hath said; and that as the head of his body, the church; John, xv. 1, &c. God the Holy Ghost calls the church by the same, Isaiah, v. 1, &c. Now the Lord Jehovah's glory is celebrated in that Christ, the great Shepherd, first formed his people into a church, a flock, and brought them out of Egypt. To make room for it in Canaan, the Lord drove out the natural inhabitants, seven nations, from thence. There the church was settled: it spread abroad: the hills were covered with the branches of it, and the sea of the neighbouring states found Israel flourishing. But when the enemy came in, like the boar of the wood, and sin and corruption brought forth wild grapes, then, though the Lord had planted a choice root, it became a degenerate plant; Jerem. ii. 21. All this is literally the case respecting the history of the old church. But with what increasing strength of allusion is the similitude made in reference to the new! for here Christ, as the true Vine, and his church as his branches, are brought out of the spiritual Egypt of sin and death. When they have taken root in Jesus, the branches of his grace and the fruits of his Spirit go forth in every direction, to his praise and glory. And, agreeably to Jehovah's promise, the dominion of Jesus is *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*. Psm. lxxii. 8. Are those branches broken off? Hath the enemy, like the boar, directed his malice against the Vine? Yes, in the person of the elder branch, the Jew, we find sad devastations. The Holy Ghost hath explained this by his servant the apostle, Rom. xi. 1—26.

14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:

look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;

15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest strong for thyself.

16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself.

18 So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

19 Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

This is a beautiful and most interesting prayer: and, after the view which the apostle hath given of this subject, in his Epistle to the Romans, to which I before referred, may we not consider it as plainly meant for the church of the Gentiles to be daily using at the throne and mercy-seat for their elder branch, the Jews? as if the cry was universal, Lord, help thy church; graft in again thine ancient branches! And, Reader, do not fail to remark, with me, the reference which the Church hath to Christ, the man at God's right hand, the man whose name is the Branch, and in whom is life; and who hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also*. This is he, the Intercessor, and from whose intercession the barren fig-tree, though a cumberer of the ground, is permitted to stand another year; Luke, xiii. 7, 8. And observe, the promise of the church, both Jew and Gentile, is, we will not go back from thee, if thou wilt quicken us. Sweet truth! No man quickeneth, and no man keepeth alive his own soul. Observe also the thrice repeated prayer for the Lord's face to shine upon us, and his arm to turn us: Yes, if the Lord turn the heart, then, and not else, the heart is changed. And, finally, observe, that as this prayer is thrice repeated, so the Lord commanded Aaron thrice to bless the people in Jehovah's name: surely all the persons of the Godhead were meant to be kept in view, as jointly and severally blessing the people. Numb. vi.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! if the church of old, with reference to Christ, as he who was to come as the Shepherd of Israel, thus prayed him to shine forth, and to shew himself from between the cherubim, well may you and I look up to Jesus now, who not only hath come and led his sheep-fold, and gone before them, but, like the good Shepherd, hath laid down his life for his sheep. If the church's deliverance from Egypt is spoken of with such praise, and Jesus, who was then only looked to through type and figure, was so dear to the people, surely believers now ought to be-

hold Christ in every thing, and enjoy him in every thing. Let us, therefore, Reader, look up to God the Holy Ghost, the Glorifier of Christ Jesus, and beg of him for grace to make these two more especial improvements from this very precious Psalm: *First*, to have more frequent and lively actings of faith upon the person of Christ; and, *secondly*, to improve those actings of faith upon his Person, by keeping up a constant communion and fellowship with him.

Yes, thou great Shepherd of Israel, for I would call thee, thou blessed Jesus, by that name, do thou give me daily, and every moment, to act faith upon thy glorious Person! Thou art he whom the Father calleth *his Shepherd*, the Man *his fellow*! And thou art to all thy people the good Shepherd, the chief Shepherd, the great Shepherd, whom the God of peace brought again from the dead! Oh! do thou shew thyself to my soul in all the actings of faith, as feeding thy flock, taking account of them, knowing all their names, going before them, leading, guiding, feeding, healing, restoring, and keeping them, and causing them to lie down in green pastures. Yes, Lord! thou art thyself the food of their souls, and their portion for ever.

And while, by thy blessed Spirit, thou enablest me to keep up a lively view of thy Person, and to act faith also upon thine offices, help me, Lord, to improve those actings of faith by maintaining constant communion and fellowship with thee. Precious Jesus! while thou art coming forth to bless me, help me to see thy coming, and to be going forth continually to meet thee: Lord, help me to be pressing after greater knowledge of thee, greater improvement of thee, and greater enjoyment of thee. And oh! let thy love, thy grace, thy tenderness, thy compassion, and the infinite preciousness of thy salvation, be my daily, hourly joy, and the food of my soul: and let the hymn of my heart be like this of the church: *Give ear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that dwellest between the cherubim, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

PSALM LXXXI.

CONTENTS.

The Writer of this Psalm is calling upon Israel to bless the God of Israel: and he proposeth the subject and points to the cause. The Psalm concludes with lamenting the sad departures of Israel in many instances.

To the chief musician upon Gittith, *A Psalm of Asaph.*

SING aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.

3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.

It is very probable that this Psalm formed part of the religious worship in the temple on the feast days. We find several occasions of this sort: such as the feast of trumpets; Levit. xxiii. 24; Numb. xxix. 1; and the jubilee trumpet; Levit. xxv. 9: and we know that instruments

of music were used in the temple service. But as we also know, that almost all things in the dispensation under the law were shadows and types only of a better dispensation under the gospel, I venture to believe that we cannot derive any one authority for musical instruments in the house of God, from what we behold in those periods before the coming of Christ. And, without doubt, every mind that is truly spiritual must allow that the melody of the soul can need no stringed instruments to awaken real devotion within. These were carnal things before the time of reformation. I would desire to sing with the spirit, and to sing with the understanding also, when I approach the throne of grace, to praise a God in Christ. I would sing loud indeed unto Jesus the Rock of my strength, and desire to bring all the devout chords of my soul to tell my God of his redemption, of his jubilee, and salvation. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Ephes. v. 17—20.

4 For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.

5 This he ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: *where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.

Moses appointed certain seasons of memorial; such, for example, as the passover; Exod. xii. 23, 24.

6 I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.

The Reader will remark, in this place, a change of the person speaking. In the preceding verses the church is speaking, and the members of it are calling upon one another to attend the service of the Lord. But here it is the Lord himself that is introduced as speaking.

7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

These are sweet views of God's former dealings with his people; and a reference to Israel's history will mark out the several periods here spoken of. But, Reader! do not you and I also see our own history, and Jesus interposing for our salvation?

8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;

9 There shall no strange god be in thee: neither shalt thou worship any strange god.

10 I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Reader! let us for a moment drop Israel's history, to which these verses refer, to look into our own. We know how the Lord delivered

Israel upon the several occasions here described ; but may not you and I conceive, without violence to the words, that Jesus speaks to us in the same gracious language? Oh! precious Lord! let there be no strange god in our hearts! Forbid that we ever set up the idol there. But do thou open our mouth, open our hearts, and fill us with thyself, that we may live to thee and to thy glory!

11 But my people would not hearken to my voice ; and Israel would none of me.

12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust : *and* they walked in their own counsels.

Reader! what saith thy heart to these charges? What saith thy experience to this awful giving up? Oh! Lord! do thou still keep, still preserve, and abide in thy love, for thou hatest putting away. Reader! do not overlook, in the midst of the solemn things of this verse, that the Lord still calls Israel *his people*. Precious thought! They are his by creation, his by redemption, his by new creation, and the conquests of his Spirit, in Christ Jesus. Pray read that blessed scripture, Isaiah, xliii. 1, &c.

13 O that my people had hearkened unto me, *and* Israel had walked in my ways!

14 I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.

15 The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him : but their time should have endured for ever.

So Jesus wept over Jerusalem! And had Israel then, or upon the occasion which this Psalm records, hearkened unto the Lord, the *temporal* prosperity of Israel would have continued. For, I beg the Reader to observe, that in both instances it is of *temporal* prosperity the Lord evidently speaks. *Here* it is of feeding them with fine wheat, and honey out of the rock ; and *there*, in Christ's days, it is of preserving Jerusalem from being visited by the destruction of the sword. Luke, xix. 41—44.

16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat : and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let every renewed call, which we behold in the old dispensation, to excite the people to praise, remind us of our higher privileges, and become an additional incentive to the most animated love and praise to our God in Christ. Were the Old Testament saints perpetually reminded of the distinguishing love of God to his people; and was it the voice of trumpets by which the Holy Ghost caused it to be proclaimed in his church, *Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound?*

Think what increased causes we may find, to whom Jesus himself hath manifested his great trumpet of salvation, declaring that when it is blown, *they shall come that are ready to perish.*

And shall we, like Israel, forget the Lord? Shall we say, or, what is to the same effect, shall we do, as they did; that it may be said of us, His people would not hearken to his voice, and Jesus's Israel would have none of him? Oh, Lord! in mercy avert these awful departures. No! precious Jesus! it is thou who hast brought our souls out of the spiritual Egypt of sin and death! It is thou who hast converted us from the language of nature to a language of grace, which we understood not, neither should have known, but from thy teaching. Thou hast indeed removed from our shoulders the burden of sin, and delivered us from the slavery of Satan; thou hast heard and answered prayer; and thou hast been our God and our Saviour. Oh! then still go on, to satisfy our souls with the bread of life, and the water of life, which is thyself, and *keep us by thine almighty power, through faith unto salvation.*

PSALM LXXXII.

CONTENTS.

The sacred writer is here addressing himself to princes and magistrates, by way of reminding them that when they sit in judgment the eye of Jehovah is upon them. But the most interesting part of this Psalm is that which points to Christ.

A Psalm of Asaph.

GOD standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

While we have reference, in a particular and especial manner, to the design of the Holy Ghost in the dictation of this Psalm, and behold what a very solemn appeal it makes to judges and earthly potentates for awarding righteous judgment between man and man, in every cause which comes before them; let us no less remember the private concern which every individual hath in the same doctrine, so as to preserve a consciousness, in all our judgments, that there is One who presides over all. Oh! for grace to look up to that everlasting and eternal Witness, who seeth not as man seeth, but who judgeth righteous judgment! But whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, teach me, thou blessed Jesus, to have an eye to thee, *by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice.* Prov. viii. 15.

3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.

5 They know not, neither will they understand;

they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

While we pay all due respect to the important truths here set forth, concerning earthly courts of justice, I would not overlook the occasion, the very idea of judgment and justice sets forth, to call to mind that throne of judgment which the Lord sets up in the conscience, by which he seems to deal with sinners according to the covenant of works, but in effect to lead them to Christ. Reader! doth not the blessed work of salvation by Jesus begin in the soul in a consciousness, inwrought in the heart, of our guilt and ruin, and total inability of being found just before God? And is it not by this process that Jesus and his great salvation are endeared to the soul?

6 I have said, *Ye are gods*; and all of you *are* children of the most High.

7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

The sense in which magistrates and princes are said to be gods, our blessed Lord himself hath explained, when clearly proving, that it does not imply the smallest idea of anything exalted about them, but in office only, and thereby distinguishing between the sense in which Jesus is really and truly God, distinct from all his creatures; John, x. 35, 36. But the prayer of the church to Jesus, in the last verse, decidedly proves that the consolation of the faithful, under all the oppressions of the world and unjust judgment, is the contemplation of Christ's coming to judge the world in righteousness, and ministering true judgment unto the people. How earnestly the church longs for this second advent of Christ; and how sure is the promise of Christ's coming, may be gathered from Christ's promise to that effect, and the church's echo to his promise in the close of scripture, *Behold, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.* Rev. xxii. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pass over all lesser considerations, which the perusal of this Psalm might open to our view in the judgment of earthly powers, to behold Him who is the righteous Judge, and to whom the Father hath committed all judgment. Oh! how sweet, how very sweet it is, to consider that He who is one day to be my Judge, is every day my Brother! Jesus will indeed at the last day sit upon the judgment-seat, and before him will be gathered all nations: angels, principalities, and powers, will be brought under his unerring judgment. And while such views are enough to check all unrighteous decrees among men, which will there be fully reversed; they are, or ought to be, enough also to carry conviction to the heart, that nothing can escape his all-seeing eye, nor escape his righteous judgment. But, Reader! hath Jesus already brought us under his righteous judgment? Hath he, by his blessed Spirit, made us to

flee from a covenant of works, to take refuge under his own covenant of grace? Then is there no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. And if Jesus be my Judge, who hath already been my Surety; if he, who died the just for the unjust, hath wrought out a righteousness to justify the souls of his people, and shed his blood to wash them from all sin; surely, if he hath born their sins, he will not condemn their souls. He once died for them, and rose again to justify them; and when he comes to judge both quick and dead, then will he claim them as his own, and declare their righteousness in him, before a congregated world. The very words which he will then utter are already recorded; and what shall reverse his sentence? *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Well might the church cry out of old, and well may every believer now join in the declaration: *The Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us!*

PSALM LXXXIII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here again under affliction, and is looking to the mercy-seat for deliverance. He makes complaint against his enemies, and those of the church.

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

KEEP not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

Whether we behold Christ, thus appealing to the Father, under his exercises, for himself and church; or the church herself thus crying, in his name, for God to arise against her foes, the sense is the same. Jesus and his church have but one and the same cause. And it is for the oppression of the poor and the sighing of the needy, that the Lord saith he will arise; Psm. xii. 5.

2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

Do, Reader, remark the expression; the Lord's *hidden ones*. As Christ himself is said to be hid in the Father's shadow, in his hand, and in his quiver, Isa. xlix. 2; so Christ's little ones are said to be hidden when the wicked rise; Prov. xxviii. 12. Hence the prophet describes Christ as a hiding place to his people; and the Psalmist sweetly considers Christ in this light; Isa. xxxii. 2; Psm. xxxii. 7.

4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

5 For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee.

6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;

7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;

8 Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.

All confederacies are to the same purport, where God's grace doth not influence the heart. And what a host of them are formed against the Israel of God? And let the Reader remark, who they are that join thus together. As it was by the seed of Jacob of old, so is it now by the praying seed of Jacob. Edom was Esau's seed, Jacob's brother: Ishmael was the natural son of Abraham. And who are the foes of the child of God? It was not an open enemy, saith the prophet concerning Christ's foes, that reproached me; Psm. lv. 12; and as by Christ, so by his people: a man's foes are those of his own household. Nay, we may all say, though not by him, yet of ourselves, our own hearts are confederate against us.

9 Do unto them as *unto* the Midianites; as *to* Sisera, as *to* Jabin, at the brook of Kison:

10 *Which* perished at En-dor: they became *as* dung for the earth.

11 Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah and as Zalmunna:

12 Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.

13 O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.

14 As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;

15 So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.

16 Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD.

17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

18 That *men* may know that thou, whose name alone is JÉHOVAH, art the most High over all the earth.

There is not only a great beauty in this appeal and prayer of the church, against all her enemies, but also a great exercise of faith, in divine dependence. We give God credit for all that is to come, when we give him the glory of what is past, in redemptions. The church had many striking and signal deliverances to have recourse to, in the ancient monuments of the Lord's dealing with her foes. The story of *Jabin* and *Sisera*, the captain of his host, who mightily oppressed Israel, was well known; and in the songs of Israel, no doubt, the children were taught from one generation to another. Judges, iv. 5. And so likewise was the victory of Israel over *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, Judges, vii. But what I would particularly desire the Reader to remark upon this occasion is, the strength of faith, and the referring all the glory of salvation unto God. The prayer is, Do thou, Lord, accomplish these things for us; for it belongs not to an arm of flesh. It is blessed to learn where all our mercies are; and from whence to look for salvation. And what a divine thought doth the last verse close with, as the sum and ultimate attainment of all! That men may know Jehovah to be Jehovah. And as it is life eternal to know God, and God in Christ: so the enemies of God shall, sooner or later, know, to their everlasting ruin and shame, the same sovereignty of his power. For the knee that will not bend to his grace, shall break under his rod. John, xvii. 2, 3. Psalm ii. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! observe how implacable is the enmity of Satan against Christ's hidden ones: and what persecutions, from a variety of quarters, he will stir up, in order to draw them from God. But observe also, how eternally secure they are of God's favour. They are hidden *with* him, and hidden *in* him: and although for a time the Lord may seem to keep silence, while the enemy triumphs; yet, in due time, Jesus will arise to the destruction of all his and their adversaries; and while the Lord hides them, he manifests himself in their defence.

See, my soul, whether thou art in this happy number. The people that are hidden, *dwell alone, and are not reckoned among the nations*. They are so truly secret and unperceived, in all their sweet transactions with God in Christ, that the world knoweth them not, because it knew him not. And who shall describe their hidden life with Christ in God? Who shall say how, or when, it began; how it is carried on; how kept alive; by what channel communicated, and preserved to glory? Oh! the unknown mercies, the unnumbered blessings, from the day of their effectual calling, until grace is consummated in everlasting glory! Oh! the blessed visits Jesus makes to his hidden ones: the manner he gives to them in secret the ten thousand foretastes of his love! Lamb of God! that feedest thy church above, surely no less art thou attentive to thine hidden ones in the wilderness below. Yes, thou precious Lord Jesus, thou art my life, my strength, my joy, my portion, my defence, when the *Ishmaelites*, and the *Esaus*, and *Edoms*, of the present hour, come on like troops of *Tema*, to destroy. Hide me, Lord, in thee and thy righteousness, and give me to see it, and daily to live by faith in present enjoyment of it, until faith is swallowed up in sight; until thou art in every thing blessed to my soul, and I am blessed in thee. Then, like the apostle, I shall truly know that I am dead to every thing but thee,

and that my life is hid with thee in God; that when thou, who art my life, shalt appear, I shall appear also with thee in glory.

PSALM LXXXIV.

CONTENTS.

We have here the earnest longings and devout aspirations of the soul for personal communion with God in Christ. The blessedness of that man is sublimely set forth who hath a God in Christ for his portion.

To the chief musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

HOW amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Though the latter part of this rapturous Psalm evidently belongs to the church, and is the language of the church concerning Christ; yet I do not see wherefore the former part may not be supposed to be the language of Christ. It is well known that our Lord spent whole nights in prayer to God; and the holy nature of the man Christ Jesus, we may well suppose, longed for the everlasting and uninterrupted enjoyment of God above. I beg the Reader to mark the vehemency of expression in these verses. Oh! for such holy longings of soul! Oh! for more of the spirit of Jesus!

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.

4 Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

I cannot sufficiently admire the beauty of these expressions. The happiness of a bird freed from all fears, and taking her quiet repose in a nest, out of the reach of every enemy, in one of the upper apartments of the altar, is a fine image to represent the security and tranquillity of a soul resting on the bosom of Christ in God. Well might he add, All are blessed that are thus housed, and fed, and nourished, and secured.

5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee: in whose heart *are* the ways of *them*.

It is from the very striking manner in which this verse is introduced, and the singular manner adopted in the words of it, that I ventured to make the observations I did make in the opening of this Psalm. Let the Reader mark it, and while he finds it written, Blessed is the man

whose strength is in thee; let him ask of whom can this be fully said, without the shadow of a change, but of the blessed Jesus? In whose heart but his are the ways of his people. Sweet thought, to see Christ in all things having the pre-eminence!

6 *Who* passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

7 They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God.

What though the people of God have a wilderness to go through, a *Baca*, a weeping place, and are themselves as *Bochim*, weepers, Judges, ii. 5; nevertheless, while coming up out of it, leaning upon, looking to, and rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ, they must go on from strength to strength: for Jehovah himself hath promised to strengthen them in the Lord, and to cause them to walk up and down in his name; Zech. x. 12; and by and by they shall in person appear in Zion, as their angels do now behold the face of their Father which is in heaven. Matt. xviii. 10.

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

A new subject is evidently opened at this verse: Here is a soul calling upon God as a covenant God, the God of Jacob; and in his name prays to be heard.

9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

No one can be at a loss to explain this verse, which contains an immediate address to God in the name of Christ. For who is God's anointed but Jesus? Here is a verse all over gospel. No New Testament believer can put up a more faithful petition with reference to Jesus, than is here put up by the church of the Old Testament saints. Oh! for grace to be in the daily use of it. And while God the Father proclaims, as he doth from heaven concerning Jesus, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him*; do thou, my soul, carry back with thee God's own words, in God's own authority, and say, *Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed!*

10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

How doth, or how ought, the reading of this verse make a truly awakened soul long for the everlasting sabbath of heaven; yea, even for Jesus, the very sabbath of the soul. Observe, Reader! the door of a house is the place of the porter, a menial servant; and there it was Jesus had his ear *digged*, as it may be read, Psm. xl. 6, alluding to the custom of a servant in the house of Israel, that had his ears bored at the door of the house, when, out of love of his master, he would not go out free. Exod. xxi. 5, 6. Oh! thou supreme Pattern of every thing that is lovely and gracious; thou precious Jesus! didst thou take upon thee the

form of a servant, that we might be free for ever? John, viii. 36; Lord, may I love the doors of thine house, and there dwell for ever!

11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

A precious view, this, in the double sense of it; and which plainly shews to whom it peculiarly belongs. Jehovah Elohim, in his threefold character of person, is all this abundantly. What signifies our darkness when Jesus is the light and the life of the soul? What power have enemies when Jesus becomes a shield? And if he give grace, he will also give glory; for grace is the Spirit's earnest and pledge of glory. It is the token of divine assurance. Grace here is to glory hereafter, as the bud is to the flower.

12 O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.

How beautifully and divinely the Psalm closeth! Oh Reader! may your heart and mine join issue with it! Blessed is the nation, blessed the family, blessed the man, who trusteth to a God in Christ!

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL! thou holy, thou blessed, thou anointed of God! Oh! let thy name be ever to my soul as ointment poured forth. For while my God and Father looks upon the face of his anointed, Jesus is my sun and shield. And looking up to him whom the Father beholds, always apprehending and laying hold of him by faith, oh! how will thy person, thou blessed Jesus! thy love, thy grace, thy mercy to me, a poor sinner, be then considered! How shall I delight in thy name, thy sabbaths, thine ordinances, thy word, thine house of prayer! Surely, one day in thy courts, will be better than a thousand elsewhere. And will not Jesus grant me, by his blessed Spirit, these soul-satisfying, soul-strengthening enjoyments? Shall the sparrow, the bird of the air, be indulged with a resting place; and shall a child of thine be kept from thee? Art not thou my resting-place, my Noah, whither, like the dove, I may return when I can find no place for the sole of my foot to light upon? Lord Jesus! be thou all in all to my soul! and while gratifying my faith with making every day a sabbath-day here below, oh! for grace to long for the everlasting sabbaths of heaven, where the unceasing love and adoration of God and the Lamb will be my perpetual and eternal joy for evermore. Haste, my beloved! and until this day of heaven without a shade break in upon my longing soul, and the shadows of earth for ever flee away, *be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.*

PSALM LXXXV.

CONTENTS.

This is another of the gospel Psalms, and truly precious it is, when opened to the believing soul by God the Holy Ghost. It appears, in

its first view, as if it referred to some temporal deliverance of the church; but if the Reader look diligently into it, he will find some points which have a higher note, and sing of spiritual mercies by Jesus Christ.

To the chief musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.

If we first advert to Israel's history as a history of the church, we may trace abundant proofs of God's favour, from the moment they were formed into a church, through all their eventful pilgrimage. They got not the possession of their land by their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them. Psalm xliv. 1, 2, 3. And so again in their subsequent captivity, in Babylon, it was the Lord's deliverance, not their strength. But we lose the chief beauty of the Psalm, as well as our own interest in it, if we go no farther than the view of temporal mercies and deliverances. Surely the Lord's graciousness to his land and to his people is doubly sweet and blessed, when read with an eye to Christ. Here the Lord hath indeed brought back his people from the captivity of sin and Satan, from the bondage of corruption, and the shadow of death. Here the Lord hath indeed forgiven their iniquity, and covered all their sins, by casting them into the depths of the sea of the Redeemer's blood. Micah, vii. 18—20. 1 John, i. 7.

4 Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease.

How sweet and suitable is this prayer for converting grace, after experiencing pardoning mercy! When Jesus hath purchased our pardon, his next gracious act is to renew our hearts to a proper enjoyment of it. And what a blessed thought is it that Jesus not only undertook for our debt, but engaged for our duty: not only to bring us to the favour of our God, but to restore in us the image of our God. Oh, thou lovely Lord! when shall we have learned the whole of thy mercies!

5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?

6 Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?

7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.

These are divine breathings, and they speak the language of a truly awakened, regenerated, pardoned sinner. These cries suit the church, and every member of the church. They comprise in three leading blessings, many more that are included in them: the total removal of all displeasure; the light of the divine countenance; and joy in the Holy Ghost. Reader, I hope you know somewhat of those pleadings: they form the richest enjoyments of the soul, when made with reference to Christ. Oh! it is blessed to enter into the retirings, as it were, of God; and there to plead with him his promises, in Jesus, and to point, by faith, to the blood of his dear Son!

8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

Here, like another prophet, the man of God, having given in his petitions, now stands on his watch-tower, to hear the Lord's answer. Reader, so should you and I do, and not like the ostrich of the wilderness, leave our prayers without looking after them, as she leaves her eggs, unconcerned and unconscious whether they are ever made productive. And the reason is very obvious: God will speak. But if they are gone away from the mercy-seat, is not this their folly? How can they then know what the Lord hath spoken?

9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

Here, if I mistake not, the principal beauty of the Psalm begins to open. I do not presume to say so much, but I would humbly ask, are not these the words of God, in answer to the foregoing petitions? Moses was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to tell Israel how nigh the Word was unto them; Deut. xxx. 11, &c. and here Jesus and his salvation are said to be near them. And what can be more glorious than the consideration of this? Nay, is not Christ himself the Glory-man? And in his salvation is not glory come nigh us, yea, in our very nature? What a blessed scripture is here! And as Christ is the glory of his church, so his church is the glory of Christ. 2 Cor. viii. 23. And it is this which makes a land the glory of all lands. Ezek. xx. 6. And observe how confidently these things are spoken: Surely salvation is nigh. Yes, indeed, may every believing soul say it is. For Christ hath come, and hath redeemed, and hath obtained salvation; and now we are one with him, and he with us. He is the glorious Head of his church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. John, xvii. 21, 22. Ephes. i. 23.

10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

11 Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Reader, behold what a meeting is here! All the divine attributes, indeed, all the Persons of the Godhead, for man's salvation. All centre

in the person of Christ. Is not Jesus himself emphatically called *Mercy*, and the *mercy promised*? Luke, i. 72. And is he not *Truth* itself? John, xiv. 6. And is he not *Righteousness*, yea, *the Lord our righteousness*? Jerem. xxiii. 6; 1 Cor. i. 30. And is he not the *Peace* of his people? Isaiah, ix. 6; Ephes. ii. 14, 17; Micah, v. 5. And where did ever those seemingly opposite attributes meet, so as to concur and unite for the salvation of sinners, but in the person of Jesus? Mercy inclines to pardon: Truth must stand; and God said, the soul that sinneth it shall die. Righteousness admits of no abatement: Peace by the cross satisfies every demand. Was there ever an assemblage of divine qualities so brought together, and so illustriously displayed for man's salvation, as here in the person of our Christ? Oh! thou Emmanuel! Oh, thou Lord our righteousness! did truth spring out of the earth, and didst thou look down from heaven, yea, come down on thy blissful errand to save sinners, to reconcile all things to thyself? Oh give me to see that all the divine perfections are now eternally satisfied by thy wonderful and mysterious meeting; and that Jehovah hath now glorified himself, and made thy church eternally and everlastingly happy, in the perfect salvation of thy blood and righteousness.

12 Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good*: and our land shall yield her increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him: and shall set *us* in the way of his steps.

All increase, all blessings, must now continue to flow in our Emmanuel's land, his church; and that church cannot cease from following her glorious Head, when He, now lifted up, hath undertaken and promised to draw all his people unto him. John, xii. 32.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul, read again and again this blessed Psalm; and so read and meditate concerning the most glorious things spoken of in it, until thy whole affections are led out in holy rapture, praise, and love, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the wonders of redemption so beautifully and largely set forth in it. See, my soul, how all the attributes of Jehovah meet to accomplish salvation, by the union of what nothing but divine love could have proposed, and nothing but divine power could have accomplished! See how all the sacred Persons assemble to crown Jesus, King of Glory! Here God and man meet in one person, Christ. Here law and gospel, justice and mercy, are found harmonizing! Here heaven and earth are brought together, rather than poor man shall be lost! Here a covenant of works and a covenant of grace meet in the wonderful person of Jesus! And here we learn an evident proof, that God can be just to his own glory, and yet gracious to a poor sinner's transgressions, in justifying the ungodly.

Look up, my soul, look up, and contemplate thy Jesus, thy Redeemer, thy Saviour. Surely thou hast never done this as thou ought, if thou dost not behold in him what this Psalm records, mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other. In

him, and his righteousness, his blood, and the graces of his Holy Spirit, do thou seek for the Father's honour and glory, and the assurance of thine own everlasting salvation. And oh! let the consciousness of every thing centering in Christ for grace here, lead thee to the blessed hope and confidence, that every thing for glory hereafter must centre in him also. In Christ, Jehovah meets the sinner with pardon and mercy in this life; and in Christ all the manifestations of Jehovah meet to give happiness and glory to the church to all eternity. Hallelujah! Salvation to God and the Lamb. Amen.

PSALM LXXXVI.

CONTENTS.

The royal Prophet is at his devotions; and in beholding David, surely we must not overlook Him, of whom David was so eminent a type. We find strong faith joined with earnest prayer in the opening of the Psalm, and loud praise at the close of it.

A Prayer of David.

BOW down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy.

2 Preserve my soul, for I *am* holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

I pause at the close of these verses, though thereby a chasm is made in the prayer, to call the Reader's attention to what this petitioner saith in it, where the great argument made use of is, that he is holy. Can any thing more pointedly prove that this is Christ? David never, in any period of his life, could make use of such language: and none but He, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, could adopt the expression. The same word here rendered *holy* is used in direct application to Christ, Psalm xvi. 10.

3 Be merciful unto me, O LORD: for I cry unto thee daily.

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, LORD, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.

Who, that recollects what is said of Christ in the days of his flesh, that he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, can

fail to trace Jesus in these cries of the soul? Reader, do observe what expressions these verses contain. He calls himself Jehovah's servant; and speaks of the lifting up of his soul unto the Lord. All which correspond to the office of Christ, and the dependence which, during the whole of his ministry, he placed on the Father. Isaiah, xlii. 1. Psalm lxxxix. 20. While we keep a steadfast eye to the person of Christ, as thus pleading with the Father upon the holiness of his nature, for strength and comfort in the days of his flesh; we may safely, *in* him, and, by virtue of our union *with* him, make use of similar petitions, in his name, and for the holiness of his nature, at the mercy-seat. The church is highly interested in Christ, and in all that belongs to Christ.

8 Among the gods *there is none like unto thee, O LORD*; neither *are there any works like unto thy works.*

9 All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O LORD; and shall glorify thy name.

10 For thou *art* great, and doest wondrous things: thou *art* God alone.

Here is a sweet reference to the covenant of redemption in and by Christ: and I would fain persuade myself that Christ had an eye to it in what is here said. God the Father promised to give his Son the heathen for his inheritance; Psalm ii. 8; Isaiah, xlix. 6; and may we not suppose, that as God created all things by Jesus Christ, those nations whom he hath made, whom he hath redeemed, and whom he hath new made by the regeneration of his Spirit, are here meant, who are to come and worship before him? Psalm lxxii. 11.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

12 I will praise thee, O LORD my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

While we look to Christ as our glorious Head, let us see our personal interest in him, and, by virtue of our union with him, take up this language. John, xiv. 26.

13 For great *is* thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

This is evidently a direct reference to Christ. Compare Psalm xvi. 10, with Acts, ii. 22—36; xiii. 34—37.

14 O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent *men* have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.

The apostles, in their prayer, point to these exercises of the blessed Jesus, Acts, iv. 27; and Jesus himself expresseth the same, Psalm xxii. 16.

15 But thou, O LORD, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Though the expressions be here somewhat varied from those in the fifth verse, yet the meaning is the same. And we find the blessed portion to which they refer, Exod. xxxiv. 6, and it is repeatedly used in the sacred word: Numb. xiv. 18. Jerem. xxxii. 18. Nehem. i. 3, &c. Reader, for what are these frequent repetitions of this gracious proclamation of heaven, in the person of Christ, but to prompt the church, and every individual member of it, to make use of them by faith in Jesus? When God passed by, in the holy mount, and thus proclaimed himself, was it not to make all his goodness pass before Moses? And what is God's goodness towards men, but God, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them?

16 O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.

17 Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see *it*, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

While we here behold Christ as God's servant and God's chosen, surely every believer in him may humbly adopt this prayer and ask for a token of good. And what good equal to the token of God's Spirit, the seal of the covenant, union with Christ, and fellowship with the Father, and with his blessed Son? Oh, for such blessed tokens, whereby believers are sealed unto the day of redemption! Ephes. i. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

Pause, Reader, yet a little longer, and hear the cries which Jesus, thy Surety, used in the days of his flesh. He begs the Father to incline his ear to him, for, though holy, he is poor and needy; though harmless, the proud were risen up against him; and though undefiled and separate from sinners, yet there were those that hated him. And was it so, that he who was rich became poor for our sakes, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich?—Precious Lord! we have seen thee in thy low and debased estate, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and shall not such views of thine unequalled humiliation tend to reconcile our hearts to any, and to every situation, which thy wisdom appoints, and which thy grace will carry all thy people safely through? Oh for grace to imitate thy lovely example! Oh for a spirit of supplication to carry all trials, crosses, afflictions, to the throne; and there to remember we have an Advocate, one whom the Father heareth always; there to lodge,

and there to leave all our wants; and to cast all our care upon him, who hath so cared, and still doth care, for us. And wert thou, blessed Jesus, in the days of thy flesh thus exercised? Though thou wert a Son, yet didst thou learn obedience by the things which thou didst suffer? And being made perfect, didst thou become the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey thee? Oh Lord! shew some token for good, even the light of thy blessed countenance upon us; and let the whole world, both of friends and foes, know that He, who was once a man of sorrows, is now our risen and exalted Saviour, and can, and will send down every token of good, as the necessities of his people shall require. Yes, Lord! we are assured that we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but thou wert, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Help us then to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

PSALM LXXXVII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm hath been very justly considered as a beautiful ode on the Incarnation of Christ; and, as such, contains the outlines of that glorious event, and of the happiness and welfare of the church in it.

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah.

HIS foundation is in the holy mountains.

The very title of this Psalm leads the Reader to expect the discovery of some more than ordinary blessings in it. And what can be more blessed than to sing of him who was born, and lived, and died, and rose again, for the redemption of sinners? The title may be justly read, A Psalm or Song for the sons of *miserable man*; for such was Korah: and the late Mr. Romaine so translated it. Hence, according to his view of the words, in this first view, it is of Jesus the Psalm speaks, in whom the church shall be established. And there is a great beauty in this verse, that He, of whom the Psalm sings, is not mentioned by name! because every one, taught by his Spirit, knows who it is. So the church, Song, iii. 3. And let the Reader remark another beauty; the church is founded on Christ, the Rock of ages; whereas the world, the scripture saith, is founded upon the seas, and established upon the floods. Psalm xxiv. 2. Pause, Reader, and consider how eternally safe and secure the one: how precarious and fluctuating the other.

2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Read with reference to Christ, this verse is most beautiful; for it is in Christ the Lord visiteth and rejoiceth in his people. Lovely as Jacob's praying seed are, yet they are so only in Jesus. The acceptance of their persons and their offerings is all in Christ. Ephes. i. 6.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

Surely we cannot be at a loss to apprehend what is meant by the glorious things of the church, which is made glorious within by reason of her glorious Lord, and Head, and King. All his people are made kings and priests to God and the Father in Him; and hence they are declared to be *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people*; Rev. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9. But glorious as these things are in themselves, yet I apprehend these are not the things spoken of; for they are rather the effects than the cause. The glorious things evidently refer to somewhat higher, which can be no other than Christ himself. And we shall have some faint conception of how truly glorious the things spoken of Zion are, when we consider the marriage of Christ with his church. What indeed can be equally glorious with the contemplation of the Son of God choosing Zion for himself, and uniting Zion to himself, for ever? *He is, saith the apostle, the Head of the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* Ephes. i. 22, 23.

4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this *man* was born there.

This verse throws great light upon the glorious things spoken of before. For the words are as if Jehovah had said, I will cause it to be remembered by them, who knew me in Rahab and Babylon, *here was the man born.* And who but Christ could be the man born in Zion, to be the Saviour of his church, which is his body, whether called from Rahab and Babylon, Philistia or Tyre? So Jehovah declared, when proclaiming it a light thing to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, *I will also give thee,* said Jehovah, *for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation, unto the ends of the earth.* Isaiah, xlix. 6.

5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest himself shall establish her.

If, as Mr. Romaine justly concludes, we may, without violence to the original, read this verse—"And of Zion it shall be said, *A Person, and a Person* shall be born in her;" this plainly intimates the identical person, God and Man, Christ Jesus: and this decidedly refers the whole of the glorious things spoken before to be of Him. Then the Highest, He himself, will perfectly establish her; for in Him Zion must be firm. Reader, what blessed views open to our souls in these precious things of our Jesus!

6 The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that this man* was born there. Selah.

As Jesus is the first-born among many brethren, so when Zion's sons are registered, Jehovah himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall record it: indeed, it hath been recorded, that *Here was the man born.*

In Jesus redemption began; in Jesus redemption is completed; and in Jesus the people, his people, are beheld and blessed for ever.

7 As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there*: all my springs are in thee.

This is the just and unavoidable conclusion of all that went before. There can be no source, no spring, no fountain, but in Jesus. Every thing of life, and light, and salvation, grace here, glory hereafter; all are in Christ: not only *from* Christ, but *in* Christ. A God incarnate must be the only possible source of blessedness, both now and for ever. Oh! what a thought, to comfort the soul under all barrenness, deadness, and languishing frames whatever.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! what sayest thou to this blessed Psalm, as to thy personal experience of the glorious things contained in it? Most plain and evident it is, that the foundation upon which the temple, as a type of Christ, is founded, is Christ Jesus. *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, Jesus Christ.* But, my soul, art thou founded in Him? and are all thy fresh springs in Him? See the foundation of every thing out of Christ! Look into houses, families, churches: if Christ be not the rock, on which every individual is built, how shall it be said of any, when Jehovah counts, and writes up the people, that *this Man*, even Jesus, was born in that soul? How shall that promise of Jesus be fulfilled: *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God: and I will write upon him my new name!*—And, my soul, see to it, as an evidence of these precious glorious things, that all thy resources, all thy happiness, grace, righteousness, joy, glory, be all in Jesus, and flowing from him alone, in all thy refreshments.

Oh! ye elder brethren, the Jews; ye that are the descendants of Zion, behold Him, concerning whom Jehovah hath recorded, a Person and a Person shall be born in her! May this almighty Redeemer hasten the time of his arising in Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob! And ye, no less, the Gentiles yet to be called in, behold ye! *Philistia and Tyre!* ye, people of *Ethiopia!* see the register of Jehovah, *This man was born.* Lord! hasten the hour when *Ethiopia*, and *Seba*, and the multitude of the isles, shall stretch forth their hands unto our God. Amen.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

Whether the penman of this Psalm, under the spirit of prophecy, is describing the Person and sorrows of the ever-blessed Jesus; or whether they be the afflictions of his church and people; yet, from beginning to end, the subject is one continuation of the sorrows of the soul.

A Song, or Psalm, for the sons of Korah. To the chief musician upon Mahalath, Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day *and* night before thee.

2 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry.

It is not of so much importance to enquire, by what hand the Holy Ghost sent this Psalm to the church, especially as the Lord the Spirit hath not thought proper to inform us. But it should seem to be that Heman which is spoken of, 1 Chron. xxv. 4. If, however, the Lord the Holy Ghost referred to the person and afflictions of Jesus, in what is here recorded, it may serve to teach us how very important a part it was intended to form in the temple service, when such a Psalm, or Song, was composed for the daily use of the sons of Korah; these miserable sons of fallen nature, who, but for the redemption through the sufferings and soul-travail of Jesus, must have thus groaned for ever! Reader, are we not prompted to perceive Christ in this pouring out of the soul? *Was there ever sorrow like unto his sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted him, in the day of his fierce anger?* Lament. i. 12. Observe how the blessed Jesus, in these soul cries, as the Surety and Representative of his people, calls God, the God of his salvation; intimating, that from Him he looked for an assured deliverance; and reminding the Father, both for himself and people, that the end must be blessed. Heb. v. 7, 8, 9.

3 For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength.

5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.

6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the depths.

7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah.

8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I *am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.

9 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

It is impossible for a child of God, one should think, to have any doubts as to whom these expressions peculiarly and principally belong. To whom can they so properly belong, as to the blessed Jesus? Who that reads of his soul-agony in the garden, and his cries on the cross, can fail to behold the striking application? Who that recollects Christ bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, can need to be told, that then the divine wrath lay hard upon him for our sins, and all the billows and waves of God's displeasure at sin were poured out upon him? And who that recollects the removal of Christ's disciples from him in Gethsemane, their desertion of him in the hour of danger, and the offence his cross was unto them all, before the Holy Ghost had descended upon them after Christ's resurrection, can require any farther evidence as to whom the whole points, but to Jesus? Yes, thou Lamb of God, it is thou of whom the prophet speaks, and not of any other man. Oh, may my soul delight to put away all acquaintance far from me, that I may often follow thee, in silent and sacred meditation, through the hallowed walks of Gethsemane!

10 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah.

11 Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? *or* thy faithfulness in destruction?

12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

If I mistake not, the force and beauty of these expressions are intended to confirm the certainty of the things they seem to inquire after. We meet with many such passages in Scripture, where the certainty of the truth intended to be established is more effectually done by the inquiry, than if it had been said in so many words. Thus our Lord demands, *What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* By this question, it is plain, Christ not only meant to say that it should profit him nothing, but, by this method of stating the subject, he intended the most decided conviction of the stupidity and folly of neglecting the care of the soul, upon any and every consideration whatever. So in the present instance: *Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee?* Yes, *thy dead men shall live* (is the promise of the Father to his Son), *together with my dead body, shall they arise.* Isaiah xxvi. 19. Jesus by his death hath overcome death: for it was appointed that *he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.* And as he was *delivered for our offences*, so was he *raised again for our justification.* Heb. ii. 9; Rom. iv. 25. Hence, therefore, God's wonders shall be shewn among the dead; for *the dead in Christ shall arise.* For if we believe that *Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* 1 Thess. iv. 14, 16. Oh! how blessed the thought: God's faithfulness is engaged, pledged, made over, in covenant engagements, to this assured purpose. 'The loving-kindness of God is as sure to the dead in Christ, as to the living in him.' Hence that blessed declaration, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*

For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him; Luke, xx. 37, 38. Reader, think what blessed privileges Jesus hath procured by his redemption, and what wonders, even in the regions of darkness and of the grave, have been wrought by his one vast salvation!

13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

14 LORD, why castest thou off my soul? *why* hidest thou thy face from me?

15 I *am* afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: *while* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

16 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

17 They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

18 Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness.

There is a great degree of earnestness in the sorrows, again repeated, through these verses. Jesus, from the moment of his birth to the cross, sanctified and set apart as he was, a Nazarite from the womb, in the eye of the law, stood forth the Surety and the burden-bearer both of the sins and sorrows of his people: and it is a blessed thought for the believer, in the heart-felt knowledge and conviction of it, that though such rich, free, sovereign grace is shewn to a poor sinner, in the providing of such a substitute as Jesus to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, yet, in the accomplishment of this great undertaking, there was no favour nor forbearance shewn to Christ. If he will be a Surety, he shall smart for it: never will the law relax a single claim, nor justice forgive an iota of what is due. *Thou shalt not come out thence, from the prison of the sinner's dreadful bondage, until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing; Matt. v. 26.* Reader, do not hastily pass over this sweet view of Jesus. In the thorough conviction that the Lord Christ, in all his sufferings, personated his people, bore their sins, expiated their transgressions, and died, the just for the unjust, to bring them unto God; here lieth the whole assurance of salvation. It is this which alone gives confidence in every true believer's soul, against sin and Satan, the terrors of God's law and justice. Here alone are founded the triumphs of faith, in believing *the record, which God hath given of his Son.*

REFLECTIONS.

SHALL I not ponder over the contents of this plaintive Psalm, and reflect on the sad cause of human misery? Day and night may tears run down, when the soul reviews the melancholy source of this world's afflictions. But, my soul, when in Jesus thou beholdest such sorrow, to

what a height of increased lamentation doth the subject arise? That man, who is a child of sin, should be the child of sorrow, is what might well be supposed, and is to be expected in a state like the present. But when we hear his holy soul, who knew no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile, thus crying out under the *water-spouts* of Divine wrath, sore amazed and distracted; what a horrible idea doth this awaken of the baleful malignity of sin and man's fallen estate? To have been present at the destruction of the old world by the flood; to have seen Sodom destroyed by fire, or Korah and his company swallowed up by the earthquake; these would all have given lively ideas of God's irreconcilable hatred of sin. But to view sin in all its horrors, no representation can come up to the cries of the Son of God. If, my soul, thou wouldest see sin exceedingly sinful, go to Gethsemane, or to Golgotha; there hear the holy Jesus uttering strong cries, and learning obedience by the things which he suffered. And shall I not, precious Lamb of God, shall not my soul be drawn out in love to thee, in delight in thee, in affection towards thee, and dependence upon thee, when I behold thee, in these unequalled sufferings, and when I am constrained to say, Lo, all this, and more, did Jesus suffer and endure when he knew no sin, that his people might be made the righteousness of God in him? Oh Lord, in the contemplation of thee and thy sufferings, enable me to go on and find confidence in all the trifling difficulties and sorrows with which thou seest fit to exercise me here below. Thou art still the God of my salvation: and thou wilt bear me up, and carry me through, and lighten all my pressure, until thou shalt bring me home to behold thy glory and to dwell with thee for ever.

PSALM LXXXIX.

CONTENTS.

This is a glorious Song indeed, in celebration of the blessings of redemption. God the Father's covenant-mercy in Christ is most devoutly acknowledged, and his faithfulness and truth dwelt upon, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I WILL sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

Ethan, as the mouth of the church, here sets forth a noble example to the people. He determines to celebrate the praises of Jehovah, and particularly as set forth and displayed in his covenant-love, in the sure mercies of David, even redemption by Christ. Isaiah, iv. 3. Acts, xiii. 34.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

3 I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

Nothing can be more beautiful or interesting than the transition which is here made from *Ethan* to Jehovah himself. The sacred writer had determined to make known God's mercies; but in so doing, the Lord himself is introduced as proclaiming them. Reader, pause, and recollect, who the speaker is in these verses; and then attend to the most blessed and gracious declarations contained in them. Mark what the Lord God saith: *Mercy shall be built up for ever*. And how? In Christ: for He is the first-born in the womb of mercy, the *promised mercy*, which came in with the fall, when it was said, *the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*; Gen. iii. 15. And hence, when Zacharias sang concerning Christ's approach, he called him by this very name, the *Mercy promised*; Luke, i. 72. Reader, indulge the delightful thought, for it is blessed. Christ is indeed the mercy, built up by Jehovah for ever. For in him shall men be blessed; and out of him there is not a single mercy for the fallen race of Adam. Precious, precious Jesus! when I consider what a mercy thou art to thy people, and thy Father's mercy also, to all the ends of the earth, how doth my soul rejoice in the consolation! *Mercy shall be built up for ever*. It is blessed to observe how, in reference to this, in all ages of the church, the Holy Ghost comforted the people with an assurance that Jehovah would build the tabernacle of David, which was fallen down; that is, our poor ruined nature, and restore the desolations of many generations. Amos, ix. 11. Isaiah, lxi. 4. Rev. xxi. 3. Jehovah, having thus made proclamation in the holy mountain of his will and pleasure, next proceeds to inform the church how the eternal edifice of mercy is established: *I have made a covenant with my chosen*. Here the church is referred to Jehovah's covenant-purpose of redemption, founded in his own everlasting love, and assured to the church in the council of peace between the persons of the Godhead before the world began. Hence all those glorious scriptures, in which Jehovah is represented as transacting the eternal purposes of redemption with his dear Son. Isaiah, xlix. 1—12; Psalm ii. 6—8; lxxii. 7; Titus, i. 2; and hence all those promises made to David, as typical of Christ, with which David's history so much abounds. 2 Sam. vii. 1—13.

5 And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

How beautiful again is this transition to the church. It is as if the church had said, Is Jehovah so gracious, so abundant in mercy, and truth? then let the heavens above declare thy wonders, and let thy saints below repeat the song of redemption throughout the earth. And agreeably to this, we find angels celebrating redemption, and both at the birth of Christ, and at the return of Christ after redemption-work was finished, shouting their hallelujahs. Rev. v. 9. Luke, ii. 13, 14. Psalm xxiv. 7, 8.

6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto

the LORD? *who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?

7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.

8 O LORD God of hosts, *who is* a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

11 The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine: *as for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

12 The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.

13 Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.

14 Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

These verses contain a blessed hymn of praise. Jehovah's name, and his perfections, are gratefully celebrated. His sovereignty, grace, power, love, and goodness, are beautifully set forth, and most thankfully acknowledged. The destruction of Israel's enemies, in the ruin of Rahab (meaning Pharaoh) is particularly mentioned with praise. And as this was typical of Christ's victory over Satan and all the enemies of the church, so believers find great consolation in the assured interest they have in Christ and his finished salvation. Hence the prophet, ages before it was accomplished, looking back to the event of Egypt's destruction, sang aloud of the victories of Jesus. *Art thou not it which hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, &c.* Isaiah, li. 9—11. I only detain the Reader with one short observation more upon these sweet verses, just to remark, that *Tabor* and *Hermon*, which are here said, in a figurative manner, to rejoice in Jehovah's name, are much spoken of in the Old Testament scriptures, and perhaps with peculiar reference to

the New. Those hills, the one to the east, and the other to the west, in Canaan, were much frequented by the saints of God. David speaks of the sacred hill of *Hermon*, and compares brotherly-love to the dew of it, Psalm xlii. 6; cxxxiii. 3. And *Tabor* is yet more eminent, as being the memorable spot of Christ's transfiguration, where God the Father proclaimed his perfect love and approbation of Jesus as his dear Son. Well might this hymn, therefore, in allusion to those glorious events, call even the holy hills to rejoice in Jehovah's name. Matt. xvii. 1—5.

15 Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

A new subject is here opened. The sacred writer, having celebrated the praises of Jehovah in what had gone before, now speaks of the happiness of his people. Moses had long before observed, that there was no people like Israel; none who had privileges so great and distinguished as they had, in a covenant God to look up to, and to be happy in for ever: and here the Psalmist points out in what that happiness consists. Observe: He doth not say, Blessed is the people that *hear* only, but they that *know* the joyful sound. Probably he alluded to the calling of the people up to the assemblies of divine worship, the new moon feasts, and especially the jubilee trumpet on the great day of release. And although this trumpet of the jubilee was never sounded but once in every fiftieth year, and consequently was not familiar from frequency, yet not a poor captive in Israel's camp, that longed for the year of release, but perfectly knew the sound, the moment it reached his ear, on the morning of the day of deliverance. Reader, what is the joyful sound of salvation by Jesus, but the same? Oh, what a joyful sound indeed is it to that precious soul, convinced of sin and his utterly lost estate by nature and by practice, that thirsts for Jesus more than the hart for the water-brooks! And, Reader, do remark the blessed effects. All such redeemed souls shall walk under divine light, and in the divine life. Jesus's name, his righteousness, his favour, his love, his visits, shall be their daily, hourly enjoyments. All their spiritual joy and happiness are in him, the Lord their righteousness; not in themselves nor in their highest attainments.

17 For thou *art* the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.

18 For the LORD *is* our defence: and the holy One of Israel *is* our king.

These verses come in, as assigning the great cause of all the blessedness described in the foregoing verses. It is all centered in the person, and founded on the complete work, of the glorious Head of his church. There, where God the Father hath placed all his glory, there the people who know the joyful sound have placed all their dependence.

Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength, is what God proclaimed should be the solemn declaration of the redeemed. And then it follows, *In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.* Isaiah, xlv. 24, 25.

19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is mighty*; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.

20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:

21 With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.

22 The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.

23 And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.

24 But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be with him*: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

25 I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.

26 He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.

27 Also I will make him *my* first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.

28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

29 His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

Nothing, I venture to believe, hath tended more to obscure the glories of the Lord Jesus, and to hide from the view of an ordinary reader the many blessed things which the book of Psalms is continually holding forth, concerning the person and kingdom of Jesus, under the name of David, than the confounding what is said of Christ with the thoughts of David, king of Israel. David was an eminent type of Christ, it is true; but the name of David, as meaning Christ, was used by the prophets ages after David was dead and buried. See Jerem. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; Hos. iii. 5. Hence Peter the apostle, in his sermon, on the memorable day of Pentecost, endeavoured to call off the attention of the Jews wholly from David, to fix it on Christ. In this passage (the 19th verse) particularly, it would be doing the greatest violence to the

scripture to suffer the smallest idea of David, king of Israel, to cross the mind, while attending to the sublime truths here recorded. What *vision*, or what *holy One*, could these words mean, but Him who was *set up from everlasting*, and who alone was found *worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof?* Prov. viii. 23. Rev. v. 1—9. And was not Christ in his human nature, as the *Christ of God, chosen out of the people?* Is it not blessed to consider that individual Person, that *holy Thing*, so called, Luke, i. 35; that *body* which the Father gave him for the express purpose of salvation, Heb. x. 5; the *one*, the very individual *one chosen out of the people?* To behold the Father's choice, and the Spirit's anointing of him, our great Representative, suited for the purposes of our salvation, and accomplishing our redemption by his blood, and righteousness? And, in this point of view, how blessed are all those covenant-engagements and promises of a faithful God, and how eternally secure doth it make all our assurances of righteousness and everlasting happiness in him! Reader, if we read these scriptures with reference to Christ and our interest in him, by virtue of his merit in all he did and in all he suffered as the Surety and Representative of his people; we shall, through the Spirit's teaching, enter into the full enjoyment of the blessings here enumerated, and faith will find a sufficient warrant and authority in the Father's testimony concerning redemption.

30 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;

31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;

32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

It is all along considered, in the covenant-engagements of Jehovah, that the seed of Christ will manifest frequent rebellions. *I knew*, saith Jehovah, speaking of Israel, *that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.* Isaiah, xlviii. 8. And therefore, in the covenant, God hath made provision for corrections. Hence chastisements, afflictions, sicknesses, troubles, and the like. *Thou wast a God* (saith the Psalmist) *that forgavest them, though thou took vengeance of their inventions.* Psalm xcix. 8. And the reason is obvious: the purchase of salvation cost no less a price than the blood of his Son. So inestimable a blessing, and so dearly bought, is not to be trifled with.

33 Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

35 Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.

36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

37 It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

What a blessed *nevertheless* this is, (verse 33) and how sweetly doth it come in here, to give relief to a poor sin-beaten, tempted, and fallen soul! Though poor and wretched, and wanderers from the Lord, as the best of Christ's children are in themselves, yet in Jesus are they still viewed, and in him, the Beloved, they are accepted. God the Father hath an eye to his covenant-engagements, to his word, to his oath, to his own free everlasting love, and to the ransom which he hath received for their redemption from the hands of their blessed Surety. My soul, think of these things; give thyself wholly to the meditation of them. There is everlasting efficacy, everlasting worth and virtue in the blood of the Lamb; and his blood and righteousness plead more for thee than all thy infirmities cry against thee. Oh, precious Jesus! Oh, gracious God and Father in Christ!

38 But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.

39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown *by casting it* to the ground.

40 Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.

41 All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.

42 Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.

43 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.

44 Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.

45 The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.

46 How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?

47 Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?

48 What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not see

death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

49 LORD, where *are* thy former loving-kindnesses, *which* thou swarest unto David in thy truth?

50 Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants; *how* I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the mighty people;

51 Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

Here is a new train of thoughts, arising out of the view of God's covenant love in redemption, celebrated before. The degeneracy of Israel, and the captivity of the people (probably with an eye to the Babylonish oppression) is here, by the Spirit of prophecy, dwelt upon. And if it doth not refer to that particular period of the church, yet it plainly refers to a season when the waters of the sanctuary ran low. The sacred writer pleads hard for deliverance; first, by claiming relationship and covenant-interest; then by adverting to the triumphs of the enemies; next, by reminding the Lord of the length of the affliction, the transitory state of all things here below, the shortness and unsatisfying nature of life, and the very poor condition of fallen sinful man upon earth: and he closes all with an allusion to the insults offered by the enemy to the person and work of Jesus. Reader, pleadings in prayer are the most interesting parts of prayer, when offered up with confidence in Christ.

52 Blessed *be* the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

The Psalmist cannot conclude, however trying the personal exercises of the soul may be, without taking confidence in divine faithfulness, and proclaiming Jehovah's glory in the contemplation of it. At all events, the Lord shall be blessed for evermore. As if he had said, What signifies all discouragements within me, or around me; without, though fightings; and within, though fears; yet the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. God my Father is faithful, Jesus liveth, his blood and righteousness are the same, and the Holy Ghost sets to his seal that God is true. Hence I will put a double Amen to it; so it is, and so it must and ever shall be, Amen. Jehovah is blessed for ever and ever; and let all the people say, Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul, did Ethan determine to sing of the covenant-mercies of the Lord, and to make this the song of his rejoicing for ever: and wilt thou suffer thine harp to hang upon the willows? Wilt thou not take it down, and proclaim the same covenant faithfulness of Jehovah to all generations? Hear what the Lord God himself hath said concerning it.—Mercy is by Jehovah himself built up for ever: yea, the sure mercies of David.

And is not Christ this mercy? Are not all mercies, that are real mercies, founded in him, and flowing wholly from him? Is it not Jesus that gives sweetness, value, enjoyment, and continuance to every mercy? And do not all blessings truly derive their very, property as blessings, from Jesus? Oh! blessed consideration! Mercy is built for ever. Jehovah hath made a covenant with his chosen; and hence in the word and oath of Jehovah, all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are secured. Hallelujah.

And hast thou, my soul, heard and known this joyful sound? Art thou walking in the light of the divine countenance? Art thou rejoicing in Jesus all the day: and in his righteousness art thou making thy boast? Is this holy One, this almighty One, this chosen One of God, thy chosen? And dost thou say of him, this is He whom my soul loveth? Lord, do thou choose our heritage for us!

Holy Father! my soul desires to bow down before thy footstool, under a deep sense of sin. In how many ways, and in how many and various paths of transgression, have I forsaken thy laws, and walked not in thy judgments! Lord, I accept the punishment of my iniquity, and bless thee for the precious *nevertheless* in thy covenant-engagements to Jesus, whereby thou hast said, that thou wilt not lie unto David. For his sake, Lord, help me to rest upon the full assurance of all thy covenant promises, that his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before thee. May my soul exultingly rejoice in the Lord, and for the triumphs of Christ, cry out in the same language with thy servant, *Blessed be the Lord for evermore.* Amen, and Amen.

P S A L M X C.

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We cannot be at a loss to form a proper idea of the antiquity of this Psalm; for the title shews that Moses was the penman of it. Perhaps it was written at the time when the Lord determined, for Israel's unbelief, that the carcasses of that generation should die in the wilderness, as related in Numb. xiv. It is called a prayer, and in it the Man of God strikingly sets forth the frailty of man, and his transitory state, compared to the eternity of God.

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

With what a vast source of consolation doth the Psalmist introduce his subject, in contemplating the Lord as the refuge of his people! He doth not say what the Lord hath provided in comforts, amidst the dying circumstances of the world, in which the believer shall find relief; but that the Lord himself is the refuge, the hiding place, the portion of the soul. Reader, I pray you read those sweet scriptures, Isaiah, xxviii. 12; Psm. xxxii. 7.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,

even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

Nothing within the compass of words can more strongly define the vast and immeasurable distance between the eternity of Jehovah and the vapourish life of man, than what these few verses express. The eternal and unchangeable existence of the Lord, how finely marked, from everlasting to everlasting; and with whom a thousand years, or a day, are the same. Reader, do not overlook the blessed truth contained in this view, at the same time, respecting the eternity of that salvation which is founded alone in Jesus. He that sitteth upon the throne, and createth all things new, is himself eternally and unchangeably the same in person, and in the efficacy of his redemption, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Rev. xxi. 5. Heb. xiii. 8.

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are *as* a sleep: in the morning *they are* like grass *which* groweth up.

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up: in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*.

10 The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath.

Here are several beautiful figures, illustrative of man's short and transitory state of existence: first, as a *flood*, whose tide never stops a moment from flowing, but sweeps every thing before it: next, as a *sleep*, during which the man is unconscious of what passeth; for such is life, a dream, a fancy, an illusion: next, as *grass*, which, as the Psalmist saith elsewhere, withereth before it be fully grown up: next, as a *tale that is*

told, meaning a mere voice, a breath, which, though heard, is not seen, and passeth away, even in the moment of its existence. Reader, pause, and contemplate the humbling truth. *The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass.* Oh! what a relief did this voice give, when it added, *But the word of our God shall stand for ever!* Isaiah, xl. 6—8. Oh, thou uncreated Word! Thou didst condescend to be made flesh, and didst dwell among us: Thou didst take our nature, to make us partakers of thine! Hail, thou gracious, holy, blessed Redeemer!

12 So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted us, *and* the years *wherein* we have seen evil.

16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

These verses contain the sanctified use of the foregoing meditations. If such be the transitory state of man upon earth, Lord cause thy people to improve these appointments of thine, to thy glory, and their welfare. Are our days short? Oh, make them gracious. Are they vain and unsatisfying? Oh, direct us to Jesus, who will cause them that love him to inherit substance. Are they full of sin and infirmities? Oh, let the consciousness of these things endear Jesus in his blood and righteousness: and let all the events of a short, unsatisfying, sinful life, make us long for the work of salvation, and the beauty of our Lord God to be upon us. Lord, work in us, and upon us, both *to will and to do of thy good pleasure.* Philip. ii. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, have you ever contemplated, in the point of view this blessed Psalm represents it, the dying circumstances of a perishing world? There is nothing which, under grace, can more effectually tend to give a right and proper estimate of human life. In every state, in every thing, the funeral proclamation is momentarily making: *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* From a conviction of this unquestionable truth, the inquiry arises what will be the best preparation for it; and, since there can be no exemption, how shall you or I be suitably and properly

affected towards it? This Psalm opens with an answer the most satisfactory. The Lord is the only dwelling place in all generations. The Rock of Ages is the only habitation. If God, in Christ, be the dwelling place of the believer, here the soul resides secure amidst all the dying and the dead circumstances of a convulsed, tottering, crumbling, and departing world. Reader, what say you to this security? Are you living upon a faithful, unchangeable covenant-God in Christ? Have you taken shelter in Jesus, as a hiding place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land? Oh, what an everlasting security is here! Because I live, saith Jesus, ye shall live also. Fear not, said he, to the dying Patriarch, fear not to go down into Egypt, I will go with thee. And when you and I can say, as the Patriarch did, I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord: then may we add, This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide unto death!

PSALM XCI.

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Under several very striking similitudes, the Person of Christ and his redemption work are pointed out. This Psalm is the more remarkable in that the accursed enemy himself, in his temptations of Christ, hesitated not to make quotations from it, as referring to Christ.

HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I venture to believe that the Holy Ghost had no other object in view, in dictating this Psalm, than to refer the whole of what is here said to the person of Christ, as the great Head and Surety of his people; and, under this idea, it opens with one of the most sublime subjects the church can possibly contemplate; namely, Jehovah's love to the person of Christ, as the Mediator of his church and people!

2 I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Is not this the very language of Christ to the Father, to whom he constantly looked, in and through all his vast undertaking?

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.

Here come in the promise and the answer to the cry of Jesus. God the Father had engaged to carry his Anointed safely through all difficulties and discouragements; and here are particularised some of the eminent instances of divine truth and faithfulness.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;

6 *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noon-day.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

These are all so many examples in which distinguishing grace shall manifest covenant-promises. But what I would very particularly request the Reader to remark with me, as eminently fulfilled in the person of Jesus, is, the preservation from the pestilence of darkness, and the destruction of the noon day. How lovely and truly blessed is it to see that though Christ took upon him our nature, he took none of the corruptions of that nature. His holy soul was not susceptible of the impression of the pestilence of sin, nor the defilement of our fallen nature. *Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* Reader, this is the sweet consolatory thought of the soul, when pleading for salvation, in and through the Redeemer's righteousness. Heb. vii. 26.

9 Because thou hast made the LORD *which* is my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

Here is the ground of the believer's confidence. Jesus, as the sinner's Surety, made God his hope, and rested his salvation upon him and his covenant-engagements.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Surely we must be senseless indeed, if we do not view Christ here, when the devil himself hesitated not to acknowledge it. Turn, Reader, to the subject of thy Redeemer's temptation, and observe how Christ converted what Satan meant as the trial of his faith into the very source of his thanksgiving and joy; Matt. iv. 7.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, there-

fore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

This is a beautiful repetition of what had been said before. Jesus had engaged his whole heart and soul in the service of Jehovah, for his Father's glory and the everlasting welfare of his church and people: and Jehovah had promised, that, when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Isa. liii. 10, 11. Here, therefore, the sum and substance of these promises are given. Here the Lord promiseth to be faithful, and we may, I think, without violence to the several glorious things contained in this Psalm, remark, that though short, yet a more interesting account, and of the dialogue kind, between the Father and the Son, can hardly be found within an equally small compass in the Bible. And as we are most highly interested in all and every promise made to Christ, as our glorious Head; so it should seem that we cannot, when reading or singing this Psalm, have our minds more highly instructed than by contemplating Jesus as the one blessed God-man here spoken of, and in whom all the promises are yea and amen to his people.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED JESUS! how sweet to my soul is it to behold all these gracious promises of God the Father made over to thee, and for the security of thy person and work, as the great Head of thy church and people? Truly was it said of thee, thou holy Lord, that thou didst set thy love upon thy Father. For though thy love to thy church was such that thou gavest thyself for it, an offering and a sacrifice to God, of a sweet-smelling savour, yet it was thy love to thy Father which prompted thine infinite mind in the great work of redemption. Yes, blessed Jesus! methinks I still hear thee saying, *I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.* And therefore did the Father love thee, as the Surety of thy people, in that thou didst lay down thy life that thou mightest take it again. Hence Jehovah's sweet promises: Neither the lion, nor the adder, the young lion, nor the dragon, shall be able to contend with thee. No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.

And, oh! Lord, how blessed is it to see in thee, and thy great salvation, the everlasting security of thy people also! Yes, almighty Conqueror! in thy strength and power shall the humblest of thy people at length put their feet on the neck of all their enemies. Devils shall be subject to them through thy name; and the God of peace will bruise Satan under their feet shortly. Oh, for grace to go on conquering and to conquer, making mention of Jesus and his righteousness only, until every enemy shall be subdued, and Jesus shall bring home his royal army, victorious, under his almighty banner, to sit down with him on his throne, and to be made kings and priests to God and the Father.

PSALM XCII.

CONTENTS.

Here are some very striking arguments in favour of the blessedness of waiting on the Lord. The state of such as serve God is described, and their happiness insisted upon.

A Psalm, or Song, for the Sabbath-day.

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High :

2 To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night ;

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery ; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

From the title of this Psalm, it should seem more than probable that it was composed for the public service of the temple on the sabbath-day. But whether this was the case or not, it is now marked by the Holy Ghost as suitable for the Lord's-day service, and may, under his teaching, be happily made use of either in private or public. Every sabbath-day is, or ought to be, a thanksgiving day. And as it is the Lord's day, and an emblem of the Lord's rest, believers ought, with particular reference to Christ, to enjoy both the Lord and his day. And, Reader, do observe, that though it be called a Psalm, or Song, for the Sabbath, yet is it not confined to that day ; for the hymn saith, it is blessed to shew forth the loving-kindness of the Lord in the morning, and his faithfulness every night. And as we have no psaltery nor harp suited to the Old Testament dispensation, I would say, Lord let the ten strings of my instrument be the whole chords of my heart. Tune the whole to praise thee, to love thee, to celebrate thy goodness, and out of the abundance of my heart may my lips to glorify thee !

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy works : I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

5 O LORD, how great are thy works ! *and* thy thoughts are very deep.

What work, I would ask my soul, hath the Lord made me glad through ? Oh ! what innumerable subjects may I find for gratitude and joy through the whole kingdoms of his word, his providence, and his grace ? And, my soul, wilt thou not chiefly praise him, and shall not thy sabbath-day song, and thy every-day song, be of his work of grace upon thy heart ? Dost thou not cry out here, O Lord ! how great are thy works !

6 A brutish man knoweth not ; neither doth a fool understand this.

7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; *it is* that they shall be destroyed for ever :

8 But thou, LORD, *art most* high for evermore.

How strikingly do these verses represent the state of the ungodly and unregenerate! What can they know, or what can they discover? Jesus, with all his beauty, glory, fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency, is nothing in their eyes, neither is there any loveliness that they should desire him. My soul! mark the properties of discriminating grace!

9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn* of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

11 Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies, *and* mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up against me.

I beg the Reader to mark the wonderful speaker here introduced. Who but the blessed Jesus could talk of the horn of his exaltation, or of the rich anointings which were poured out upon him without measure? Luke, i. 69; John, iii. 34.

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Here again we must look out for the ever blessed Jesus. Of whom but that righteous One could the Prophet speak? Surely he is as the palm-tree of Engedi, and the tree of life in the paradise of God. Rev. xxii. 2.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD, shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing:

After what the preceding verse said of Jesus, the characters of his people are here beautifully introduced. They are called trees of righteousness, of the Lord's right-hand planting. And from being branches of their living Head, they bring forth fruit unto God. Isaiah, lxi. 3.

15 To shew that the LORD *is* upright: *he is* my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in him.

How very lovely and blessed doth this Sabbath Psalm, or Song, end? For what is the whole of it; nay, what is the whole purport of redemption? Is it not to shew forth the faithfulness, the covenant faithfulness, truth, love, mercy, grace, and everlasting kindness of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to manifest that he is the Rock, and that his work is perfect? He hath blessed, and he doth bless, and he ever will bless,

the Church in Jesus. Here he glorifies his holy name. And here he fully proves that there is no unrighteousness in him. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

SEE, my soul, what a gracious provision the Holy Ghost hath made for thee to sing thy song on the sabbath-day! Never, surely, wilt thou be at a loss for an hymn of praise to carol aloud the blessedness of the sabbath, as long as this Psalm riseth to thy view. Behold! what a glorious subject it openeth, in the celebration of Jehovah's faithfulness. Think what fatherly love thy God and Father in Christ Jesus manifested towards the church, and towards thee, and every individual member of Christ's mystical body, when giving his dear Son as the glorious Head of the Church, the very ordinance, the word, the sabbath, and the rest, in grace here, and glory hereafter! And think what a sabbath Jesus is himself, and what a rest to every weary soul! My soul! wilt thou not flourish under this Palm-tree of thy Lord, and spread abroad under his gracious shade and his fruitful blessings? And think how beneficent is the Holy Ghost in all his quickening influences and gracious teachings, to lead thee on the sabbaths to the ordinances of Jesus, and there to shed abroad the love of God in thine heart, and direct thee into the patient waiting for Jesus Christ. Hail! holy, holy, holy, undivided Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! May every sabbath which sheweth forth thy faithfulness find my soul resting more and more upon the Lord our righteousness, and testifying my earnest waiting for that everlasting sabbath of rest which is above, and *which remaineth for the people of God!*

PSALM XCIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm, though short, is sweet and full of Jesus; and celebrates the person, glory, and majesty of Christ and his kingdom.

THE LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

2 Thy throne *is* established of old: thou *art* from everlasting.

That it is the person of Jesus, as the glorious Head of his church, who is here spoken of, and with reference to his mediatorial kingdom, is evident, from the Lord being said to be *clothed* with majesty and strength. Yes! God the Father girded him with strength for the warfare: and the human nature which the Son of God put on, was of Jehovah's providing. *A body hast thou prepared me;* Heb. x. 5. Behold, my soul, thy God and king in Zion! Rejoice, that the Lord thy God reigneth; all power is his in heaven and earth. Oh! what a thought to comfort the mind under every event that may arise. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

4 The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters, *yea than* the mighty waves of the sea.

All the opposition made against Christ and his kingdom, and against Christ and his people, is alike vain and impotent as the striving of the waves which dash against the rocks. Like Noah in the ark, the people of Christ are safe in him, though tempests beat without. Sweet thought to the believer also! As no storms nor floods without, so no fears within, can lessen or abate the love of Jesus to his chosen. *Many waters cannot quench his love, neither can all the floods drown it.* Song, viii. 7. Reader! think of this. Not all the floods of corruption, which as a deluge covered our nature; nor all the afflictions, agonies, and soul-travail of Jesus; nor the vials of God's wrath; no, nor even the baseness and ingratitude of his people, quenched his love. Precious Jesus! was such thy love to me?

5 Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.

Here is a blessed conclusion to this triumphant Psalm. God's testimonies and faithfulness are ever sure: and the Lord's holiness is pledged for the full performance of all covenant promises. *I have sworn once by my holiness, saith Jehovah, that I will not lie unto David.* Psalm lxxxix. 35.

REFLECTIONS.

SWEET thought, in the perusal of this Psalm! The right of Jesus to government as the Son of God, one with the Father, is a natural right, for he is Lord of all. And sweet to the believer also is the thought that, as King in Zion, as the Mediator of his church and people, he hath a donative right, a purchased right, and a right by conquest and by power. Rejoice then, my soul! Thy God, thy King, thy Jesus reigneth. Yes! blessed Lord, do thou reign, and rule, and govern, in thy Zion. Do thou manifest to my soul, that thou hast subdued my stubborn heart, and brought me under thy gracious sceptre. And, Lord, do thou reign in me, and rule in me and for me, against all the host of foes and floods of the ungodly, whether of sin or Satan, or my lusts or the world. And oh! Lord, give me desires to know thee, and to obey thee, and to live to thee and to thy glory. I would be led a willing captive by my Lord, and know no will but thine. And, Lord, subdue the world to the sceptre of thy grace! Let the earth rejoice that thou art king, and let *every knee bow* before thee, *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Amen.

PSALM XCIV.

CONTENTS.

It should seem that this Psalm was composed at a time when the church was oppressed, and the enemy triumphed; and silence at a throne of grace proved a sharp exercise to the people. The subject is of this kind. Here are complaints and petitions followed up with faith, that the Lord will hear, and in due time answer the cries of his afflicted.

O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

3 LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?

4 *How long* shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?

5 They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage.

6 They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.

7 Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*.

It is always a mark of grace when the Lord's afflicted ones can commit their cause, be it what it may, into the hands of God. But though a believing soul can, and will refer all into the divine wisdom and justice, yet it is profitable to draw nigh to the Lord with our complaints, and to leave them there. It is one thing to complain of God, and another to complain to God. The Lord hath commanded his troubled ones to draw nigh unto him. *Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee.* And again, the Lord saith, *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord.* Psalm xii. 5.

8 Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?

9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?

10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?

11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man,
that they *are* vanity.

This is a beautiful appeal to the oppressor. In the contemplation of the divine perfections, the oppressed believer points out how impossible it is for the wicked to escape the all-seeing eye and almighty arm of God. Reader! what a blessed thought is it to the true follower of Jesus, that "whoso toucheth one of Christ's little ones, toucheth the apple of his eye." Zech. iii. 8.

12 Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest,
O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law :

13 That thou mayest give him rest from the
days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the
wicked.

14 For the LORD will not cast off his people,
neither will he forsake his inheritance.

15 But judgment shall return unto righteous-
ness : and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

Here the subject takes a new turn. From appealing to men, the petitioner turns now unto the Lord; and he puts it down as an unquestionable truth, that, let men persecute how they may, or let the sorrows of God's afflicted ones be what they will, yet that man cannot fail to be blessed whom the Lord chasteneth. *As many as I love, saith Christ, I rebuke and chasten.* Rev. iii. 19. Heb. xii. 5—9. Reader! do not fail to recollect this, in all thine afflicting exercises.

16 Who will rise up for me against the evil-
doers? *or* who will stand up for me against the
workers of iniquity?

17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help, my soul
had almost dwelt in silence.

18 When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy,
O LORD, held me up.

The Psalmist is looking round for help or assistance against the common enemy; but finding none, he looks to the Lord. It is blessed to be stripped of all creature-help and creature-confidence, that we may be constrained to look wholly unto the Lord!

19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me,
thy comforts delight my soul.

This is a precious verse. Happy the soul that can adopt the same language! When carnal men are in trouble, they will be turning from one earthly comfort to another, to find relief. But when a child of God is in sorrow, he knows that nothing but the same hand that wounds can heal. Oh! what blessedness will he then find in that promise, brought home and applied to the soul by the Holy Ghost: *I, even I, am he that com-*

forteth you : Isaiah, li. 12., How truly blessed is it in trouble to look to Christ and the rich consolations in him !

20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law ?

21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

22 But the LORD is my defence ; and my God is the rock of my refuge.

23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness ; *yea*, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

Here is the conclusion of every faithful follower of the Lord Jesus. Here he rests the ultimatum of all his exercises. *Tell ye the righteous, it shall be well with him.* He that rests in Christ, and his blood and salvation, rests in that which cannot fail. He that believeth shall not be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end. Oh ! for grace to be found in Christ, and resting upon him : here cannot be a failure, but an everlasting security, and a good hope through grace : *They shall be even as the mount Zion, which may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever.*

REFLECTIONS.

How blessed it is, that the Lord hath reserved in his own hands the judgment and punishment of his enemies ! And however we may be led to think that we are doing the cause of Christ good, when at any time we feel constrained to take vengeance of his enemies, yet here we learn to leave the whole with the Lord. *Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord.*

But amidst all the exercises with which the faithful are tried, from the oppression and malice of the world, what a blessed relief is it to have a covenant God to fly unto, and to lodge all complaints in his almighty hands. Precious Jesus ! thy comforts are a rich cordial to the soul, amidst the host of sorrows with which thy people groan in the present state. Thy blood and righteousness, thy grace, and the sweet influences of thine Holy Spirit ; the fulness, fitness, suitability, and all-sufficiency that is in thee, become a most powerful balance to bear up the mind under all the pressure of the sins and sorrows of life. I bespeak, Lord, an interest in thee, and communion with thee, and every suited grace from thee, against a dark and trying hour. Do thou, gracious Lord, by thine Holy Spirit, grant me continual, daily, hourly relief, to bear up against all despondency. And oh ! Lord, grant me such faith, and in such lively exercise, that my soul may at all times rejoice in the consolation ! Give me to find comfort in thee, and then, sure I am, I shall find assurance in thy great salvation. *Return to thy rest, O my soul (will then be the language of my heart) for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

PSALM XCV.

CONTENTS.

This is a gospel Psalm, from beginning to end. The rock of whom it speaks is Christ, and the salvation it sings is his. It forms an earnest exhortation of the church, that every heart should join in praises to the God of salvation.

O COME, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

We cannot possibly err in our application of what is here said, by referring to Jesus and his church; since the Holy Ghost himself hath condescended to give his own comment upon it, Heb. iii. and iv. where the blessed Spirit expressly saith, the day spoken of in this Psalm means the gospel day, and that Christ is the rock of our salvation. 1 Cor. x. 4. So believers are enjoined by the Holy Ghost to invite one another to sing the praises of Jehovah, their Rock, their Jesus, their salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

The *joyful noise* is again repeated, as if the blessed Spirit would have the earth ring with his praises, as the heaven above is full of his glory. And, Reader! do remark the privilege of the gospel church, compared to the church of old: Jehovah then dwelt between the cherubim, shadowing the mercy-seat; and there the church drew nigh. But, Jesus having *opened a new and living way* for us by his blood, we are permitted, yea commanded, to come into his immediate presence, having such an *High Priest over the house of God*, who hath not only opened the way by his blood, but *ever liveth* to keep it open by his intercession. Exod. xxv. 22. Heb. iv. 14—16.

3 For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills *is* his also.

5 The sea *is* his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry *land*.

Here the Psalmist, taught by the Holy Ghost, brings forward some of the blessed causes for which Jesus claims the love, and praise, and unceasing adoration of his people. He is our Maker, and a great King, in whose hands are all the things of the earth. He is the upholder, and preserver, and sustainer of all things; for by him all things consist; and as all things were made *by* him, so were they *for* him. All things, as the

gospel speaks, were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. John, i. 3. Coloss. i. 16—18.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

7 For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day, if ye will hear his voice,

The call is again in a beautiful manner repeated, and the invitation to praise him is now joined with a request also to pray to him, to fall down before him, both as our Maker in original creation, and our Maker in the new creation by the Holy Ghost; and, by every act of unfeigned love and holy joy and adoration, tell our glorious Immanuel what our souls feel in every suited affection towards him. And as these high-sounding praises are with special reference to Jesus, as the Rock of our salvation; so in the same special manner we behold ourselves as his redeemed, his people, and the sheep of his hand.

8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and as in* the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

10 Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

The Holy Ghost hath given his decided comment upon this scripture, with reference to the church, Heb. iii. 4, and adverts to the circumstances of Israel at the waters of *Massah* and *Meribah*, Exod. xvii. 1 to 7. No doubt, there was much unbelief in this rebellion of Israel, particularly with respect to Christ; for the Holy Ghost saith that the Gospel was preached unto them. Therefore this was the sin referred to in the rejection of Christ: *Behold I stand upon the Rock, saith God.* And Paul was commissioned to tell the church; that that Rock was Christ. And wherefore is that story incorporated in such an hymn of praise to Christ as this is, but to say the same to us? *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you a heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Compare Exod. xvii. 6; with 1 Cor. x. 4; Heb. iii. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! canst thou accept the invitation, and join with holy joy and love the pressing call of the church, and hasten to celebrate the praises of Jehovah Jesus, the Rock of thy salvation? Is he indeed thy Rock, thy Saviour, thy Holy One, thy Jesus, thy Chosen? Hath he won thy

affections, gained over thine heart to his love; and dost thou know him in all those sweet and covenant relations, in which the Holy Ghost here represents him to the Church? Oh! precious view of a most blessed and precious Saviour! Help me, Lord, to put forth all my strength, and hasten to bow down the knee of my heart with all my soul and body, before his footstool. Yes! Lord, I would make a joyful noise, the loudest noise of the warmest heart, in praising thee, in loving thee, in living to thee, both in ordinances and without them, day by day, and night by night, to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called me out of darkness into his marvellous light. Creation, providence, redemption, grace, glory, shall all come into the notes of my song. And I would not only call upon all that is within me to praise Jesus, but I would call upon every one around me to make a joyful noise to the God of my salvation! And oh! thou dear Redeemer! I beseech thee, Lord, by all the endearing tokens of thy redeeming love, manifested to such a sinner as I am, grant me renewed grace in the continued exercise of faith, that while praising thee I may live upon thee, and while adoring thee my soul may increase in love towards thee. Then shall I have some faint enjoyment of what the blessed above, at the fountain-head of thy presence, richly partake of; and by learning day by day to praise thee more and more, my soul may be forming, under thy divine hand, for the everlasting enjoyment and praises of my God, in the glory that shall be revealed. Amen.

PSALM XCVI.

CONTENTS.

Here is a new and repeated call to praise Jehovah; and, like the former Psalm, chiefly on account of redemption. It is altogether a gospel Psalm. Blessed the soul that in reading or singing it finds the Holy Ghost pointing to Christ, and enjoys Christ in it.

O SING unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

I beg the Reader to remark the threefold call to praise Jehovah. And is not this with reference to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Especially, as this is a Psalm in honour of redemption, is it not as if the sacred writer was calling upon the Church to give to each Person of the Godhead, and to all collectively, the praises due for their joint love, mercy, and power, in this act of sovereign grace? Do observe, that both Jew and Gentile are invited to the celebration of the honour due unto the glorious name of Jehovah! The song itself is a *new* song, such as the redeemed from heaven are said to sing, and which none could sing but the redeemed from the earth. Rev. xiv. 3. So that upon every account this lovely Psalm comes home to our hearts, and seems to demand an interest in every one that hears it. Reader! let us pause

over this opening of it, and ask ourselves, whether we can sing this *new* song with a *new* heart in Christ Jesus?

3 Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

Here we have the subject-matter of the song: It is Jesus. His glory, his name, his praise, his wonders of redemption, every day, and all the day, let them be proclaimed.

4 For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised: he *is* to be feared above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the nations *are* idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

In order to heighten the praises of Jehovah, let his salvation be preached among the Gentiles. Let the dunghill gods of the heathen fall down, as Dagon did before the ark. 1 Sam. v. 3.

6 Honour and majesty *are* before him: strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.

We have no conception of the splendour and glory with which the church above is blessed, in the immediate contemplation of God and the Lamb. The prophet gives us some faint idea of it, when saying, *In that day shall the moon be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his antients gloriously.* Isaiah, xxiv. 23. And the apostle follows up the same idea, when, in his account of the New Jerusalem, he saith, *The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* Rev. xxi. 22.

7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

8 Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto* his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

It is impossible sufficiently to celebrate the glories of Christ in his kingdom. All divine perfections are his; all spiritual, temporal, eternal dominion belongs to him, both by virtue of his Father's gift, his own right of purchase, and the conquests of his Spirit. Therefore (saith the Psalmist) tell it out at large who Jesus is, how sure, how certain, how durable and eternal, his kingdom. *As I live, saith the Lord, I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness,*

and shall not return; that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Isaiah, xlv. 23. Hence the earnest exhortation of the Psalmist, Psalm ii. 12.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.

12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

In these verses, the soul of the inspired writer is so lifted up, that he even calls upon the inanimate parts of creation to join in celebrating the glorious king Messiah's praises. The heavens and the earth, the sea and its fulness, the fields and the trees of the wood, all shall manifest, by tokens, joy in the glories of their Creator. For as the whole creation groaneth by reason of the fall, so in redemption every thing shall bear a part in holy joy.

13 Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

All the redeemed of God are uniformly represented as looking unto, and longing for, the second coming of Christ. How the Church longed for Christ's first coming, is often represented in scripture. And Jesus comforted his disciples with the blessed prospect, when from signs and tokens they were to *lift up their heads*, when *their redemption drew nigh*; Luke, xxi. 28. Hence, when Jesus, at the close of the canon of scripture, saith, *Behold, I come quickly*, the Church with one voice is represented as crying out, *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*. Rev. xxii. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we have been attending to this gospel Psalm, this new song of the church, in honour of her Redeemer: but can we truly and heartily join in it? Is it not the same new song, or to the same effect, as John heard the redeemed in heaven sing? Indeed, how should it be otherwise; for it is wholly of salvation? And if the church above sing it, ought not the church below? And if every individual of that church, at the fountain-head of bliss, sing it, ought not every individual of the church, though in a wilderness-state below, to sing the same? Reader! have we learned it? Can we sing it? Do we live in it, and delight in it? Yes! yes! if Jesus be precious, surely we shall at least hush out the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light; and the song of Moses and the Lamb will be our daily song in this house of our pilgrimage.

Precious Author of all our joy, Jesus, by that endearing name would my soul look up to thee, and sing of thee, and of thy praise, all the day long! As the thirsty earth receives the falling shower; as the darkened land rejoiceth in the opening day; so let my soul wait and long for thee, and welcome thee and thy coming, every day, and all the day, in songs of the most sublime adoration, love, and praise. And while en-

joying thee and thy presence in my own soul, I would declare thy glory among the heathen. I would tell of the wonders of thy love among all people. And though full well I know, blessed Jesus, that all praise must fall infinitely short of thine excellent greatness, yet would I put forth all my strength, and call upon all the heathen to rejoice, at the blessed thought that Christ reigneth. And, Lord, while singing thy praises, this should swell my joyful song, that Jesus cometh, and is coming, and will come, to judge the earth, to take to himself his great name, and live, and love, and rule for ever. Oh, Lord! may it form a sweet and harmonious note in my song, that Jesus, who cometh as the judge of all the earth, cometh also as the Lord and Saviour of his people. *He is coming to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.* Come then, Lord Jesus! come, and be glorified in my soul, and be glorified in my salvation! For surely I know, and believe, that *every knee shall bow before thee, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Amen.

PSALM XCVII.

CONTENTS.

The same subject that ran through the former Psalm is here continued: and Jesus, as the Christ of God, is the sum and substance of it. Very strong and solid reasons are given wherefore the Church should unceasingly rejoice in the contemplation of the Redeemer's reign; and well may she give her loudest response of Amen, to every part of it.

THE LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad *thereof*.

What a sweet thought is it to consider the reign of Jesus, in grace here, in glory hereafter; in all the kingdoms of his government, temporal, spiritual, eternal, natural, moral, or spiritual; in providence or grace! Precious Lord! while my soul beholds thee in this glorious view, what occurrence can cast me down?

2 Clouds and darkness *are* round about him: righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of his throne.

How blessedly doth this verse follow the former! Though clouds and darkness prevent my seeing at all times the way of his dispensations towards the church, and towards my soul; still do I not know that Jesus reigneth? Peace, then, my soul! I shall surely wade through every trouble, for Jesus leads, and Jesus is before. Psalm lxxix. 19.

3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.

5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD; at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.

The Psalmist, no doubt, alludes to the Lord's dealings with his people in the wilderness; but, spiritually considered, the subject ariseth to a greater degree of sublimity in the view of the conquests of the Lord, by his Spirit, in the hearts of his people. Here, it may be truly said, the fire of his sacred word hath a most powerful effect, to burn up all the briars and thorns that would oppose the Lord's way. The enlightening word of his grace, and the illumination of the Holy Ghost, open light in the soul, to make the sinner tremble; and the heart, like wax, is brought down, from hardness like a stone, to all the melting affections of the love of Jesus. See those scriptures, Jer. xxiii. 29; Isaiah, xxvii. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Psalm lxviii. 2; Nahum, ii. 10.

6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people his glory.

The Lord frequently refers to all creation in evidence of the righteousness of his reign; and eminently so will this be proved at that final day, *when all flesh shall see the salvation of God.* Isaiah, xl. 5.

7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him all ye gods.

This is every day manifested in the kingdom of grace, when poor sinners are brought over from the worshipping of dumb idols, to serve the living and true God: and how eminently will it be displayed in the last day, in the kingdom of glory, when Christ shall be all in all!

8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD.

9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

Whatever effect the astonished nations of the earth now feel at the blessedness of Christ's church, his beloved Zion takes part in all that concerns our Lord. Tell a lover of Jesus that a nation is born at once, or that an individual poor sinner is recovered by grace to the Lord, and every citizen of Zion participates in the triumph. Blessed Jesus! I bless thee for this evidence of my being thine, that amidst all my undeservings, *I do prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy.* Psalm cxxxvii. 6. And as the soul of a believer rejoiceth in the conversion of every poor sinner, so is joy excited in the view of the judgments of God over the enemies of Christ, death, hell, and the grave. Reader! turn to the book of the Revelations, and behold the joy of the holy apostles and prophets, and of all heaven, in the destruction of mystic Babylon; Rev. xviii. 20. And oh! what everlasting joy will burst forth from all the host, when all enemies shall be brought under Christ's feet!

10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

A rule is here given to judge of real love. If I love Jesus, I shall love his people. If I love him, I love what he loves, and hate what he hates. See an appeal of this kind to the Lord, much in point, Psalm xxxiv. 21, 22.

11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

This is a proper thought to be kept alive in the mind of a believer. Light is *sown*, not gathered, nor reaped, though sure. Hence the patience of the husbandman is recommended in waiting for it, James, vi. 7; Gal. vi. 9; Psalm xxvii. 14.

12 Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

No one but a believer can take pleasure in the recollection of God's holiness. Every unrenewed sinner must, if he thinks at all, be dreadfully alarmed at it. But to a soul, believing and trusting in Christ and his righteousness, the holiness of the Lord is as dear and precious as any other of the divine perfections; and for this plain reason: because in the person of Jesus, his glorious surety, he beholds a holiness every way equal to the demands of God's righteous law, and in that holiness he considers himself, both now in grace, and hereafter in glory, as appearing before God. Sweet thought! Lord, help me ever to give thanks at the remembrance of thy holiness, and be made a partaker of it in Christ Jesus! Heb. xii. 10.

REFLECTIONS.

HALLELUJAH! The Lord God, even Jesus, omnipotent, reigneth! And while all the earth may find cause to be glad, and the multitude of the isles to rejoice, well may I, a poor inhabitant of these islands of darkness, born in sin, and by nature ignorant of Jesus and his reign, join the triumphant hymn of praise. And though a thousand obstructions of clouds and darkness prevent my perfect and clear knowledge how Jesus reigns; yet sure I am he doth reign in grace, and his kingdom shall be in everlasting glory.

Oh! let it please thee, thou almighty King of Zion, to go forth in the fire of thy word, in the hammer of thy law, in the melody of thy gospel, in the sword of thy Spirit, subduing the people to the sovereignty of thy grace, and bringing all thine enemies under thy footstool. Oh! shine, Lord, by thy word and Spirit, into the hearts and consciences of poor sinners; that their hearts may melt like wax before thee, and every knee bow unto thee, and every tongue be called forth in thy praise. And while waiting the precious fruits of that light which is sown for the righteous, give me to see that my path is the path of the justified soul in Christ Jesus, which shineth more and more unto a perfect day. Yes! my adorable Lord and Saviour! I will rejoice in thy righteousness. I will give thanks at the remembrance of thy holiness, with-

out which no man can see the Lord. Such an High Priest, such an holy Surety, such an all pure, spotless, and undefiled Saviour, became poor sinners who had in themselves lost all holiness, and stood exposed thereby to the everlasting judgment and displeasure of almighty God. Well, therefore, may my soul rejoice in thee, who art the Lord my righteousness, and who art made of God to all thy redeemed, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption; that according as it is written, *he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* This therefore shall be my hallelujah song on earth, in the contemplation of this holiness, and my holiness in thee, until I come to the full enjoyment of thy presence, thy glory, and holiness, among the redeemed in heaven. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness: as a bridegroom, decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

PSALM XCVIII.

CONTENTS.

This, like the foregoing, is a true gospel Psalm. Jesus is adored for the victories of his redemption; and the Church, both Jew and Gentile, is called upon to sing aloud the triumphs of his grace.

A Psalm.

O SING unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

It may be truly said of our Jesus, that he alone hath gotten the victory, for *of the people there was none with him*; Isaiah, lxiii. 3. But what is this *new song* the church is called upon to sing? It can be none but that of redemption. For creation work had been long finished, and long and faithfully recorded: and ever is to be recorded as an ancient, lasting, eternal song. *The morning stars then sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.* Job, xxxviii. 7. But when redemption work came forward, and was perfected, a new note, a *new song*, was added to the subject, of mercy, and the church is called upon, as being most highly interested, to sing it. The song, and all the subject of it, is Jesus.

2 The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

When we descend into particulars, how lovely is this song? The Lord hath made it known, and it contains most blessed things. It speaks of the marvellous things which he hath wrought, the victories Jesus hath

obtained, the grace he hath manifested, not only to his own people the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, and to all the earth; and of the extent of his empire of grace throughout the world; so that all people shall see his great salvation. Reader! turn the subject in your mind, and see those illustrious proofs of divine grace, especially as exemplified in your own experience. Can you sing this *new song*? Hath the Lord made known his salvation unto you? If *all the ends of the earth* shall see it, well may every soul ask his own heart, Have I seen it? and am I a partaker of this unspeakable gift of God in Christ?

4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.

6 With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

There can be no doubt but that when musical instruments are spoken of in the word of God, and in the Psalms more particularly, as we find them there more frequently mentioned, somewhat more is intended than the mere harps and cornets invented by men: I take it to mean, let all the chords of the heart be in unison of praise to the God of such rich mercies.

7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

8 Let the floods clap *their* hands: let the hills be joyful together

9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Here all inanimate creation is again called upon to join the song. For if men should be silent, the very stones of the earth would cry out. And this appeal to the silent heavens and the noisy sea, plainly proves that what I remarked before, concerning stringed instruments, must imply somewhat more intelligent and higher. Indeed, as the song is not creation, but redemption; and as *the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain*, in consequence of the fall; the recovery may be supposed to call forth every thing that hath breath to praise the Lord. Rom. viii. 22. But, what a sweet thought! what a reviving, blessed, precious, consolatory thought, is that with which the Psalm closeth; *Jesus cometh to judge the earth*. Oh! how delightful the consideration, that it is in his righteousness his people expect him. *He shall come*, saith one of the sacred writers, *to be admired in his saints, and to be glorified in all them that believe*. Then, saith another, *in that day shall it be said, Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him: we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation*. 2 Thess. i. 10. Isaiah, xlv. 9.

REFLECTIONS.

How blessed the thought, how full of glory the meditation! Jesus hath conquered all the enemies of our salvation! Himself, our Jesus, our Brother, our Husband, our glorious Head, is he that hath gotten the victory. And what endears it yet more is, that he hath gotten it in our name, in our stead; for us, and for our salvation: and all he is, and all he hath wrought, and all he hath obtained, is ours. And, my soul, pause, and consider how the communication of those mercies is endeared to thee. Jesus hath not only conquered, but made known: He hath not only remembered his mercy, and accomplished salvation, both toward the house of Israel, and to all the ends of the earth; but he hath, by his blessed Spirit, taught the souls of his people to believe in him, and to depend upon him. Well may every redeemed soul sing unto the Lord the *new song* of redemption. Let the sea roar with echoing the same, and all the trees of the wood clap their hands!

But pause once more, my soul, and ask thine heart, Canst thou sing this *new song*? Hath the Lord brought thee out of *the horrible pit*, out of *the mire and clay*, even out of the ruins of nature, and sin, and Satan, and put thy feet upon the rock, and a *new song*, even *the song of Moses and the Lamb*, into thy mouth? Oh! for grace to sing this new song with a new heart: to make Jesus, in his person, in his love, offices, salvation, the everlasting melody of the heart, and the rejoicing for ever. Oh! for grace, that in the review of all the covenant love of God in Christ, I may be looking unto, and waiting for, his coming. Haste, my beloved; let the shadows of night flee away; and be thou like a roe, or young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

PSALM XCIX.

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The Prophet in this Psalm, as in several of the preceding, is still engaged in sounding forth the high praises of the kingdom of God in Christ. In the latter part, the Psalmist refers to several of the Old Testament Prophets, as examples in the Church, of praising the Lord.

THE LORD reigneth: let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

God's sovereignty and reign is first spoken of in the opening of this Psalm, as a cause for holy fear to all the earth. And this perfection of Jehovah is held forth as the reason for universal homage and reverence. *Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my presence?* Jerem. v. 22. But, as if the Lord had a peculiar eye to the comfort of his Church, he adds, in the latter part of the verse, God's sitting between the cherubim, or on the mercy-seat, whence the Lord promised to speak to his people, Exod. xxv. 21, 22. Reader! what a lovely representation is this of Jesus, our mercy-seat, and God's propitiatory! And are not all the sweet words of grace which we hear spoken to us, in and by Jesus? 1 Sam. iv. 4. Numb. vii. 89.

2 The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people.

Still looking to Zion, the Psalmist in this verse praiseth the Lord's greatness, sovereignty, and grace. Reader! in how eminent a manner hath Jehovah manifested his greatness, goodness, and glory, in the person and work of his dear Son!

3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.

4 The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

5 Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

I do not presume to speak decidedly upon this, or any other part of the divine word. As one indeed treading holy ground, I would put off the shoes from my feet. But I would humbly ask, is not this call upon the church *twice* repeated with only a little variation, in conformity to the plan of adoration observed above? Did not Isaiah; did not the beloved John, behold somewhat of these glorious acts of adoration and praise? See Isaiah, vi. 1—3, and Rev. iv. 2, to the end. Reader! what can more strikingly prove, so far as our present capacities are capable of conceiving any thing of this sublime subject) the glorious doctrine of the Holy Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? And observe, how this worship is offered, both in heaven and upon earth, at the footstool; that is, through the mercy-seat, the propitiatory, even Christ Jesus. There is no approaching Jehovah but in and by him. Neither can there be any real apprehension of the existence of a three-fold character of persons in the Godhead, but through this Mediator. John, xiv. 6.

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.

If I mistake not, the introduction of these eminent servants of God in this place, in order to shew the Church how they approached to worship the Lord, and were heard and answered, is with a view to encourage all the Lord's heritage to approach, and in the same way; for it was at the mercy-seat, meaning Christ. In him they were heard; and for his sake they were accepted. Exod. xvi. 10, 11. Numb. xii. 5.

8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.

Perhaps this is particularly added concerning those eminently gracious men, to shew us, that notwithstanding the sanctity of their character, they were men of like passions with ourselves. Therefore the sole cause of their acceptance was in Christ. Oh! what a blessed thought of encouragement to every true believer of the Church now! How ought it to beget in saints a solemn reverence for God's holiness! How ought it to excite humble joy and confidence, that we have Jesus, our Holy One, to approach to an holy God in!

9 Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.

The Psalm beautifully concludes with repeating a *third* time the strongest of all arguments for praising Jehovah; the holiness of his nature: and what hath so highly exalted that glory to our view, and love, and praise, as the holiness of Christ Jesus? Heb. vii. 26.

REFLECTIONS.

AFTER reminding both the Reader and myself of all the blessed causes which this delightful Psalm contains, to join with the sacred writer in ascribing "glory to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, for ever and ever," I would desire to recommend his attention, and my own, to what is said concerning those servants of the Lord, Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel. We are told that they called upon the Lord, and were answered. But though God forgave them, yet took he vengeance of their inventions. The solemn consideration of this account, suggests several very interesting and weighty reflections.

First, We learn from it, that God's choicest servants have their inventions; and the best of men, after all, are but sinners. *Aaron* offended, and but for the intercession of *Moses*, would have fallen. Here *Christ*, surely, in his glorious, all-prevailing intercession, was eminently represented. *Moses* himself neglected to sanctify the Lord in the eyes of the people, when presumptuously joining himself with the Lord, he cried out, *Must we fetch you water out of the rock?* and *Eli's* partiality to his children made him too easy to their vices. Alas! who among the fallen sons of Adam, hath escaped the common taint of sin?

Secondly, we learn, that these sins of God's people are displeasing to the Lord, and that he takes vengeance for them. Though their persons and their offerings are accepted in Christ, yet their corruption shall bring with it chastisement. And when a child of God feels the rod of God, as a kind correcting father, and cries out under it, *Thou art righteous in all that is come upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly*; this is what is called in Scripture, *accepting the punishment of our iniquity*: and this manifests the holiness of God, and prevents the abuse of his covenant-mercy in Christ.

Lastly, God hearing the prayers of his servants, and answering them, notwithstanding their inventions, of which he takes vengeance, teacheth us the whole cause wherefore it is that saints are accepted, and sinners saved; namely, on the sole account of the covenant-love and faithfulness of God our Father, in and for the sake of the blood and righte-

ousness of his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, Reader, what a blessed consideration it is, that God still owns his covenant relationship; and Jesus's blood and righteousness still plead for mercy. The corrections of our God and Father, are not to satisfy his justice, for that Christ hath done; but for the display of his holiness and love. And, amidst all our unworthiness, the merit of Jesus still remains the same. Blessed, for ever blessed be God, for Jesus Christ! Lord, give us grace to serve with fear, and rejoice with trembling. May we ever exalt the Lord our God, and worship him in his holy hill: for the Lord our God is holy.

PSALM C.

CONTENTS.

Here is a Psalm, and a glorious one it is, in which the whole church, nay, the whole earth, is called upon to praise Jehovah: for creation, redemption, providence, and grace; and all the blessings connected with the whole. Few are strangers to this blessed Psalm, who ever heard of God in Christ.

A Psalm of Praise.

MAKE a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

No service can be *real*, that is not *free*, and performed with gladness. Think, my soul, with what freeness, and gladness of heart, thy Jesus entered upon his service, when he cried out, at the call of the Father, *Lo! I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my bowels;* forming part of myself, so congenial it is to my whole soul. Psalm xi. 7, 8. My soul, what sayest thou to this view of thy Saviour? Oh! how precious to behold Him every where, and in all things!

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: *it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

Observe the motives, and the encouragements, to this cheerful service. Our God, is God; and he is a good God; and he is our God, as our Creator: and we are his, by right of creation, like sheep that have an owner. And, being his property, shall we not be his care? Yes, for he is good. Sweet thought! both by creation, and by redemption, we are his; and therefore he hath an undoubted right to all our services; and well may we give him the tribute of praise.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

Here the invitation, or rather the command, is reiterated: surely such

a God, such a Creator, such a Redeemer, may well demand our warmest praise. And therefore let us enter into his courts: let us approach his footstool: let praise, thanksgiving, and sacred joy fill every heart, swell every song, burst from every tongue: bless, bless his name! Reader, in the Jewish church, the courts of God's house became the nearest place the Gentiles were permitted to approach, in their sacred worship: and even Israel was not allowed to enter into the Holy Place. But you and I, poor Gentiles by nature, and sinners by practice, are permitted to enter into the *holiest*, by the blood of Jesus; nay, commanded to come, and find grace to help in all time of need. Think, my brother, of the vast privilege; and let us improve it to his glory, in whose name and righteousness we can alone come, and by whose rich redemption such blessings are alone made ours.

5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

How delightfully this verse closeth in upon what went before! Wherefore are such blessings bestowed? it might be well asked: Why hath Jehovah made us, and *new made* us, in Christ Jesus? Why opened his heavenly courts, and called upon us to come in? Is it because man is deserving, and faithful, and just? Oh no; for in ourselves we are most undeserving. Wherefore is the vast mercy then? Because the Lord is good; the Lord is gracious; he delighteth in mercy. He will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. And that grace and mercy, like himself, is unchangeable: the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Hallelujah, then, Amen. Hallelujah. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, Reader, pause my soul, and contemplate the numberless beauties, and the vast sweetness contained in this short, but comprehensive Psalm. No wonder it is so often sung in our churches. No wonder, while it is sung, so many souls of true believers should feel such rich enjoyment in it: holding forth, as it doth, the persons both of God and of his Christ; with the many rich blessings contained in the covenant relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And shall not all lands, which are to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, join in the joyful noise? Shall not both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rejoice together? Shall not, in every place, as the Lord hath said, be incense offered unto Jehovah's name, with a pure offering, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same?—Come, all ye people, all ye nations, both high and low, rich and poor, one with another: come, sing forth the praises of Jehovah, the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier! Come into his presence with thanksgiving; enter his courts with praise. For he is indeed gracious, and will receive the homage of his creatures in Jesus. Come, Reader! Come my soul! Come, come before him. He is justly entitled to our praise. He demands it; he expects it from us. Oh! for grace to worship him in the beauty of holiness, and to sing the jubilee song of salvation, in and by Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM CI.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm contains a mingled song of joy and sorrow; both addressed to the Lord.

A Psalm of David.

I WILL sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

Though I do not say that David had no reference to himself, and his personal exercises, when he wrote this Psalm, many parts of which so very properly suited him; yet I venture to believe, that the Holy Ghost intended it more for the comfort of the Church, in sketching forth some blessed points, referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. Reader, let us, while passing through it, lose sight as much as possible of David, and of our own history, in order to discover somewhat of Jesus, in whom David, as well as you and I, can only find comfort. And here at the opening, who could sing so sweetly, both of mercy and judgment, as the Son of David, when in the days of his flesh *he rejoiced in spirit*; and also offered up *strong cries and tears*? Luke, x. 21; Heb. v. 7. Who but Jesus, as the Head of his Church, can truly be said to sing of mercy, in that he hath obtained the whole fulness of mercy? Nay, he himself is the very mercy of Jehovah to all his people. And if judgment form a part in the song, surely none can sing of this but Jesus! He bore all the punishment due to sin from the righteous judgment of God, his Father. And he alone, having the righteous administration of it in the earth, and to whom all judgment is committed, must finally fulfil all! Reader, you and I would never have been able to sing of either, but for Jesus. And now, were it not for an interest in him, how could such different subjects be blended? But while we see Jesus going before, can we follow him in the song? Shall we go after him, still with praise, in the view of his person, and sing a song to our God in Christ, whether his providences smile, or whether they frown? Oh! it is blessed to have the same heart to this, by living upon an unchangeable God in Christ, and never to hang the harp upon the willows. 1 Thess. v. 18.

2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.
O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

Who but Jesus could behave himself wisely? Who but the Lamb of God could be said to have a perfect heart? Jesus indeed desired, and had, the constant presence of the Father. But, alas! how little is our communion with God in Christ kept up in the soul?

3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes:
I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked *person*.

5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

Nothing can be more beautiful, considered as descriptive of the person and work of Jesus, in the days of his flesh, than what is here said. But such views of perfection, as they are nowhere to be found among the fallen race of Adam, considered out of Christ, are only calculated to distress the soul exceedingly. Reader, pause then with me, and say, if it be possible, how blessed, how inexpressibly blessed, is it to behold Jesus in all these perfections of character, and to consider him in all as the great Head and Representative of his church and people!

6 Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

Reader, pause over these verses. Behold in one, what endearing doctrine it contains! Behold in the other, the solemn denunciations. Like the pillar of a cloud, in the wilderness, the aspect of glory and light to the one, becomes darkness and terror to the other. Jesus! Let thine eyes be upon him that now writes, and him that hereafter may read these lines; and let the sweet influences of thy Holy Spirit induce faithfulness, and every needed grace, in our hearts. Oh! to dwell with thee, thou condescending Lord of thy people, and thou to dwell with us, and be in us, *the hope of glory*: what unspeakable felicity is this! Come, Lord, and make our hearts thy home: and dwell in us, and reign and rule in us, for ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

JESUS! my song shall be of thee; and to God my Father will I sing. I will sing of thy person, sing of thy love, sing of thy grace, of thy mercy, nay, sing of thy judgments; for I know, Lord, that all thy judgments are right, and that in my deepest exercises, it is because of thy faithfulness that I am troubled. There can be nothing amiss in that which Jesus appoints. Nothing, therefore, shall put my soul out of tune, while Jesus is my song. And that which is the work of heaven, shall, through thy grace, be my employment on earth. Jesus is, and hath been, and shall be, the one all-sufficient note of joy, and love, and praise, both now and for ever.

And, holy Father, most gracious almighty God, to thee, will I sing of Jesus. It is thou that hast proclaimed Jesus from heaven as thy dear and ever blessed, and beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleased. And humbly, Lord, would I send up the feeble notes of my song of praise, to say how happy my poor soul is with such a Saviour! Lord, I will sing to thee of thy mercy in giving Christ; in the birth of Christ; in the death of Christ; in the resurrection of Christ; in the redemption by the blood and righteousness of Christ; in the ascension, exaltation, and triumphs of Christ; in the everlasting priesthood of Christ; in the gifts of the Spirit by Christ; and of all the blessings folded up and contained in this one unequalled gift of thy dear Son, Christ Jesus. This, Lord, shall be my song, my daily, hourly song, in this house of my pilgrimage, until thou shalt be pleased to take me home, to sing the high praises of Jehovah, in heaven, for ever. And oh! thou blessed Spirit, wilt thou not tune my heart, and tune my harp, to this melody of soul, that I may sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding also? Wilt thou not cause me to sing of Jesus, to sing of Him, who is the sweet singer in Israel, and the chief musician of all harmony? The first song of praise ever raised for man to sing, was of Jesus, which angels sung? *Glory to God in the highest.* And the everlasting song of heaven, to be sung by all the redeemed, is, *To Him who was slain, and hath redeemed us by his blood.*—Begin then, my soul, and never end thy song; but let Jesus live in thine heart, dwell upon thy tongue, drop like the honey-comb in unceasingly blessing God in Christ; and, until thou join the hallelujahs of heaven, sing of Jesus both in mercy and judgment; and to Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, let thy voice be raised. Amen.

PSALM CII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here engaged in prayer. We find much that clearly refers to the person of Christ. The sorrows expressed, considered with reference to him, are very striking: and the refuge taken in the eternal strength of Jehovah, as the strength of the redeemed, forms a most interesting part in this divine Psalm.

A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

HEAR my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.

2 Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day *when* I call, answer me speedily.

From the authority of the Holy Ghost, in having caused his servant, the apostle Paul, to quote a portion of this psalm, in his first chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, in direct reference to the person of Christ, it is plain, that the church *now*, as the Apostle did *then*, ought to be always upon the look-out for Jesus in every part of Scripture. For my own part, when I consider Christ as our Head and Surety, who

in all our affliction was afflicted; and when I hear *the strong cries of Jesus in the days of his flesh*, and connect with it the cause, I find it profitable to consider him going before, in all the tribulated path of sorrow, and to behold him, who endured *such a contradiction of sinners against himself*, as the best method to avoid being wearied, and faint in my mind. As such, I read this psalm, *first*, with reference to the person of Jesus; and *then*, as, in Him, forming a suitable form of words to approach God in Christ, at a mercy-seat, in seasons of soul exercises and trouble. Heb. xii. 3.

3 For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.

5 By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.

6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert.

7 I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.

8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me, are sworn against me.

9 For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,

10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

11 My days *are* like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

I make no chasm in the reading of these verses, because they form together a complete detail of the state of the sufferer, and serve the better, in an united point of view, to interest our hearts in the perusal. Suppose, Reader, that you and I consider these words, as spoken by the prophet with reference to Jesus: we have several portions to the same effect, which the Holy Ghost hath explained by direct application to Jesus. See and compare Psalm xxii. 8, with Matt. xxvii. 43; Psalm xxii. 1, with Matt. xxvii. 46; and Psalm xvi. 10, with Acts, ii. 29—31. I conceive such views to be very blessed. And, *first*, observe the days of Christ are said to be, as *the smoke*, or *the shadow*. Jesus was only *thirty years old* (counting after the days of his flesh), when he entered upon his public ministry; and the whole period from that time to the cross, was only about *three years and a half*. Taking upon him our nature, and bearing the sin of that nature, induced those effects which are here spoken of. Luke, iii. 23. *Secondly*, remark the sorrow of these days, in the consequences it induced. He saith, *his heart was smitten, and withered like grass*. He forgot to eat bread,

What he did eat was *like ashes, and mingled with tears*. And such was his groaning, that *his bones would scarce cleave to his flesh*. These things could only be said of Jesus, as the sinner's Surety. David, king of Israel, in no period of his troubles, waded through either bodily or soul distresses like these. But nothing can be more suited than these expressions to Christ. The prophet described him as having a visage *marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men*; Isaiah, lii. 14. And in the gospel account of the Evangelists, the relation exactly corresponds. From the manger to the cross, he was a *man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*; Isaiah, liii. 3. Thirdly, note what the patient sufferer complains of; *the reproaches of his enemies all the day long*, and of their being *sworn together against him*; these things were soliterally fulfilled in the person of Jesus, as they never could be in any other. He was accounted a deceiver, a blasphemer, nay, a devil; when, in the same moment, in his mouth, *there was no guile*. Precious Jesus! how very endearing are such views of thee and of thine unequalled sorrows, beheld, as thou art in thyself, and as thou art in thy tender love to us, and to our poor fallen nature! Lastly, and above all, observe the cries of Christ, on account of God the Father's displeasure against sin, which He, as the sinner's Surety, sustained, when he said in this Psalm, *I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up and cast me down!* Who shall say what the holy soul of Jesus felt in those unequalled moments of sorrow, when, for our sin, it *pleased the Father to bruise him, and to put him to grief*? Isaiah, liii. 10. Who shall ever conceive the anguish of heart, that Jesus experienced, when *the sword of justice* received a command to *awake and smite him*? Zech. xiii. 7. And what form of words can be found to explain the nature of that soul-agony which constrained the holy Jesus to exclaim, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*? Mark, xiv. 34. Lamb of God! when I think of these things, shall my mind be led away to think of other afflictions, or the exercises of myself, or other sinners, when thy spotless soul, in which was no sin, was borne down, under a pressure that would have crushed a whole creation, where sin is found? Do I not hear thee say, *Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger?* Lament. i. 12.

12 But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.

13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.

14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

15 So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

16 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

Still prosecuting the subject of this most blessed psalm, with reference to our adorable and glorious Mediator, may we not accept the several expressions here, as spoken by Christ, in his capacity of Surety; and as taking confidence for himself and church in the covenant-engagements of the Father? I stay not to enlarge, but I refer the reader to those most interesting passages of Scripture, in other parts of the divine word, which serve to explain the doctrine. Isaiah, xlix. throughout; Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4—19 to 37; Psalm lxxxvii. throughout.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth;

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23 He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.

How truly lovely is it to observe, through every part of Scripture, the confirmation of the everlasting love, and unchangeable purposes of Jehovah, concerning redemption! It was this tender look of God from heaven (speaking after the manner of men) which prompted the infinite mind of God, our Father, to raise up a Saviour, and a Great One; and to send his Son to be the Saviour of the world. Compare Isaiah, xix. 20; lxi. 1, 2, 3; with Luke, iv. 18, 19.

24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years *are* throughout all generations.

I do not presume to say as much, but I would ask, is not this verse a prayer of Christ, as the Christ of God? Taking it in connection with what went before, God the Father is represented as beholding the sin and misery of the church. He adds, in this view, that his name shall be declared in Zion; and he will loose those appointed unto death. To these blessed declarations the answer is, that the church's great Head, in the days of his flesh is afflicted, yea, his strength is weakened, as had been said before, verses 3 and 11: Destroy not then (saith the humble petitioner), neither take me away in the midst of my years. Similar to that passage, Isaiah, lxxv. 8.

25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

27 But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.

28 The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

From the apostle Paul's quotation of this glorious passage, Heb. i. 10, &c. and his illustration of it, as there explained, it should seem very evident that these verses contain God the Father's answer to Christ's prayer, and form a blessed summary of all redemption mercies ensured to the church in Him. And therefore the church may, with full assurance of faith, take to herself, and every individual of the church, with equal right in Christ, the whole blessings of covenant promises in redemption: for as Christ is, so is his church in him. His love the same, his grace the same, his redemption the same, *yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER, I know not what soul exercises or afflictions your heart may be wounded with; but I venture to believe, that the truest relief under all, is to view Christ in his unequalled sorrows. Poring over ourselves, or over our own sorrows, and magnifying them, will never bring comfort. But if I see Jesus with the eye of faith, in the tribulated path; if I mark his footsteps, and he calls to me, and leads me by the way of the footsteps of his flock, where he feeds his kids, beside the shepherds' tents; I shall feel comfort. *They had an eye unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.* He, whose bread was ashes, and whose drink was mingled with tears, will turn my water into wine; make my very crosses sweet, and cause my tears to become like the spiced juice of the pomegranate. May the Lord the Holy Ghost so glorify the Lord Jesus to our view; cause us, in our sorrows, as well as in our joys, to be always looking to Him, living upon Him, walking with Him, and making Him our all in all, in every state!

And, Reader, do not let us overlook the blessedness this psalm contains of a sure victory, and happy issue, to all our exercises. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.* Jesus's unchangeable love, everlasting righteousness, and all the covenant engagements of Jehovah in, and to Him, makes all sure and fixed. Though all things are changing, fluctuating, dying, perishing here below;—though in ourselves, in our friends, in our houses, in the church, in the world; all like a vesture are folding up, and hastening to decay; yet Jesus lives: and, in that, all is secure: for he hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* Hail, holy,

great, almighty Saviour! Thou art he whom the Father loveth, and hath given all things into thine hands. Eternally secure in thee, we are screened from every danger: thy children shall continue, and thy seed shall be established before thee. And when heart, and strength, and all shall fail, thou art, and wilt be, *the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.*

PSALM CIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is one continued hymn of praise, and includes a comprehensive view of the goodness of Jehovah, in all the great works of creation and redemption, providence and grace.

A Psalm of David.

BLESS the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *ble*ss his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

How beautifully does the psalm begin, in calling upon the soul to this most pleasing service, of praising God! Reader, do remark it, that it is *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*; while *with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation*. Unless the heart be engaged in any service, there is nothing truly valuable in that service. Hence it was an ancient custom in the church, at the opening of the service, to call upon the people, *Lift up your hearts!* Rom. x. 10.

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemed thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies:

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*: so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Observe what motives the sacred writer adopts to awaken the soul to the praise and love of God: as if he had said, My soul, hast thou sinned? God in Christ pardons thy sins. Art thou diseased in body and soul, by reason of sin? God in Christ healeth all thy diseases. Art thou ruined and undone in all the circumstances of nature, by reason of the fall? It is God, in Christ, that redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with all that is needful for thee in grace. Art thou feeling decays, and is the event of mortality hastening upon thee? God in Christ will renew thee, as the eagle is renewed in old age. Precious, precious salvation! and all eternally secured, and made certain, from a God in Christ. See, in confirmation, those scriptures: Isaiah, xliii. 25; Exod. xv. 26; Isaiah, xxxiii. 24; Exod. xix. 4; Isaiah, xl. 31.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.

If we read these verses as we ought, with a view to Christ, here most eminently hath Jehovah manifested those sovereign acts of mercy and judgment, by redemption in his dear Son. And, surely, it was not without reference to this, in a most eminent manner, that the Lord did, at the request of Moses, make all his *goodness* pass before his servant in the holy mount. For what is God's glory, but his goodness in Christ Jesus? and to a soul that is regenerated, and made one in Christ, God's justice and righteousness are as dear as his mercy and his love; evidently because the believer is thereby convinced, that God's justice and righteousness have both been satisfied and magnified by the death of Christ. Consult those passages, and compare them, and behold in them the most blessed proof, in confirmation, that it is a glorious part of Jehovah's character, *He will by no means clear the guilty*, without a sacrifice; which sacrifice Jehovah himself hath provided, and accepted and approved, when Christ offered himself upon the cross. Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7; Rom. iii. 25.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth *his children*, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

The Psalmist in these verses, under various representations, sets forth the mercy of redeeming grace; and, in order to heighten the representation, he borroweth his language from images in the works of nature, and the feelings of the human heart. He takes a resemblance from the heavens, to demonstrate that God's grace, his superabundant grace, as far transcends our conceptions of it, as God's thoughts are above our thoughts; and his ways above our ways. Isaiah, lv. 8. He borrows another figure from the extensiveness of the earth, and the total impossibility for the distant points of the east and west ever to join, by way of setting forth the vast and immeasurable distance between the sinner and his sins, when they are taken away by the hand of that fit man, Christ Jesus, into the land of everlasting forgetfulness. Levit. xvi. 21, 22. He takes a third very sweet and endearing resemblance from the feelings of the human heart, to set forth the tender compassion of the

Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, by shewing, that God's love is a fatherly love, full of pity, and full of compassion. See those scriptures, Isaiah, xlix. 13—15; Micah, vii. 18, 19.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children:

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Nothing can be more beautiful and interesting than the striking contrast the Psalmist hath drawn in these verses between the frail, perishing, dying nature of man, and the strength and eternity of God. And what endears it to our view, is, that amidst all our dying circumstances in Adam, our everlasting existence is secured in Christ. The oneness between Jesus and his people, gives a right of interest in all that belongs to Him, as the head and Mediator of his redeemed. He hath said himself, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* John, xiv. 19. Reader, I pray you, do not overlook this, for in this consists the whole beauty and loveliness of the passage. It is our union with, and our interest in Christ Jesus, that brings with it these unspeakable mercies. It is the covenant relation in which believers stand to God in Christ which secures the peace of this life, and the everlasting happiness of that which is to come. Oh! for grace to enter into the hearty, cordial belief, and perfect enjoyment of those blessed words of Jesus: *At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* John, xiv. 20.

20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

22 Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

The Psalmist, having thus stirred up himself to bless God in Christ, here breaks out into a fervour of holy devotion, and calls upon all intelligent creation to join in the hymn of praise, that the acknowledgment of divine goodness may be universal. Put forth all your strength, ye

angels of his (*elect angels*, as Paul calls them), preserved in Christ Jesus: do ye praise Him. 1 Timothy, v. 21. Ye ministers and hosts, whether employed in the upper, or in the lower world, do ye join in the song. Yea, let all the works of our God in Christ, in all places, join in the same. And do thou, my soul, unceasingly do so; and set a hearty response of Amen, to the notes of all creation, which praise our God and Saviour. *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.*

REFLECTIONS.

THINK, my soul, while thou art perusing this psalm, if such were the calls of the Old Testament saints to bless Jehovah, what demands are now upon New Testament believers, to live in a frame of everlasting praise and thanksgiving for Jehovah's unspeakable mercies in Jesus Christ. The highest knowledge those holy men of old had, concerning the mercies of redemption, were but shadows of good things to come, compared with what the souls of the redeemed have now to enjoy in substance in Christ Jesus. Abraham, who saw the day of Christ, saw it but afar off; and David, though by the eye of faith, he beheld his Son after the flesh, that should arise to sit upon his throne, and reign for ever; yet, what could both, or all indeed, of those heroes of antiquity, who died in faith, not having received the promises, know of the Lord Jesus Christ, in comparison with the humblest of regenerated believers now, who know Christ, and are convinced of their union and interest in him, and live in him, and to him, as the Lord our righteousness?

Oh! thou Emmanuel! thou glorious God in Christ! well might the stones cry out, if the souls of thy redeemed ceased to bless and praise and love, and adore thee! Thou hast indeed redeemed our souls from death, and healed all our iniquities. Thou hast been, and still art, and everlastingly wilt be, our salvation from sin and woe. *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* Thy love, thy mercy, thy pity, thy compassion, as infinitely transcend the pity of a father for his children, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Help me, O thou gracious God, by the sweet constraining influences of thy Spirit, to love thee, to praise thee, and to live to thee, and upon thee for ever. And oh! ye angels of light, ye ministers of my God, yea, every thing that hath breath, cease not to praise the Lord. Let the fathers to the children declare his praise. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Amen.

PSALM CIV.

CONTENTS.

This is a divine Psalm, in point of sublimity of thought, as well as devotion. It celebrates, like the former, the glories of God: and probably, though not said to be so, was written by the same hand, as the penman of the Holy Ghost.

BLESS the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

In the opening of this psalm, I would call upon my soul, as the prophet did on his, to bless Jehovah. And I would desire to have it impressed upon my heart, both in the reading of this scripture, and all others of a like nature, that when Jehovah is blessed and praised, in a review of any of his sovereign acts, whether in creation, providence, or grace, it is Jehovah in his threefold character of person, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: for as all the persons of the Godhead are in scripture declared to be the joint authors of all these mercies, so are they together properly the united one glorious object of adoration, obedience, love, and praise.

2 Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

What a sweet and lovely description is given of Jehovah covering himself with light! And, if we construe the expression, as we certainly may, without violence to the general sense of the passage, we may behold in it Jehovah's covering himself with light in the manifestation of himself to our souls, in the person of Jesus Christ. *No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*: John, i. 18. And considered in this point of view, how truly blessed is the passage, *In thy light shall we see light*; Psalm xxxvi. 9. I hope the reader will forgive me, if, while I desire to enter, with him, into the full enjoyment of all the beauties this hymn of praise contains, in adoring Jehovah in the works of his creation and providence; I still look beyond the works of God in nature, to behold, in what is here said, very striking allusions to his works of grace. Jehovah hath indeed laid the beams of his chambers in the waters, and founded his earth upon the floods. But hath he not also founded the everlasting beams of his covenant love in redemption, in the chambers of all his divine perfections; and doth he not call upon his people to enter into them, as a security in Christ against all danger, when the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity?—Isaiah, xxvi. 20, 21.

4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Who can read this verse without being struck with the expressions? The apostle to the Hebrews throws a greater light upon the ministry of angels, as unceasingly engaged in the service of the church of Christ; Heb. i. 14. But while attending to this view of a subject so astonishing, let us contemplate a yet higher in the ministry of Him who is *a spirit of judgment, and a spirit of burning*; Isaiah, iv. 4. Yes! thou blessed, holy Spirit! thou, even thou, art the source of all spiritual life to the new creature in Christ Jesus. For what the wind and air are in the natural world, such art thou in the spiritual. So Job sang, and so the Lord's people find, by happy experience. *The Spirit of God*

(saith he) *hath made me ; and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life ;* Job, xxxiii. 4. Oh ! for grace to raise an everlasting song of praise to all the Persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the quickening life imparted by each. *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. And it is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ;* John, v. 21 ; vi. 63.

5 *Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.

6 Thou coverest it with the deep as *with* a garment : the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At thy rebuke they fled ; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains ; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over ; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.

All these are so many beautiful descriptions of the various works of God in creation. They need no comment ; but we may scripturalise them in reference to the new creation in Christ Jesus, and find much for the soul to delight in. The foundation-stone which God hath laid in Zion is sure ; and never to be moved. All the waters of sin and hell, and the breakings up of the great deep of iniquity, cannot remove it. Though the *mountains depart, and the hills be removed*, the word of the Lord, and salvation in that word, even the uncreated word Jesus, standeth for ever. Isaiah, xxviii. 16 ; Song, viii. 7 ; Isaiah, liv. 10.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field : the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers : the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man : that he may bring forth food out of the earth ;

15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.

Here is a beautiful gradation of the provision God hath made for his creatures in animal life, rising up from the beast to man. The beast of the field, the fowl of the air, all are fed by his bounty; agreeably to that other sweet scripture, *Thou openest thine hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing*; Psalm cxlv. 16. But observe the superiority of the Lord's favourite creature, *man*. It is wise that is given to him, and oil, and bread. And can we forbear discovering the spiritual sense of these distinguishing mercies! The wine of the gospel; the oil of grace in the light of God's countenance shining upon the soul; and Jesus, the bread of life, that man might indeed be strengthened, and live for ever. Say, my soul; say Reader; are not these the glorious things intended by this representation? Was not this the wine, which cheereth God and man; when God's justice drank of it, and was satisfied; and when the sinner drinks of it, and is made glad? Judges, ix. 13. Oh! for the anointing of the Spirit, that true oil of grace, to make the face to shine, when *beholding us in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*; 2 Cor. iii. 18. And oh! for that *bread of God*, even Christ's body, of which whosoever that eateth shall live for ever. *Lord, evermore give us this bread!* John, vi. 33, 34.

16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*: the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

It is beautiful when from those representations in the works of nature, the Holy Ghost teaches us lessons of grace. There are trees of righteousness also, the scripture tells us, namely, the Lord's heritage, and of the Lord's right-hand planting; and these also are filled with the Spirit, from being united to, and living in Christ Jesus. Isaiah, lxi. 3; John, xv. 5.

17 Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir-trees *are* her house.

18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.

Here again we are taught that as the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, find food and shelter in those provisions which their bountiful Creator hath made for them; so the souls of the redeemed find every suited grace in Jesus, their rest, their portion, and refuge for ever.

19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

As in the natural, so in the spiritual world, there are seasons of light and darkness; and when Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, for a moment

withdraws his shining from the soul, and makes darkness there, Satan, the great enemy of souls, comes forth, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Oh! how sweet, after a dark night of temptation, doubt, and fear, is it to the soul, to behold Jesus arise *with healing in his wings!* Malachi, iv. 2; Psalm cxxx. 6.

23 Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening.

So, my soul, do thou, morning by morning, go forth in the spiritual work of thy Jesus, in his strength, and his righteousness, until the evening of life be come, and the Lord of the household command his steward to call the labourers, *and give them their hire.* Oh! for grace to be found at that season in Jesus, and wholly accepted in him. John, ix. 4; Matt. xx. 1—8.

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

How beautifully is this verse introduced! It should seem as if the sacred writer, while contemplating the Lord's goodness in creation and providence, could no longer contain himself, but leaving the whole of inferior creatures, breaks out in this hymn of praise. Reader! shall not you and I do the same, while contemplating with him the same wonderful subject, and adding to it also the still more wonderful theme of God's goodness in redemption and grace? Yes, indeed, if we know ourselves to be the happy objects of these rich mercies in Jesus! Oh! Lord! may we well say, how manifold are thy works, and thy works to us! *Lord! how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to us, and not unto the world?* And, Reader! think what wonders will break in upon our souls when redemption work in us is finished; when standing on the sea of glass, with the harps of God in our hands, we sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!* Rev. xv. 2, 3.

25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships; *there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.*

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.

28 *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

In these verses, from others of the great works of God in the kingdom of nature, the Psalmist finds occasion to raise songs of praise. And most beautiful and expressive is the subject. In the congregated waters of the great deep, the immeasurable expanse of ocean, the innumerable living creatures there dwelling, the great and small inhabitants of all the finny tribe; what a thought does it form in the human mind, in the contemplation of the immensity and omnipotency of God, that all these wait upon him, and are every moment living upon his bounty! But, Reader! is it not doubly improving to spiritualise the subject, and in the kingdom of grace to remark the fulness of Him *who filleth all in all*; as not only supplying the redeemed in heaven in the church above, but also the whole of his people in the church below, in one and the same moment, by the unceasing communication of himself in an endless perpetuity of supply of grace and mercy, and life, and light, and salvation. Precious Jesus! *it hath pleased the Father, that in thee should all fulness dwell.* Thou art in the midst of the throne, feeding thy redeemed in glory. And thou art no less attentive to all the wants of thy people below. Of thee, *the whole family in heaven and earth is named.* And all wait upon thee; for it is thou that satisfieth the desire of every living thing. Ephes. i. 22, 23; Rev. vii. 17. If, Lord, thou shouldest suspend but for a moment that spiritual life which thou dost impart by the Holy Ghost, how lifeless do our souls become! but when thou renewest thy bounty, oh! how refreshing is the new creation of Jesus! And what will it be, Lord, in that great day when soul and body, for ever living to Christ, and in Christ, shall die no more, but arise to all the glories of salvation!

31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

The Psalmist having begun this song of sublime adoration and thanksgiving, knows not how to quit it. Again and again he dwells upon the blessed theme, and in these verses, celebrates afresh Jehovah's glory, greatness, sovereignty, and goodness.

33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

These verses possess a peculiar and personal sweetness; and the Psalmist takes the whole home to himself. As if he had said, I know not

what others do, or what others may determine; *but as, for me, and my house, I will serve the Lord; I will sing of the Lord, and to the Lord, for ever and ever. And when life, and strength, and voice shall fail, while my heart can think, or memory remains, Jesus shall be my meditation. His name shall hang upon my lips with my last quivering breath. Oh! precious Jesus! if the mercy be not too great to ask, let this be the dying blessing of both him that now writes, and him that reads. Amen.*

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! read, and pause over again and again, this lovely hymn, until thine heart, and every devout affection, go forth in praises to Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all the blessings here ascribed to Him, who is indeed very great, and glorious, and clothed with honour and majesty. Behold him going forth in acts of creation, providence, goodness, mercy! See the Lord as raising up this magnificent universe, and storing it with inhabitants, not to make himself more glorious, for that is impossible; but to make innumerable beings happy: not that he might receive, but that he might impart; and pour out emanations of himself to communicate life and comfort to myriads. Hail! thou glorious, great, and bountiful Jehovah.

And, my soul, when thou hast duly pondered this wonderful subject, and bent the knee in praise and humbleness before a God of such infinite power and majesty, as he has manifested in the outer works of nature and providence; look up for his leadings, to take thee by the hand, and to bring thee in to his inner courts of grace; and there let thy mind be overwhelmed in contemplating a God in Christ, displaying redemption to a lost world, in the person, and by the offices of Jesus. Oh! thou *brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person!* In the glories of thy redemption thou hast gone forth for thy people; making thine *Angels spirits, and thy ministers a flaming fire.* Thou sendest forth the springs of thy grace into the humble heart, and thou waterest the souls of thy redeemed from above; all, all live upon thee, and in thee, and from thy rich communications. Help me then, Lord, to praise thee, to love thee, to delight in thee, and let my meditation of thee be sweet. Sweet it always must be, most blessed Jesus, for thy very name is as ointment poured forth. And while sinners that despise thee, and will not accept thy salvation, shall be no more; let my unceasing song of love and praise come up before thee from day to day, till I join the redeemed in their hallelujahs before the throne for ever. Amen.

PSALM CV.

CONTENTS.

This lovely Psalm contains some of the outlines of the Church's history: and if we consider, as we have full authority, that the events of the old Church were but types of the new, we shall find much of the gospel in it, and sweet instruction may be derived from it.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

4 Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.

If the Reader wishes to see the history of the Church at the period to which this Psalm refers, he may consult 1 Chron. xvi. where he will find it. David is said to have delivered this Psalm to *Asaph* for the use of the Temple-service. The occasion was the bringing up the ark from the house of *Obed-edom*. And as this ark was a well-known type of Christ, every child of God may, and indeed ought to take this sweet hymn, as given to the old church by the Holy Ghost, for the use of Old Testament saints, by faith in Christ, and sing it in his daily song, with melody of heart, unto the Lord. Reader! What say you to this daily service? Can you sing of redemption? Can you sing of Jesus? Can you give thanks to the Lord in deed and in truth, and make known abroad his deeds of salvation to your soul? These are grand questions; and they imply blessed truths, when the believing soul can answer them in the affirmative. Psalm xl. 2, 3.

5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

7 He *is* the LORD our God: his judgments *are* in all the earth.

8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.

9 Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant:

11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance;

12 When there were *but* a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

13 When they went from one nation to another,
from *one* kingdom to another people :

14 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea,
he reproved kings for their sakes;

15 Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do
my prophets no harm.

The Psalmist, to awaken in his own heart a proper sense of God's goodness, and to stir up suitable and corresponding affections in himself and the Church towards the Lord, for such love, in these verses leads back the subject of meditation as far as the first call of God to Abraham; and in a beautiful, though brief manner, carries it on from that period to the patriarchs' being led down into Egypt. Remember these things, saith he, ye that are the seed of Abraham, and mark down in these memorandums the loving-kindness and covenant faithfulness of God. Reader! do not forget what Paul saith to the church concerning Abraham's seed: it is blessed to know this, and to live in the enjoyment of it; Gal. iii. 29. But at the same time do not also fail to connect with this view of the Church's history the gospel history in it. This everlasting covenant of God the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Zacharias, in the temple, it is expressly said, was confirmed in Christ. Nay, it was to perform the mercy promised, and to remember his holy covenant, for which Christ came. Luke, i. 72. And hence, as the Church thus began from small and inconsiderable beginnings, when the Patriarchs were but a few of them, and they strangers upon earth; so now, the day of small things is the same: the redeemed are frequently unknown, unnoticed, disregarded, and passed by of men. And though the Lord still protects his anointed, and hides them from the malice of the world, yet are they the same as ever, pilgrims and sojourners here below, looking for *a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*; Heb. xi. 10. Reader! you and I shall do well, as we read these things, to inquire under these particulars, as in the former, whether we bear such a correspondence of character?

16 Moreover he called for a famine upon the
land; he brake the whole staff of bread.

17 He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph,
who was sold for a servant:

18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was
laid in iron:

19 Until the time that his word came: the
word of the LORD tried him.

20 The king sent and loosed him; *even* the
ruler of the people, and let him go free.

21 He made him lord of his house, and ruler
of all his substance:

22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

The Reader will hardly need information as to what part of the Church's history this refers. Every one who is in the daily habit of reading his Bible, will recollect it. When the Lord determined to carry down the patriarchs into Egypt, by his providence, he induced a necessity for their going thither by making a famine of bread. And that his people might find every needful supply for them, Joseph was sent before. The exercises of the patriarchs, before the great events of blessings to be accomplished by their going down into Egypt were wrought, were trying: Jacob's distress, and Joseph's prison, must previously take place. But at length the ways of God's love and care over them became unfolded; and the patriarchs are blessed with plenty, and Joseph is made Governor over the whole land. And who doth not see in all this Jesus and his Church most beautifully and amply set forth? When a famine is induced in the soul of God's chosen; not a famine of bread only, but of the word of the Lord, and the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven; necessity constrains the church to seek relief. Without Christ the soul perisheth for ever. And how is Christ given? God our Father sends a man before us, even Jesus, our spiritual Joseph; and He, like the son of Jacob, is sold as a servant: *the iron entered into his soul*. But when, from the prison, and from the cross, Jesus hath wrought out deliverance for his people, and God hath highly exalted him at the right hand of his power, then is the Church made glad; bread and life are dispensed, and in her glorious Head salvation is sung by the Church for ever. Oh! what unnumbered mercies were folded up in this part of the Church's history, when Israel at length came into Egypt, and God formed his Church there into a people! Amos, viii. 11. Gen. xv. 13—16. xlvii. 1—4. Reader! at every pause in this interesting subject, ask your heart, what part you bear in it? Have you known what a famine of soul means? Hath it constrained you to seek for a supply? Have you heard that there is corn in Egypt; and, like the patriarchs, have you sent to inquire of the Man, the Lord of the country, for relief? Do you indeed know this Joseph, this Lord Jesus Christ? And do you know him, that he is indeed your brother? Hath Jesus made himself known unto you, and hath he filled your heart with his love, as Joseph filled his brethren's sacks with corn? Oh! for grace to know these things, and to take part in all that concerns Christ and his people!

24 And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

25 He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

Reader! what a beautiful explanation is given here, by the Holy Ghost, to the Church's history, during her being in Egypt, concerning the rigorous treatment of Israel by the Egyptians. The Lord turned the heart of the Egyptians to be thus unkind to Israel. And wherefore?

that Israel might long to leave Egypt; that Israel might form no alliance with Egypt; and that Israel might leave all for God: Sweet lesson to my soul! Doth the world hate me? Am I at any time unkindly dealt with by the world? Oh! precious Jesus! let me see thine hand in the appointment. They are but second causes, merely instruments, in all. Yes! yes! dear Lord, when I think of this, and read this blessed scripture, plainly do I perceive that they are but the sword; but it is thy hand that guides it. And is it not, oh! thou wise and loving Saviour, to do by me as by thy Israel, that I may long to leave the world, form no alliance with the world, but come out from among them, and cleave wholly to thee? And if by these means, however painful they may be to flesh and blood, Jesus can have, and keep my whole heart; oh! how blessed thus to *hedge up my way with thorns*. Hosea, ii. 6, 7. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. Rev. xviii. 4.

26 He sent Moses his servant; *and* Aaron whom he had chosen.

27 They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

29 He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.

30 Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.

31 He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts.

32 He gave them hail for rain, *and* flaming fire in their land.

33 He smote their vines also and their fig-trees; and brake the trees of their coasts.

34 He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number,

35 And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

36 He smote also all the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength.

37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes.

It would swell this Commentary to a prodigious length, to go over the history, and the explanation of the events here recorded. I rather refer the Reader to the Bible, Exodus, vii. to x. But while I beg the Reader

to look back, and compare that scripture with this, I must not omit the opportunity here afforded to point to the spiritual illustration of the events themselves. Moses was but a type of Christ in all his commission. And the deliverance he wrought, in bringing Israel out of Egypt, was only a representation of Jesus delivering his people from the slavery of sin, death, hell, and the grave.

38 Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

The joy of Egypt, contrasted with the deliverance with Israel, forms a beautiful subject for the mind to dwell upon. Oh! the vast, the inconceivable difference, between the righteous and the wicked, in the great day of account: Isaiah, lxxv. 13—15. Reader! pray keep up the constant inquiry under every review, and at every pause, to which party do you belong? Can you say, as it is said of Moses, *By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.* Heb. xi. 25, 26.

39 He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.

40 *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like* a river.

42 For he remembered his holy promise, *and* Abraham his servant.

43 And he brought forth his people with joy, *and* his chosen with gladness:

44 And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;

45 That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.

Here we have a brief account of the Church in the wilderness, until the Lord brought them into the promised land. And here also, as before, we behold a type of the Church now. The pillar of cloud which went before them, strikingly represented the goings of the Holy Ghost before the Church; and the bread typified Jesus, the bread of life, to his people. Indeed, that we might not mistake upon so great a point, the Holy Ghost himself, by the Apostle, expressly tells us that *the rock* which gave the people drink in the wilderness, and followed them, *was Christ*; 1 Cor. x. 4. And to sum up the whole, the Psalmist saith, that Jehovah did all this in confirmation of his Covenant engagements to Abraham. And as these covenant engagements all looked to Christ for their accomplishment, sweetly do we see in the whole, that it is of

Jesus and his salvation the whole history treats, in whom, as God promised to the patriarch, *all nations of the earth should be blessed*; Gal. iii. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

Now, Reader! you have gone through that part of the Church's history, from the call of Abraham to the settling of the Church in Canaan, and seen how lovely it sets forth God's covenant love and mercy in Christ; what say you to your personal interest in these things? The apostle Paul's comment upon this history should always be uppermost in our remembrance, whenever we read this account of the Church. *Now these things, saith Paul, were our ensamples.* By these God the Holy Ghost is now teaching the Church. And if a believing soul so reads, and is so taught of God, as to see his personal concern in the whole, as a part of Christ's mystical body, he will involuntarily join the hymn of praise with which this Psalm begins, and cry out, *O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.*

But chiefly, Reader, let you and I view God's covenant love in these solemn transactions, and trace it to its source, in the fountain-head of all mercies, God in Christ in his great salvation. Yes! blessed Jesus, it was thou whom Moses typified, when, at the call of God, he came to deliver thy people, thy chosen! Egypt, at this hour, is still the bondage of the soul, under which all thy people groan, until by thy mighty arm thou bringest them out. And oh! what miracles of grace dost thou work to confute thy foes, and to encourage thy redeemed! While turning water into blood, and alarming the enemies of thy people with tokens of thy displeasure to dismay them, thou art converting the rocky heart into a heart of flesh, and making a wilderness dispensation to blossom as a rose, to give drink to thy people, thy chosen. Blessed Lord! thus nourish my soul through every remaining part of my pilgrimage, until thou shalt bring me out of all, into thine heavenly kingdom, to rejoice evermore in thy great salvation, and to sing upon the everlasting hills the triumphs of Jesus, and his Church in him. Praise, praise the Lord. Amen.

PSALM CVI.

CONTENTS.

This is not so properly a new psalm, as a continuation of the former: it takes up the subject where the preceding left off in the church's history. The Lord's goodness, and Israel's unworthiness, form the principal contents.

PRAISE ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever,

2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? *who* can shew forth all his praise?

3 Blessed *are* they that keep judgment, *and* he that doeth righteousness at all times.

Here is a general call to the praise of Jehovah, for his glories, as he is in himself, and for his mercies, as he is towards his people. And when the believer keeps in view the mercies of redemption by Jesus, and his personal interest in them, how will such contemplation heighten his song!

4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest unto* thy people: O visit me with thy salvation:

5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

This is a beautiful breaking off in the hymn of praise, to put up an earnest prayer that the Psalmist may be made a rich partaker of the covenant-mercies he had been blessing God for; and that he might see for himself what the people of God enjoyed, and partake in that rich covenant-love the Lord bestowed upon his chosen. Reader! in these great and distinguishing blessings, consists the happiness of the soul. To see Christ as he is in himself, is blessed: to see Christ as being interested in him, is yet more blessed: and to see Christ in the soul's fellowship and communion with him, from one hour to another, is more blessed still. Lord, I would say, remember me with this favour, and heaven will be begun in the soul!

6 We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.

Here comes in the acknowledgment of Israel's guilt. Was there ever such an history as Israel's, for proofs of divine love? Was there ever such an history as Israel's, for ingratitude and rebellion? Reader! look inward. What hath been manifested to you, and me, of God's love and mercy in Christ? And what hath been our improvement of this grace? Pause, and then say, is there not but too striking a resemblance? There is a vast deal of expression in these words of Israel's provoking the Lord *at the sea*, even at the *Red sea*. For there it was the Lord most graciously manifested his love to his people, and his care over them. For when the mountains were on each side, the enemy pursuing behind, and the sea before them, with no probable way of escape; then for the Lord to open a path through the mighty waters, and not only to make a way for their escape, but to make it the very way of de-

struction to their enemies ; oh ! what love was shewn here. And was it here that Israel afterwards provoked the Lord ? Reader ! is there nothing in this which suits our case ? Look again. When mountains of sin and guilt stood in the way of my soul, ready to fall upon me on every side, and no method in myself of deliverance, the enemy marching on to my destruction behind, and terrors of death before ; was it not then that the Lord opened a new and living way, in the red sea of Christ's blood, for my escape ? And have I not since caused the gracious hand to serve with my sins, and wearied him with my iniquities ? Heb. x. 19—21. Isaiah, xliii. 24.

8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

I beg the Reader to keep up his attention, not only here, but in every part of scripture, to the many *neverthelesses*, and *buts*, and *notwithstanding*s, which are sweetly interspersed, to manifest the covenant-mercy and loving-kindness of God in Christ. See a few in point: Isaiah, xlii. last verse, with the 1st verse, 43d chapter. Psalm lxxxix. 30—35. xcix. 8. Oh ! how blessed it is to see that *notwithstanding* our unworthiness, the Name's-sake, and the covenant-engagement, of Jehovah, remain ! The relation in which God the Father hath put himself to his people in Christ, and the infinite merit of Christ's blood and righteousness, must still come in to the relief of the poor sinner. There is a *nevertheless*, which is most blessed.

9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up : so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

11 And the waters covered their enemies : there was not one of them left.

12 Then believed they his words ; they sang his praise.

13 They soon forgot his works ; they waited not for his counsel.

14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

15 And he gave them their requests ; but sent leanness into their soul.

16 They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD.

17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

18 And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

21 They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.

I include all these verses within one reading, though the Reader will recollect that they refer to several very interesting transactions at different periods in the church's history. But it would swell this work to an unsuitable magnitude, to enlarge on each. I rather refer to the Bible itself: Exod. xv. Numb. xi. and xvi. Exod. xxxii. 1—4. But, Reader, while we see and lament the degeneracy of Israel, let us put the solemn question of the Apostle home to our own hearts, and see what answer consciencè will give: *What then (saith Paul) are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.* Reader! this is the way to make the reading of the word of God profitable, when, under the Spirit's teaching, we are all brought to this conclusion, *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God!* Rom. iii. 9—19.

23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.

How very delightfully this verse comes in after the former. Who doth not see in this interposition of Moses, a type of the intercession of the ever blessed Jesus? The Holy Ghost (if one may be allowed the expression) seems, upon many occasions, to have taken delight in shadowing forth the Lord Jesus in his high-priestly office and intercession, during the pilgrimage of the Church in the wilderness. This is here mentioned of Moses; so again, in the instance of Korah; and again, in the instance of Manoah and his wife. See Numb. xi. 1—21. xvi. 46, 47. Judges, xiii. 19, 20.

24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:

25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.

30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and *so* the plague was stayed.

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore.

32 They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them:

35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.

39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

For the same reason as before, I include the whole of what is here rehearsed in one reading. But let not the Reader be as brief upon the interesting things here recorded. Let him consult the several parts of the Jewish history in the Bible, to which they refer. See Numb. xiii. and xiv. And let him recollect that despising Christ and his salvation in the present day, becomes a parallel history, only with ten thousand more aggravated circumstances of guilt and ingratitude, than what here marked Israel's conduct, in their despising the promised land. The mingling with the idolatrous nations, which marked Israel's behaviour,

we find in their history, Numb. xxv. 1—3; and the lively zeal of Phinehas, recorded in the same chapter, verses 7—13, cannot fail to remind the Reader of Him, concerning whom it is said, that *his zeal consumed him*. Psalm cxix. 139. John, ii. 17.

40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

Still prosecuting the same history, the Psalmist records in these verses the perpetual ingratitude of Israel, and the unceasing loving-kindness of the Lord. And although the Lord chastened them, and gave them into the hands of their enemies, yet here also, as before, there is a *nevertheless* in the account. God's covenant-mercies, and Jesus's great salvation, stood and pleaded hard for poor, wretched, unworthy Israel. Reader! pray do not overlook the vast concern both you and I have in this history. Oh! how precious ought the same covenant love of God, and the infinitely meritorious blood of Christ, to be to us also! Oh! how loathsome in our own view is sin, when seen, as it is, *exceedingly sinful*. And oh! how must it appear in the eyes of infinite purity and holiness! And shall we not, under a deep sense of it, fall down to the dust of the earth, and like *Ezra* cry out, *O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God!* What but the covenant-engagements of God the Father, and the invaluable and never-to-be fully recompensed merits of God the Son, brought home and manifested to the heart by God the Holy Ghost, can give comfort under the alarms of a condemning conscience? *Ezra*, ix. 6.

47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise.

48. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting : and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

How suitably does the Psalm conclude in prayer and praise ? Surely every reader cannot but make the same conclusion, whose mind is properly affected by the perusal of such an interesting view as is here afforded of the Church's unworthiness, and the Lord's grace towards her. Whether, as hath been supposed by some, the church was in the captivity of Babylon at the time this Psalm was written, or whether it refers to the general captivity of sin and Satan ; yet, the cry of every awakened soul must be, to be gathered from men, from sin, from self, from the world ; and to live to God in Christ in the love and delight of Jesus, from day to day. Reader ! the Lord grant these mercies to you, to me, to all his people : and then we shall join the redeemed in every place, both above and below, in the same song of Hallelujah. Amen and Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! let us prosecute the same delightful subject as the Psalmist ; and since he goes on from one psalm so another, adoring the name of the Lord, we will follow the example ; and never grow tired of the grateful employment. Surely, we may well say, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High : to shew forth his loving-kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night.* And oh ! what an endless subject is opened for the everlasting praises of Jehovah, in the review of his love to his church and people ! Was it not the Father's love which gave rise to the church, which prompted his infinite mind to form it ; giving his only begotten Son to be her Head and Mediator ; and giving the church to Christ as a bride adorned for her husband ? Was it not the love of Jesus which at the call of God the Father, induced him to go forth for the salvation of his elect people ? And was it not the love and favour of God the Holy Ghost, who from everlasting undertook, and hath all along been accomplishing the gracious purpose, and will go on to accomplish it, until grace is summed up in glory, to bring the church acquainted, and in love with, all the covenant purposes of Jehovah in the salvation of Jesus ? And in such views of divine goodness, must not every heart feel constrained to exclaim, *who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord ; who can shew forth all his praise ?*

But what a contrast to this rich mercy of the God of Israel doth the Israel of God manifest in their ingratitude and rebellion ! Is it possible, while the Lord is so gracious, for man to be so unworthy ? Oh ! Reader ! what is man, after all divine mercies, and all divine grace manifested towards him ? Bend the knee with me, I beseech you, before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Let us seek grace to profit by Israel's history. We may all well join the expressions used in this psalm, and say, *We also have sinned with our fathers ; we have committed iniquity.* Yes ! precious Jesus, at the sea, even the red sea of thy blood, how have we provoked the Lord to anger ! Yet, Lord ! remember thy cove-

nant, and save us for thy name's sake. Thou art a God of pardons. Though there be nothing but sin and wretchedness in us; in the Lord our righteousness there is redemption. Accept us in him; and for his sake cause us yet to triumph in our God. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.*

PSALM CVII.

CONTENTS.

The same delightful subject is continued through this Psalm as in the two preceding, but in a more general way. All men are called upon, in the review of divine goodness, to praise the Lord; and the redeemed, in a yet more awakened manner. God's mercies are instanced in a great variety of ways, both by sea and land, in sickness and in health, and brought forward as so many motives to praise him.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD, for *he is good*:
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

The Psalm opens with giving a *general* invitation to *all men* to praise the Lord. And there is enough in every man's life, the most unworthy, the most unawakened, to prompt him to this service: for every thing short of hell is mercy. And if the sinner that is living without God, could but be prevailed upon to pause and ask himself, Wherefore it is that a life such as his is still in mercy lengthened? Wherefore the bounty which he lives only to abuse, is still vouchsafed him? Such a thought, if blessed of God, might cause the tear to fall, and the heart to lift itself in praise!

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

How very beautifully does this *special* call to the *redeemed* come in after the former verse! Pause, Reader! Pause, my soul! What sayest thou to this subject? Are we among the redeemed? Hath sovereign grace gathered us to Jesus, to whom the gathering of the people must be? Gen. xlix. 1; John, xi. 52. My soul! look into thine own account, and see what causes arise there for joining in the Psalmist's song. Surely thou wast a long wanderer, like the prodigal who left his father's house: surely in hunger of soul, and thirst, and weariness, didst thou long go. And never, until God the Spirit put a cry in thine heart, didst thou find peace or comfort. And liath the God of thy salvation brought thee by a *right* way, however thorny, or painful to flesh and blood; and in Jesus hast thou found *that city of habitation, whose builder and maker is God?* Well then may I shout aloud this hymn of praise to him who hath *satiated my weary soul, and replenished my sorrowful soul.* Luke, xv. 13, 14. Heb. xi. 9, 10. Jerem. xxxi. 25. Isaiah, xxviii. 12. Matt. xi. 28.

10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and *there was* none to help.

13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saved them out of their distresses.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

15 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

16 For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the gates of iron in sunder.

Here is another striking representation, whether considered with respect to God's providence or his grace, to shew the miseries of our nature by the fall. How do souls groan in their prison-houses! Whether the cry be from grace or nature, yet misery will cause it to be put forth. Elihu describes the state of carnal men under misery: they cry out, he saith, by reason of the multitude of oppressors; but none saith, *Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?* In all this no cry to God, no seeking to him! Job, xxxv. 9, 10. But the people of God under their affliction, direct their cries to God. Seek deliverance, not so much from sorrow, as from the bondage of sin, death, and hell; and

when those cries come up from a broken and contrite heart, induced by the Spirit, and offered in the name of Jesus; the Lord breaks their bands asunder, and brings them out of their prison-house. Here again as before, a renewed occasion presents itself for chaunting hymns of praise. See Isaiah, xlii. 6, 7; Psalm li. 17. Zech. ix. 11.

17 Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

18 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

19 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saveth them out of their distresses.

20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.

21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

Under another similitude, the Psalmist here sets forth the miseries of our fallen nature, in order to display the benignity and compassion of Heaven in our recovery. When sin entered into the world, sickness and death followed. Jesus the Son of God came to bear our sickness, and to carry our sorrows. And he by his own death hath overcome death, and by taking out the sting of death, which is sin, hath brought his people to the right of inheritance in that happy climate, *where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.* Isaiah, xxxiii. 24. Hence a new occasion ariseth for praising the divine mercy in Jesus.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.

25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trou-

ble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

31 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

The Psalmist in these verses takes up another representation, by way of setting forth man's wants, and God's gracious provision for him; and this subject he draws from the events which occur upon the mighty waters. He draws out, in a most finished portrait, the terrors of a storm; describes the fears and horrors of the sailor whilst subjected to its power; and having carried the picture to the extreme point of colouring, sets forth the Lord as interposing and sending deliverance. And then again, he beautifully shews the vast claim there must be upon all such to bear in everlasting remembrance the loving-kindness of the Lord. Reader! whether or not you have ever seen the wonders of the deep, the spiritual sense of the passage is the same. Life is in jeopardy every hour. By reason of sin, and the storms and tempests of our unruly passions, the malice of the world, and the fury of the enemy, what shipwreck do not the people of God continually fear, that they shall make of faith? If in such seasons Jesus commands the waves and sea to be still, and at length, by his grace, and the leadings of his Holy Spirit, like the mariner's compass, he brings them to himself, as to the haven where they would be; ought not the hymn again to break forth from every heart so delivered, and the language to every one they meet be, *Come and hear, all ye that fear God; and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.* Psalm lxxvi. 16.

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground;

34 A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs.

36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

39 Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is no way.*

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh *him* families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

From the wonders of redeeming grace upon the mighty waters, the Psalmist makes a transition to the dry and barren land of the wilderness, whence he takes occasion to set forth another striking representation of the Lord's goodness. He describes under this similitude, a barren land where no water is, and purposely made so for the wickedness of the inhabitants. * Such was the plain of Jordan, where were Sodom and Gomorrah; Gen. xiii. 10; and such were the seven churches, to whom the Epistles of John were delivered, of which scarce a vestige remains. Rev. ii. iii. He next describes the visitation of God in mercy, when the Lord makes the wilderness to blossom as a rose, and draws an unanswerable argument for the righteous to mark God's gracious dealings, and rejoice, while such views must stop the mouth of iniquity.

43 Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD.

This seems to be a general conclusion. The man of God having taken up the subject from the beginning, and shewn how all men, and especially the redeemed, ought to bless God for his goodness; and having instanced, in the different and diversified events which are going on in life, as well in the world of providence as in grace, how the Lord is watching over his people for good, and will ultimately punish the evil; he makes this the closing reflection: "The wise will ponder and observe it; and they that do so shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

REFLECTIONS.

AND now, Reader, what ought to be the result of all this long and beautiful discourse, but in a direct application of it to ourselves, to bless God, and to give him thanks for ever? And oh! if you and I can mark down in our own history, the subject of redemption, what loud and increased notes of praise ought to swell our song: *He remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Say, my soul! hath the Lord gathered thee out of the lands! Hath he taken thee home

to himself! Did he find thee in a waste and barren land, hungry and thirsty, and every hope dried up within thee? And hath he brought thee by a right way, to a city of habitation? Oh! then, *praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders which he doeth to the children of men.*

And see that Jesus is increasingly precious to thee for the time to come. All thine interest and security is from God's covenant love in Christ. There is no mercy out of Christ; all the acceptance of our persons, and the everlasting security of the redeemed, all is in Jesus. See to it, then, that all thy fresh springs are in him.

And oh! that a sense of past mercies might be made the dependence and security of the future! If the Lord remembered thee in thy low estate, when thinking nothing of him; surely his grace will have respect to thee now, when desiring his knowledge and his love. For if while thine heart was harder than stone, Jesus passed by, and bid thee live; he will not cast thee off now he hath softened thine heart by his grace. Precious Lord Jesus! in thee I find all things, both for present peace and future happiness; and therefore to thee I come, *on thee I depend, and from thee I look for all things. The Lord is my strength and my song; and he is become my salvation.* Amen.

PSALM CVIII.

CONTENTS.

This is a Psalm of praise. The sacred writer declares himself fixed and prepared, by the Holy Ghost to sing it. Happy the believing soul that finds itself in the same mood.

A Song or Psalm of David.

O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

2 Awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early.

3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

4 For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens: and thy truth *reacheth* unto the clouds.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth.

6 That thy beloved may be delivered: save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.

7 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;

9 Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

10 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

11 *Wilt* not thou, O God, *who* hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?

12 Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

13 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

If the Reader will look back to Psalm lvii. he will find the concluding verses of that Psalm to be the same as the opening verses of this. And if he will turn to the 60th Psalm, and read the last eight verses, he will perceive that they are similar to the last eight verses of this. There will be the less occasion, therefore, to comment upon it now, as the Reader, by having recourse to the exposition given under the two above cited Psalms, will render any further observations unnecessary; and I shall here only make one general observation: that as the hearts of the Old Testament saints were so fixed, and always in time, to rise early, to celebrate the divine glory, though they only saw the day of Christ afar off; surely the souls of New Testament believers ought much more to be in constant waiting, both by day and by night, to sing of Him, and to Him, who hath long since come and finished redemption. Oh! Lamb of God! cause our hearts to be fixed! and may we sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also, the high praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light! Thy Person, blessed Jesus, thy love, thy grace, and favour, in all thy great undertakings, in thy incarnation, obedience, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, power, glory; in all these our songs should constantly exalt thee. And as in all these, like Gilead, and Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Judah, the Old Testament saints enjoyed the whole by faith, long before they entered upon the possession; so now by faith may we enjoy thee, thou blessed Jesus, in all thou hast, and in all thou art, as the glorious head and mediator of thy people; then shall we be sure that thou wilt bring us home, to the strong city of the new Jerusalem of our God, where we shall see thee clearly, and enjoy the everlasting felicities of redemption in thy kingdom for ever. Amen.

PSALM CIX.

CONTENTS.

The greater part of this Psalm is written in a way of prayer; and some portions of it in a way of prophecy. It forms a very important subject, in which the Church is highly concerned.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David.

HOLD not thy peace, O God of my praise.

From the authority of the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of his servant Peter, we are not only warranted to apply the predictions in this Psalm to the person and character of the apostate Judas, and his seed, but it would be rather dangerous to suppose it to refer originally to any other. See Acts, i. 20. And as the denunciations here delivered by David under the spirit of prophecy, plainly, from this authority, refer to Judas, so it is blessed to see also that by the same spirit David is speaking in the person of Jesus. Reader! I pray you to keep the recollection of these two grand principles uppermost in your mind, as you go through this Psalm; and permit me to remark, concerning those great points at the opening of the Psalm, that it is from the want of not having a right apprehension of them, that so many (otherwise pious persons) neglect to join in the reading of it in our churches when it forms a part in the service of the day. They do not recollect that it is Judas concerning whom those predictions are uttered; neither do they recollect that they are spoken by, and in the person of Christ, against that traitor. But considered in this light, and as the Lord's denunciation against Judas, they form an interesting part in the doctrine of the cross, and in which all the friends and followers of the Lord Jesus must most heartily join. Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22. Let us now in this light attend to the cries of Jesus, as set forth in this prayer, and delight ourselves in tracing Him as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, when for us he made his soul an offering for sin.

2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.

4 For my love they are my adversaries: but I *give myself unto prayer.*

5 And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

If, while we read these words, we call to our recollection the 22d and 69th Psalms, we shall perceive an obvious correspondence. John the Evangelist tells us, that the Jews charged Christ with being a Samaritan, and having a devil, John viii. 48; and how very striking is that passage: *for the love that I had to them (saith Jesus) they are my adversaries.* Yes! it was solely for Christ's opening his commission as the Messiah, that their hatred was called forth. *For a good work say they, we stone thee not, but for blasphemy: and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God.* John, x. 33. xv. 25.

6 Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.

We cannot be at a loss to discover to whom Christ here refers; when Jesus had dipped the sop at the table, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; and after the sop, Satan entered into him. Here we see the prediction fulfilled; John, xiii. 26, 27. The expression of Satan *standing at his right hand*, is perhaps in conformity to a proverbial method of speaking: meaning as an *Adversary* to accuse, after having acted as a *Tempter* to lead into sin. Zech. iii. 1, 2. Reader! do not fail to observe the awfulness of the great doctrine contained in this passage. Satan is the accuser of all the brethren. And he who entered the heart of Judas, when Christ had given him the sop, would enter every heart, if Jesus did not restrain him. Recollect the remarkable case of Peter. The Lord Jesus told the apostle, that Satan desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat. And what prevented? The power of Christ's intercession: *I have prayed for thee*, saith Jesus. Precious, precious Lord! Do I not see: am I not fully convinced, that to the everlasting efficacy of thy blood and righteousness, must be ascribed the salvation of thy whole church, in every individual member of it, and that Satan's power is restrained? Pause, Reader! and behold the decided marks, in those instances, of distinguishing sovereign grace. Behold Peter, kept by the power of our God through faith unto salvation. See Satan entering into Judas the son of perdition! and connect with both, that view which the Holy Ghost hath given the church by his servant John, and begin now to sing that song, which ere long will be sung in one loud and universal chorus, of all the redeemed in glory, of the accuser of the brethren being cast down, whom they have overcome by the blood of the Lamb. Luke, xxii. 31, 32. 1 Peter, i. 5. John, xvii. 12. Rev. xii. 9—11.

7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.

8 Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

As the authority we have for applying all that is here said in a way of denunciation, to the person of Judas, is derived particularly from the apostle Peter's quoting this passage in direct reference to him, I beg the Reader to turn to it, Acts, i. and read the Apostle's whole address by way of confirmation to the point, from verse 15 to the end. It will at once illustrate the whole doctrine.

9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.

11 Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the stranger spoil his labour.

12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

13 Let his posterity be cut off; *and* in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.

15 Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

All these awful predictions, let the Reader remember, are spoken of a particular person, and that person, we have seen, is Judas. But that the Judas's of every age and generation are equally implicated, is evident, because his children, that is the followers of his principles, haters of Christ and his gospel, are said to be cut off, and their names blotted out. Hence it is worthy the Reader's observation, that what the apostle Peter quotes from a passage in the 69th Psalm, verse 25, in direct reference to the person of Judas, is in that very passage spoken in reference also to his seed. Let *his* habitation, saith the apostle, be desolate, and let no man dwell therein. And the Psalmist saith, let *their* habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. Compare Acts, i. 20, with Psalm lxi. 25. And what is the plain conclusion from those scriptures, but that the followers of Judas in his hatred of Christ, will partake in his punishment? And may we not behold in the Jews to this hour, evident tokens of the fulfilment of this prophecy? Oh! for grace to make a right improvement of distinguishing mercies! Oh! for grace to be sending forth the prayer of faith and hope, for the accomplishment of that blessed promise, that the hour may be at hand, when *the Deliverer shall come out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob!* Rom. xi. 26.

16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

How beautiful, by way of further illustration, doth this verse here come in! Judas's crime, and that of the whole Jewish nation with him, was the rejection of Christ, the truly poor and needy man, whose heart was broken by the burden of the sins of his people, and the rebuke of his Father. Judas saw his agony, and was admitted into his familiar acquaintance: he beheld the meek Lamb of God, and yet betrayed him. Oh! to grace how much are the people of God indebted, for being kept from the unpardonable sin, when in the days of their unregeneracy they are slighting all the sufferings of the Son of God! Psalm lxi. 20. lv. 12—15.

17 As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as

with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

19 Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.

20 *Let this be* the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.

The continuation of the awful consequences of the rejection of Christ, by Judas and his family, is here set forth; and the passage closeth with an assurance that it shall be so. And here I must again remark, in order to keep the remembrance of it alive, as well in my own soul, as in that of the Reader's, that it is Christ, the Amen, the faithful witness, who is the speaker. *Of them* (saith he) *that speak evil against my soul: against Jehovah's Holy One.* Reader! do not overlook it: and while contemplating the solemn truth, behold the despisers of Jesus, and rejoice with trembling!

21 But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy *is* good, deliver thou me.

22 For I *am* poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

23 I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.

24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

25 I became also a reproach unto them: *when* they looked upon me they shaked their heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy.

27 That they may know that this *is* thy hand; *that* thou, LORD, hast done it.

28 Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servants rejoice.

29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

Here we have the blessed Jesus, in his human nature addressing the Father, as in the days of his flesh. How very interesting to his people are those cries! How impossible but to take part in them!

and when the soul is led out by faith to view him in all the circumstances of his life and ministry, when performing and finishing redemption-work; what subject can be equally tender and affecting! Reader! turn to that sweet scripture, Heb. v. 7—9, and see whether, at every renewed reading of it, somewhat inexpressibly lovely doth not arise out of it, in beholding him, who *though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered!*

30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.

31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save *him* from those that condemn his soul.

Concerning Christ, we know, that it was prophesied of him, that he had set the Lord always before him, for he was at his right hand, that he should not be moved, Psalm xvi. 8. And of him, and him only, did the sacred writer speak, when, describing him by the spirit of prophecy, ages before he came, he said, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee*, Psalm xxii. 22. And that there might be no mistake on this great point, the Holy Ghost afterwards caused it to be confirmed by his servant Paul, when, speaking of Christ and his church as one, he quoted this very passage in direct application to Jesus: *For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee*, Heb. ii. 11, 12. And of whom doth the Prophet speak but of Jesus, when in his own person and his church, as one with himself and in himself, he says, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God*, Isaiah, lxi. 10.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over the contents of this very, very solemn Psalm. Behold in the traitor Judas, the head and representative of all the despisers of Jesus, the awful but sure consequences of rejecting the Lord of life and glory: and think what must be the end of all such workers of iniquity. If such was the close of that apostate's life, as the scripture records; if such the indignation which fell upon the Jewish nation and their beloved Jerusalem; if such to this hour the wretched state of their posterity; what indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will fall on those who crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame! Oh! ye despisers of the Godhead of Jesus! Oh! ye who deny the Lord that bought the church with his blood! think, before it be too late, what horrors and alarms will overwhelm the soul when the Son of God shall come in all his glory, and the glory of his Father, to take vengeance on them who would not that he should reign over them.

Look up, my soul, look up by faith, and in the contemplation of the

glory that shall be revealed, behold thy Jesus on his throne of grace, dispensing blessings to all his people. See him as a Lamb in the midst of the throne; all power is his, in heaven and in earth. Look to him for every covenant blessing, for in him it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. Love him who hath so loved thee: live to him who hath both lived and died for thee: and let all thy fresh springs be in him, in whom is the fountain of life, and in whose light alone thou mayest see light. Hail! ever blessed, ever lovely, and all loving Jesus! Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. Amen.

PSALM CX.

CONTENTS.

In this glorious Psalm, and in the Spirit of prophecy, the sacred writer celebrates the person, kingdom, priesthood, prophetic office, and character of the Lord Jesus. The whole of this portion of scripture refers to Christ, and to his people in him.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

In the opening of this gospel psalm, I pray the Reader to seek grace, with me, from God the Holy Ghost, that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened, to see Jesus in and through every part of it; and that as we read it, we may be enabled to act faith upon Him of whom it treats, until our whole souls go forth in the most lively emotions of love and praise to the great Author of our salvation. We shall have a better and more clear conception of this conference between the Persons of the Godhead, if we take into our view some corresponding scriptures. For this purpose consult Isaiah, xlii. from the 1st verse to the 4th, where Jehovah the Father is speaking to the church concerning Christ. Then from the 5th verse to the 9th, where he is speaking to Christ. Read also the 49th of Isaiah, where, in the form of a dialogue, the sacred Persons are conferring on the same subject of redemption. Christ begins the chapter with telling the Gentile church of his call as Messiah. Then from the 6th verse God the Father speaks to Christ on the same account. Both these scriptures serve to illustrate and explain each other, as well as to throw a light on the first verse of this Psalm: *Jehovah said unto my Adonai.* Read also as a farther confirmation, Matt. xxii. 42—45. Peter's comment, Acts, ii. 34, 35. Paul's also, 1 Cor. xv. 25. Then pause and contemplate God our Father thus addressing God the Son as the Messiah, the glorious head and surety of his people, when, having finished redemption-work he returned to glory, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hail, almighty Conqueror! thou art worthy to receive all glory and honour; and we behold thee now on thy throne, having obtained eternal redemption for us by thy blood!

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Here comes in a blessed promise made to the person of Christ, as the mediator and head of his church. The expression of *the rod of his strength*, probably means the sovereignty of his word, which first went forth from Zion. Jesus commanded his disciples, when they went forth to preach and evangelise all nations, to begin at Jerusalem, Luke, xxiv. 47. And are not the word of God's grace, and the work of God's Spirit, blended in this view of the rod of Christ's strength? For the gospel is said to be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, 1 Peter, i. 12. And indeed are not all the Persons of the Godhead engaged in this great work? God the Father is the author and giver of it, and as such it is called *the gospel of God*, and *the glorious gospel of the ever blessed God*, Rom. i. 1, and 1 Tim. i. 11. And Paul no less calls it, *the gospel of Christ*, of which he declared himself not ashamed, Rom. i. 16. And elsewhere, it is called *the ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 3—8. Hence the Prophet cries out, *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord*, Isaiah li. 9. But how beautiful is that part of the verse which calls upon Christ to rule in the midst of his enemies! Yes! his people, by nature, are enemies to him by wicked works; born in sin, and children of wrath, even as others. And when the Lord sends the word of his grace into the heart of sinners, what rebellion is found there. Sweet thought! Jesus must have every knee bend before him. If we bow not to the sceptre of his grace, we shall certainly break under the iron rod of his justice.

3 Thy people *shall be willing* in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Numberless beauties appear, in this verse, like the constellations of the heavenly borders, to call upon our notice. *First*, the promise made concerning the people of Christ. Here we find that Christ had a people, a church, a seed, an offspring, before his incarnation: and hence, not only at his birth, but even before his conception, his name was called JESUS, because he should save *his people* from their sins. Matt. i. 21. Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4. Isaiah, xlv. 3. lix. 21. *Secondly*, God the Father promiseth that this people shall be a *willing* people; *a people of willingness*, as it might be rendered; volunteers, listing under Christ's banner. When Jesus is set up as an ensign to the nations, the Gentiles shall seek to it, and his rest shall be glorious, Isaiah, xi. 10. And the prophet introduceth Christ, by the spirit of prophecy as looking amazed at the accession of his people unto him, Isaiah, xlix. 20—22. *Thirdly*, God's promise is, that all these blessings shall take place in the day of Christ's power. The sovereignty of grace, and the influence of his Spirit, which accompanieth his word, shall make it effectual; so that it shall not return void, but like the rain and the snow, which cometh down from heaven, shall give gracious influences; Isaiah, lv. 10, 11. And it is beautiful to remark how variously this day of Christ's power is spoken of in scripture, so as to point out the blessed properties of it: *A day of espousals* of the soul to Christ, Song, iii.

17: *A day of salvation*, 2 Cor. vi. 2; hence when Christ made the publican Zaccheus willing in the day of his power, he said, *This day is salvation come to this house*, Luke, xix. 9: and *a day of the Lord's making*, and marvellous in our eyes, Psalm cxviii. 24. One sweet thought more is suggested by this verse, when it is said that these great events are to be accomplished *in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning; Christ hath the dew of his youth*. It was an Old Testament promise to New Testament saints, that they should see *the King in his beauty*. For though to the carnal eye Christ's visage was marred more than any man's, and he had no comeliness to make him desired; yet to the spiritual, like the disciples, *they saw his glory, and believed in him*; Isaiah, xxxiii. 17. John, i. 14; and ii. 11. David, in his dying hours, under the spirit of prophecy, described Christ as: *the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4; and another prophet represented the remnant of Jacob begotten to Christ *in the midst of many people, as the dew is from the Lord*, Micah, v. 7. Probably to shew that sovereign grace will give to Christ an abundance of souls like the dew drops, so numero us as to be perfectly incalculable. And they shall come, as the dew cometh, of heavenly extraction, being born of God, and not of the will of the flesh, John i. 13. And unperceived, unnoticed, unknown, as the silent dew-drops of the morn; *for the kingdom of God cometh not with observation*, Luke, xvii. 20. And as they are begotten, like the dew, without the aid of man; so also shall they be preserved by the same predisposing cause, without man's deserts. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts*, Zech. iv. 6.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedeck.

The prophet having celebrated Christ in his kingly office, here extols him in his priestly character. Christ is indeed, and so the prophet described him ages before his advent, a *Priest upon his throne*, Zech. vi. 13. And here he traces up the wonderful subject to the counsel of peace between them both, in Jehovah swearing Christ into his priestly office, even that of an everlasting priesthood, *after the order of Melchizedeck*. It would fill a volume to give merely the outlines of this most blessed and interesting subject of Jesus, as the High Priest of his church and people. But in a work of this kind, brevity must be observed. Of this Melchizedeck, after whose order Christ was made a priest, the scripture hath not given such clear information as to enable us to speak particularly. The apostle Paul, in the 7th chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, hath largely dwelt upon it. To this therefore I refer, together with the original account, Gen. xiv. 18. But a *Priest for ever*, as our Lord was sworn to be by Jehovah, takes up the subject yet higher, and proves that Christ was *set up from everlasting*. And as a priest with an oath implies the validity and certainty of his office, which nothing can alter, nothing can revoke; Reader! never lose sight of Jesus in this high office. He ever lives to plead for sinners, having an unchangeable priesthood, and therefore can and will, save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

5 The LORD at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

This is a most interesting verse; for as the Lord will make his people willing in the day of his power, and support his friends; so will he subdue his enemies. The year, which is the year of his redeemed, is also the day of vengeance to those that oppose his government. Isaiah, lxiii. 4. Awful thought! Like the pillar of cloud on the tabernacle, the same which gave light to his people, was darkness to their foes.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

Christ is the universal Judge. Probably the *wounding the heads* refers to the destruction of Satan, whose head shall be bruised in every place, and in all countries throughout the earth. Jesus will himself do this; and he will do it also for his people; for, *as the God of peace, he will bruise Satan under their feet shortly.* Rom. xvi. 20.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

I do not presume to decide the point, but I am very much inclined to think that Christ's drinking of the brook, was meant in allusion to the sufferings of Jesus. The brook *Cedron*, over which he passed in his way to the garden, the night of his dolorous agony, received all the filth of the temple, arising from the sacrifices. Hence, therefore, Christ drinking of it in his way, should seem to imply that all the guilt and iniquities of his people were emptied upon Jesus. He drank of it. The cup of trembling was put into his hand, and he drank it off, that his people might drink of the cup of salvation. Sweet thought! and corresponding to that blessed scripture: *He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL! thou glorious, gracious King in Zion! exalted as thou art at the right hand of thy Father and our Father, thy God and our God; it is thy lawful right to subdue every thing to thyself; to govern, rule, bless, pardon, protect, reward, and make happy thy people. To thee it no less belongs to conquer and subdue thine enemies. Sit then, blessed Jesus, at the right hand of Jehovah, until all the nations submit to the sceptre of thy grace, and thy people are made willing in the day of thy power! Hail! no less, thou sovereign Priest upon thy throne! Taken from among men, thou art ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that thou mayest offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. And blessed for ever be thy name, thou canst have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for it is our happiness, and our joy, that we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; for thou wast in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. And our souls rejoice in the validity of thine

office. Yes, blessed Jesus! thou wast called to it of God, as was Aaron. And our Father hath confirmed thy authority and commission with an oath. Jehovah sware and will not repent. Hail then! thou great Melchisedeck! Thy divine nature is the golden altar; thy merits, and righteousness, and blood, the sure ground of acceptance; and thou thyself, the great High-Priest, offering in thine own name, to make the sacrifice sure of being accepted! Never shall my soul despair of pardon and acceptance in his name, while Jesus liveth and weareth the vesture dipped in blood.

And hail, thou divine Prophet! to explain to thy people the laws of God. Oh! for grace to receive thee, to accept thee, to delight in thee, and to attend to all thy blessed instructions! For, sure I am, the soul that will not hear thee, nor regard thy great salvation, will be cut off from among the people.

Oh! thou glorious Adonai! *from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth.* Make me, Lord, willing in the day of thy power! Make me all that thou wouldest have me to be. And while I view thee, and know thee to be EMMANUEL, JESUS, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; be thou made of God to my soul, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that he that glorieth, may glory in the Lord.*

PSALM CXI.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is remarkable as being the first of the seven which were known in the Jewish church under the title of the grand Hallelujah; probably so called because it begins with Hallelujah. It forms a devout hymn of praise; and the writer, while stirring up himself to praise God, calls upon others to join in the same delightful service.

PRAISE ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

Whether we are to consider these as the words of Christ, by the prophet, I will not presume to say; but one thing is certain, that it was Christ of whom the Royal Prophet spake, and to whom alone he referred, as speaking in similar words in another psalm. And as the apostle Paul, that the church might not overlook Jesus, had it in commission to explain that very passage in direct allusion to Christ, I think we cannot err in supposing that it is the Lord Jesus in this psalm also, who declares "he will praise Jehovah with his whole heart in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation." Let the Reader compare with diligence, Psalm xxii. with Heb. ii. 11, 12, and then judge for himself. Nay, let him then put the further question to himself; and ask, who indeed but the ever blessed Jesus, could undertake to praise Jehovah with *his whole heart*? Who but Christ, the surety of sinners, had Jehovah in view, when he said *their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them. And I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach*

unto me, saith the Lord? Jerem. xxx. 21. Reader! it is blessed to see Jesus going before in all our approaches, and to behold his lovely example: then in his name and in his righteousness, and not else, you and I may say or sing with faith this sweet verse, and determine to praise the Lord with our whole heart in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

2 The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

Every thing which tends to display the grace and goodness of God, in nature and providence, is worthy to be well regarded. But what displays bath Jehovah made in Jesus, and his great salvation! And Reader! think what blessings open to the view of that redeemed soul, who is conscious of a personal interest in them. Oh! what pleasure, what joy unspeakable, will that soul find in the blessed study!

3 His work *is* honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

How truly delightful is it to consider these things in Christ! Here is a righteousness indeed for ever. With this will his church be clothed to all eternity. Oh! how truly honourable, how truly glorious! How is it possible for a redeemed soul ever to forget such mercy, when he is himself a living monument of it from day to day? Reader, do observe how frequent in the scriptures is the allusion to God's mercy manifested to Moses in the mount. Was it not then, and is it not now, to remind us of Christ? Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands *are* verity and judgment; all his commandments *are* sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness.

There is somewhat very striking in the frequent memorandums the Lord makes in his word of his covenant, as if to shew his faithfulness. Such was the command to Moses, Deut. vii. 9. Exod. iii. 15. And Reader! how sweet is all this considered with reference to Christ, to whom all along that covenant referred, and with whom indeed it was originally made: Gen. xii. 3. Psalm lxxii. 17. Isaiah, xlii. 16.

9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name.

This is a blessed verse, full of divine things. Redemption is sent, given, free, full, everlasting. It is sent to his people, Exod. iii. 9, 10, explained by John, iii. 16, 17. 1 John, iv. 14. It is all centered in his dear Son, Coloss. i. 13, 14, 19. It is for ever unchangeable, and everlasting, Isaiah, li. 8. Heb. xiii. 8. Isaiah, liv. 10. And the whole is summed up and made sure in that distinguishing perfection of Jehovah, the holiness of his nature; as if God had pledged this divine attribute to his people in Christ, to convince them of his unalterable purposes. Psalm lxxxix. 34, 35.

10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.

This verse comes in very properly after the former, to point out the leading principles in those who are the happy partakers of the unspeakable mercy of God in Christ; and this forms one of the Lord's marks and characters, whereby his people are known: *I will make (saith the Lord) an everlasting covenant with them, that I WILL NOT turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that THEY SHALL NOT depart from me.* Jerem. xxxii. 40.

REFLECTIONS.

BEHOLD, my soul, how Jesus, going before thee in all the paths of duty, as well as fulfilling all righteousness, calls up thy love, thy praise, thy thankfulness, in his lovely example. And did Jesus, in his zeal for his Father's glory, thus delight to do his will, and to praise the Father for redemption; and shall not all thy affections be exerted to the same? Wilt thou not sing *Hallelujah*, and *praise the Lord in the assembly of the upright*?

Oh! holy Father! holy indeed and reverend is thy name. Thy covenant faithfulness, and love, and truth, to a thousand generations, may well call forth the song of every redeemed heart; for it is thou that hast sent redemption unto thy people, and sent it in the person of thy dear and ever-blessed Son; thereby making redemption infinitely more precious, and endearing it to our hearts by a thousand ties of affection, love, and duty.

Oh! Lord! give to me that holy fear, and put it in my heart, that I may never depart from thee; and cause me to take pleasure in the contemplation of all thy works. May it be my morning delight, my noon-day rejoicing, and my evening song, to search out thy gracious dealings towards the children of men. And chiefly; Lord! let my thoughts be all engaged in contemplating the person, work, offices, character, and relation of Jesus. Here, blessed Jesus! may my whole soul centre as the bee upon the sweetest flower; for my meditation of thee shall be sweet.

PSALM CXII.

CONTENTS.

This is another of the Hallelujah psalms, wherein is described the blessedness of the perfect man, in himself and seed; with all the effects resulting from his righteousness.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

To whom shall we direct our view for the character here described, but to the ever-blessed Jesus? Of him alone, in strict truth, can the things here spoken of, be said. Jesus did indeed say, and Jesus alone could say it: *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart*: that is, as the margin of our old Bibles have it, *in the midst of my bowels*, folded up in my very nature: indeed the whole nature itself. For that *holy thing*, as the angel called him before his conception, was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*. And all this, remember, Reader, is spoken of Jesus in his human nature; which human nature is united to the uncreated Word; and both form one Christ. Oh! the unspeakable joy for a poor conscious sinner to contemplate his Saviour, his Surety, his Jesus, thus holy; and that this holiness is his, in which he always appears before God, and is thereby always accepted in the Beloved. Reader, pray turn to those blessed scriptures in confirmation: Psalm xl. 8. Luke, i. 35. Heb. vii. 26. John, i. 14. Ephes. i. 5, 6.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

If the Reader wishes, as well he may, to know who are the seed of this blessed man, let him consult Gal. iii. 29. And if he wishes to know also what blessings they are entitled to, let him further consult the word of God in such scriptures as these: Gen. xii. 3, compared with Gal. iii. 8. Isaiah, xliv. 3. lix. 21.

3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

The best comment upon this verse is what Christ, under the character of Wisdom (a well-known title of Christ) saith, Prov. viii. 21. 1 Cor. i. 24.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: *he is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart *is* established, he shall not be afraid, until he see *his desire* upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;

his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

If we read these verses, *first*, as spoken of Christ; and, *secondly*, in him, as having respect to all his people; we shall be sure to include all the views which may be taken of them, and they will then afford a sweet savour of Jesus in the soul. Whoever goes over the life and ministry of Christ, in the days of his flesh (and a believing soul would wish to have this for his constant meditation), he will discover great beauties explanatory of what is here said. Indeed, I cannot see how any believer can read such portions of God's word as these, with any comfort from any personal interest in what is spoken, unless Christ be constantly kept in view, through the whole. For example: supposing we read without an eye to Jesus, what is here said; what saint alive can discover *light arising out of darkness*? Of whom shall it be said, with the smallest consistency of truth, that *he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous*? And in short, of all the distinguishing properties here marked, what son or daughter of Adam can, in himself, lay claim to such excellency? But if we read what is here said, as of Jesus fulfilling all righteousness for his people, and that in his righteousness they as the members of his body, are righteous; he being made of God to them, *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*; the beauty and glory of the psalm then appears in all its fulness, and the savour of Jesus's name is as ointment poured forth. 1 Cor. i. 30. Song, i. 3.

10 The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

An awful verse, this! But oh! how tremendously awful when fulfilled. The seed of the serpent, all along, are thus described. John, viii. 44. And, Reader, do remark the dreadful punishment, in the desire of the wicked perishing. The *very desire* of such, be it what it may, shall be their misery. Oh! who can calculate the extent of that sin, and that misery connected with it, of despising Christ; the one, the only one ordinance of heaven for sinners! There is salvation in no other. The neglect of it, and the despising of it, brings on finally, in the soul, wonder, and perishing. Acts, iv. 12. xiii. 41.

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Jesus! while my soul unceasingly beholds thee, in thy divine nature, as *one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever*, give me grace, in the perusal of sweet scriptures, like this psalm, to behold thee with an equal delight, as *the man, the very man, Christ Jesus*. For hadst thou not condescended to leave the bosom of the Father, and taken upon thee the nature of man, never could my poor nature have been taken into the family of God in Christ, and been made a child of God by adoption and by grace. It was thy wonderful undertaking that first led to this hope. Thou, becoming a very man, in order to become the sinner's Surety, and in the holiness of thy nature fulfilling all righ-

teousness, and satisfying both thy Father's law and justice in our place and room: this, and this alone, created hope and confidence in the souls of thy people. Lost as they all were in themselves, and totally incapable of doing one act of perfect obedience towards God, yet when in the same nature thou camest to fulfil all righteousness, and became sin for us, when thou knewest no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in thee; here faith, taught by the Holy Ghost, was encouraged to look up, and to see how God can be just and yet the justifier of poor ungodly sinners, who believe in Jesus. Yes, blessed Lord, in thee we behold a suitable righteousness, a complete, a covenant, an everlasting righteousness! And what endears it to every true believer's heart, is, that this righteousness is our own in thee; for thou art our Husband, our Head, our Surety, our Jesus. God our Father hath declared himself well pleased in thee; and thy people are beheld and accepted in thee. It is thou thyself, blessed Jesus, hast said it: the word is gone out of thy mouth, neither wilt thou have it to return: thou hast said that thou art one with thy people, and they one with thee; and that the world may know that the Father hath loved them, as the Father hath loved thee! And shall not my soul everlastingly rejoice in knowing thee, and loving thee, as the man Christ Jesus? Shall not I unceasingly behold thee, in thy one person, God and Man united? And shall not I sing this sweet psalm, beginning with Hallelujah, because Jesus, the God-man, hath feared the Lord, and greatly delighted in his commandments; because his seed shall be mighty in his might, and righteous in his righteousness; and because Jesus will cause them to inherit substance, and fill all their treasures? Oh blessed, for ever blessed! be the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for Jesus Christ.

PSALM CXIII.

CONTENTS.

The general subject of this psalm is praise. The sacred writer calls upon all to praise the Lord, from sun-rise to sun-set. Every individual of intelligent creation is supposed to be interested in this service.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the LORD's name is to be praised.

The prophet Malachi, looking into gospel days, declared, that the name of Jehovah should be great among the Gentiles, *from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same*, Malachi, i. 11: To this most reasonable service, the servants of the Lord are here called; and the subjects of creation, providence, and redemption, furnish out endless matter for devout souls to enlarge upon. And oh! thou blessed Jesus, how dost thou, as the servant of Jehovah, set a glorious example to all

thy redeemed! Though thou wert Lord of all, yet didst thou condescend to be servant of all, and didst even wash thy disciple's feet, in token of thine unequalled humility, and to teach us to do as thou hast done, John, xiii. 13, 14, 15. *Truly, Lord, I am thy servant: thou hast loosed my bonds*, Psalm cxvi. 16.

4 The LORD *is* high above all nations, *and* his glory above the heavens.

5 Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,

6 Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven; and in the earth!

A most sublime thought is awakened by these verses, in the contemplation of God. To behold things in heaven, in the upper and brighter world, is wonderful condescension in Him that inhabiteth the praises of eternity! And how much more so to behold things on earth, amidst the universal corruption induced by the fall! And to behold, and regard, a poor sinful worm of the earth, such as man, and the best of men, in his highest estate, is still going down in the scale of condescension. But what shall we say or think of that wonder of wonders, that He whose name is Holy, who dwelleth in the high and holy place, should come down and tabernacle with men, in the person of his dear Son? What an act of grace and condescension is here! Solomon, struck with the thoughts of God's presence in the temple which he had built, cried out, under the solemn apprehension, *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have builded!* But what would he have said, had he lived in gospel days, and beheld the word made flesh, dwelling among us; he, who was in the form of God, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with God, making himself of no reputation, taking upon him the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, found in fashion as a man, humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? Oh! thou unequalled pattern of all that is fair, and lovely, and excellent! In all things thou hast the pre-eminence! See those scriptures: Isaiah, lvii. 15. 1 Kings, viii. 28. Philip ii. 6--8. Colos. i. 18.

7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

8 That he may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of his people.

Reader, hath the Lord God been thus gracious to you, in your own instance? Do you know any thing of that rich, free, sovereign grace, which manifests itself in raising sinners from the dust of death, the dunghill of a fallen nature, and making them, in Christ Jesus, kings and priests to God and the Father? Oh, if you know any thing of this in your own personal salvation, how will you join in this sweet psalm of praise, and chaunt it every day, from sun-rise to sun set! Rev. i. 5, 6.

9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house,

and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

Several women in the Old Testament history, are proofs of this mercy: and the New Testament saints, no doubt, could produce also their Hannahs, and Rachels, and Elizabeths. 1. Sam. i. 2, 19, 20. Gen. xxx. 1, 2, 22, 23. Luke, i. 7, 13, 57. And what indeed is the promise given to the Gentile church, but that, *more shall be the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife?* Isaiah, liv. 1. These are sweet testimonies in proof. And the psalm therefore ends as it began, with Hallelujah. The Lord give grace both to him that now writes, and to him that reads, so to begin, and so to end it. *Praise ye the Lord.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I seek for grace to catch the heavenly flame, and while the Holy Ghost is thus calling upon the church to bless the Lord, that from the rising of the sun to its going down, his name shall be great among the Gentiles, oh may we not be silent, morn or even; but with the dawn of day, as well as when the shades of night close in upon the earth, may we bless the Lord, and call upon all that is within us to praise his holy name.

And, oh! what unnumbered motives and arguments arise in every direction, within, without, and all around, to be earnest and alive in this blessed service! Think, Reader, of the condescension of God the Father, in sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world! Think of the grace of God the Spirit, in making the bodies of the saints his temple. And think of that grace and love in God the Son, who so loved us as to give himself for us! Reader, a whole eternity will not be long enough for praising, blessing, and adoring Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for these things. Oh! reader, let each of us say, *What hath God wrought, in remembering us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever!* Help us, Lord, to praise thee, to love thee, to live to thee; that every day we may increase, wit hall the household of faith, in praising the God of our salvation, upon earth, until we come to the everlasting enjoyment of the Lord, and the view of him in glory, to praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity. Amen.

PSALM CXIV.

CONTENTS.

This psalm is descriptive of the going forth of Israel from Egypt: but as this was a transaction typical of the church being led forth by the great Captain of their salvation from the Egypt of sin and death, the whole ought to be read with reference to Christ in his victories for his people.

WHEN Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

That we may not lose sight, in the history of the church's first going forth from Egypt, of that far greater deliverance, the church's salvation by Jesus, one of the prophets was commissioned by the Holy Ghost, to tell the church; that it was out of Egypt God called his Son: and that, in that account, the church might view Christ. One of the Evangelists was commissioned, also, to tell the church that Christ immediately after his birth went into Egypt, to fulfil this prophecy. Compare Hosea, xi. 1, with Matt. ii. 15. So that, if we needed it, here is a key to the whole psalm. Reader, let you and I go over it, with our whole attention directed to this one point, as we read this Exodus, this going forth of Israel out of Egypt. One of the first beauties of the psalm is, the manner of Israel's departure. Israel went out, and went out with a high hand; Egypt was nearly destroyed, and therefore Israel went forth as a conqueror. Reader, is it not so with the church at large, and every individual of the church? When the Lord Jesus rescues a poor sinner from the bondage of sin and Satan, doth he not lead him out with a high hand, and a stretched-out arm? Let us remark the striking expression concerning Egypt; *The house of Jacob is taken from a people of strange language.* Yes, as the Israelites, by the over-ruling power and providence of God, preserved the sacred language uncorrupted by the jargon of Egypt, so God's people now are, by grace, preserved, in the sacred language of praise and prayer, from using the profane tongue of the carnal. Oh! how blessed to be so distinguished! 2 Peter, ii. 7, 8.

2 Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

Reader, do not fail to remark, that when Israel was brought out of Egypt, the Lord set up his tabernacle among them, and manifested his presence to them. And when the Lord Jesus brings out his people from the Egypt of the world, doth he not still fulfil that sweet promise, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?* Is it not the privilege of his people, to live *to* him, to live *with* him, and to live *upon* him? Doth he not in every act declare, *I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.* Matt. xxviii. 20. Zech. xiii. 9.

3 The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

The Red Sea, and Jordan, both withdrew for Israel. Reader, recollect (for there is a great beauty in the reflection) that forty years intervened between the period of the Red Sea retiring, and that of the river Jordan stopping in its course; but as both were thus miraculously wrought upon by the power and presence of the same God, who was Judah's sanctuary, and Israel's dominion, the wonderful events are both recorded in the same song. Exod. xiv. 21, 22. Joshua, iii. 13—17. And in both events what a beautiful type do we see of the passage of the church, through that new and living way, which the Lord hath opened for his people, through the veil of Christ's flesh? Heb. x. 19—21.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

5 What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?

6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams;
and ye little hills, like lambs?

The sacred writer is here triumphing in the grace and sovereignty of God, and demands by what power it was that the laws of nature should be so changed, in producing such wonders in creation? Moses sang to the same amount, when celebrating the event on the banks of the Red Sea. *The Dukes of Edom* (says he) *shall be amazed, the mighty men of Moab, trembling, shall take hold of them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away*, Exod. xv. 15. And the Prophet, in ages after this, sang his song to the divine glory, upon the same subject, Habak. iii. 3—16. But when we look beyond Israel's history, to the glorious subject of a far greater redemption, which this prefigured, even our redemption by Christ, how doth the subject rise in sublimity! What is it makes the mountains of sin to start from their centre, and the hills of corruption to flee away from the rocky minds of God's people? What is it that removes the tide of the world, and the torrent of ease and pride, ignorance, self-will, and the whole sea of evil, which covers the heart like the ocean, in the nature of man, while in a state of unawakened nature, and living in the Egypt of this life? What but the powerful voice of Him, who, when he speaks, maketh the dead to hear? John, v. 25.

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the
LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

8 Which turned the rock into a standing water,
the flint into a fountain of waters.

Here, the answer is given. As *Sinai* moved at God's presence, so mountains of sin, nations of idolatry, Satan, and all the powers of darkness, fall away beneath the sovereignty of Jesus, and his gospel. Yea, the very stony hearts of the most hardened transgressors, must become hearts of flesh, and every power of nature must bend to the power of his grace. When the eye is directed by sovereign love to Jesus, looking unto him whom they have pierced, they must mourn, and the waters of repentance shall gush out; Zech. xii. 10.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I ponder over the solemn, though delightful reflections, suggested by this psalm. Behold in it the state of the church, and of every individual of that church, as they are, in a state of unregenerated nature, before the Lord brings them out of the Egypt of sin and corruption. *We were by nature* (saith the Apostle) *children of wrath, even as others*. Behold the distinguishing grace of God in Christ, which makes all the difference between a people of strange language, and those who can sing the *Song of Moses and the Lamb*. Behold the power and sovereignty of almighty grace! Who shall detain the Lord's Israel, when he brings them forth! What chains of sin or Satan shall bind such as the Lord makes free? Neither mountains of sin, nor seas of unbelief, shall be able to stand against Jesus and his army. Who art thou, O great mountain, may the believer say, before our glorious Zerubbabel? Thou shalt become a plain. He it is who shall bring forth the headstone thereof, with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. And, oh!

thou blessed, all-conquering Lord! thou who subduest the enemy *before* thy people, thou also wilt subdue the enmity *in* thy people. Yes, almighty Jesus! thou art exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And, therefore, thou wilt turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Thou wilt regenerate our nature, and make all things new, by thy sovereign all-creating power. Every eye shall be filled with the tear of love and repentance; every knee shall bow before thee; every tongue proclaim thy praise. The universal song of all thy ransomed children shall be, *Salvation to God and the Lamb!*

PSALM CXV.

CONTENTS.

This is a psalm of praise, wherein the glory of God, as opposed to idols, and the idolatry and self-confidence of the human heart, is strikingly set forth.

NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

How truly this becomes the language of the believer! when the heart is full of Christ, all creature confidences are done away. And, Reader, do observe how the mercy of God in Christ is blended with God's covenant-engagements. For what is God's mercy but the mercy promised? And in what is redemption founded, but God's truth? Luke, i. 72. Psalm cvi. 8.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God?

As the enemy will triumph over the afflictions of the Lord's people, we would pray, O Lord, that they may have no occasion so to do in our being cast down under trials. May we have always grace to see our exercises sanctified, and this will stop the insults of the foe. Reader, if we should at any time be thus exercised, let us look to Jesus on the cross, and hear the insults offered to him; this will compose our souls. Matt. xxvii. 39—43.

3 But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

4 Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet

have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them; so *is* every one that trusteth in them.

Idols and idolaters are upon a par. But, alas! is not every man an idolater by nature? And even when regenerated, how often do I detect my poor wandering heart going after its vanities! Lord, give me grace in this view of the subject, to take up the prayer of the prophet, Hosea, xiv. 3—8.

9 O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

Observe the gracious call of God to the several orders of his people. First, to Israel; next, to the priests of Israel; thirdly, to all in whose heart the fear of the Lord is; perhaps taking in both the Jewish and Gentile churches. And observe yet more particularly, in whom they are called to put their trust. Who is the help of Israel, and the Saviour thereof, but He whose name is *the Lord our righteousness*? And who is the shield but Jesus? See those scriptures, Jerem. xiv. 8. Psalm lxxxiv. 9. Jerem. xxiii. 6.

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless *us*; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless them that fear the LORD, *both* small and great.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

15 Ye *are* blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

All blessings are in the person of the Lord Jesus; and they are secured to his people in his finished salvation. So ran the original charter of grace Gen. xii. 3. Hence; that sweet promise, Isaiah, xiv. 3; and hence the Apostle's confirmation of it, Ephes. i. 3—7.

16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

17 The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

18 But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

Here is a striking contrast between the dead and the living. And why may we not interpret it as the real state of the case between the dead in trespasses and sins, and the living soul in Christ? There can be neither praise nor prayer truly honourable to God, or profitable to man, until grace enters the heart; for the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8. Happy the souls, regenerated by grace, who from new hearts shew forth the praises of the Lord. Reader, the Lord make this our portion!

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! let it be my happiness to be everlastingly viewing thee, that so pride may be for ever hidden from my eyes; and that I may never come into the dreadful temptation to rob Jesus of his glory, and my own soul of comfort, in fancying that I have had the least hand in contributing to my own salvation. Let this be my every day motto: *Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.* And, Lord, help me to bless thee in the recollection of the dumb idols, in the course of which I was heretofore led; but through redeeming grace and love thou hast brought me out, and taught me to serve and love thee, the ever living and true God. Precious Jesus! how dear oughtest thou to be to me, who art in thy person, and in thy righteousness, the all in all of thy people! It is thou who art the object of faith and love; the author, the giver, the preserver, the restorer, the sum and substance of all that is excellent: blessed, glorious Lord, help me while living to praise thee, and when dying to praise thee, and in the act of death to praise thee; that the first and last of all sounds on my trembling lips may be Jesus! And let the sweet savour of thy name refresh my soul for ever! Amen.

PSALM CXVI.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm contains some very gracious breathings of a devout soul; whether, by the spirit of prophecy, the sacred writer penned them as the suited language of Christ in the days of his flesh; or whether, as the pious ejaculations of one of the Lord's people, following the example of Christ, I do not presume to determine; but certainly here is a blessed assemblage of devout expressions, highly becoming the faithful to adopt and use, with their hearts raised upwards to Jesus.

I LOVE the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

It is a point never to be forgotten, that if we love Christ, it is because he first loved us. 1 John, iv. 19. Laying this down as the foundation, the superstructure must be proper. It was God the Father's love that first gave us his dear Son; it was Jesus's love that first prompted his infinite mind to love us. Reader! never lose sight of these grand points of faith.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

If we compare scripture with scripture, and read that part of the 91st Psalm, which evidently and plainly refers to Christ, I think the likeness between that scripture and this, may allow us to suppose that it is the ever blessed Jesus, as the head and surety of his church, who is here speaking. Psalm xci. 14—16.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee deliver my soul.

If the 22d Psalm be, as it is universally allowed by the church to be, prophetic of Christ, is there not a sufficient agreement between these verses and a certain portion of that Psalm, to believe that the writer here refers to it? Psalm xxii. 15—21.

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

I would again explain these verses by others. It is blessed to get a glimpse, if it be but a glimpse only, at Jesus as the sinner's Surety, going before in all the parts of soul exercises: see Psalm xxii. 6. But while keeping in view the Lord Jesus, as the great Exemplar and Surety of his people, let us also, from a consciousness of our being united to him, and being one with him, take part in all that concerns him. Remember, if the Lord be gracious, and we can adopt the language of these verses, it is in Jesus that that grace is manifested. If the Lord helps us when brought low, it is on Jesus's account.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.

In every point of view, these are sweet words indeed! Jesus is the rest wherewith he will cause the weary to rest; he is their refreshing; and all the invitations of Jesus are to this effect, that coming to him, we shall find rest to our souls. Isaiah, xxviii. 12. Matt. xi. 28. But I must not dismiss these verses, without first observing that there seems to be an allusion to the circumstance of the dove in the ark of Noah. She found no place for the sole of her foot, until she returned to the ark. Now as the ark was a type of Christ, and the name of Noah signifies *rest*; it cannot be a violence to the phrase to consider the soul of the believer returning to Jesus from all the waves and waters of tribulation in the world, as not unaptly represented by that event. Gen. viii. 8, 9.

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

11 I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.

The apostle quotes part of what is here said, by way of shewing that one and the same spirit of faith actuates all true believers, and though men may be false, yet God abideth true, 2 Cor. iv. 13.

12 What shall I render unto the LORD, *for* all his benefits towards me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD, now in the presence of all his people.

Reader! do observe: The question is, What shall I *give* unto the Lord? under a sense of his mercies. A strange answer is returned. I will *receive* the cup of salvation. Yes! Jesus and his gospel are the free unmerited gift of God in Christ; not held forth for our *purchase*, but for our *acceptance*. The bountiful Giver needs not the gifts of his creatures. Besides, the things themselves are too costly to be purchased. Precious Jesus! thou drankest the cup of trembling. And thy people are called to take the cup of salvation! Zech. xii. 2. Isaiah, li. 17. John, xviii. 11. Luke, xxiii. 17.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

This verse comes as in a parenthesis. It may serve to comfort the faithful in the recollection. And as the death of the faithful is precious, so their lives are. Matt. x. 29, 30. Reader! if such be the preciousness of the death of saints, what must have been, and is, and ever will be, the inestimable valuable price of His death, whose death is the life of the world? Lamb of God! with what a price hast thou redeemed thy people! 1 Peter, i. 18, 19.

16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD, now in the presence of all his people.

19 In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

Here again we may safely perceive Christ the mediator, the servant of Jehovah, the son of the handmaid, and he that was bound for his peo-

ple, whom Jehovah loosed. See those scriptures, Isaiah, xlii. 1—4, compared with Matt. xii. 18—21. Luke, i. 38, 48. Isaiah, vii. 14. Acts, ii. 24. Isaiah, liii. 6. And secondly and subordinately, we may, in consequence of our union with Christ, take up the same sweet words, and looking up to God in Christ, pay our vows, as being loosed by Jesus's stripes and death from all the bondage of sin, and death, and hell, and brought into the liberty of the children of God. Rom. viii. 21.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! canst thou say, *I love the Lord?* Yes! if thou hast seen his loveliness, his beauty, his love to thee, and regard for thee, and that thou hast an interest in him. Pause over the interesting thought! Hast thou seen God in Christ, hearing thy prayers, granting thy request, and giving thee strength and confidence in his salvation? Hast thou seen his suitableness as a Saviour, so as not only to discover transcendent excellencies in Jesus, but all those excellencies and perfections as engaged for thee, and in thy salvation? And say, my soul, hast thou seen Christ so as for him to become thy rest? And hast thou returned to him from all the distractions and disquietudes of this waste and howling wilderness? If these are thine experiences, and thou art convinced that the Lord Jesus hath delivered thee from death, thine eyes from tears, and thy feet from falling; then wilt thou indeed receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord!

Precious Jesus! thou almighty Author and Finisher of all our happiness! be thou to me all I need, all I wish, all I want! Thou art indeed the rest, the only rest, for weary sin-sick souls. Thy blood is the only fountain to cleanse. Thy righteousness the only robe to clothe. Thy person the only source of happiness, for grace here, and glory to all eternity. Return then, return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

PSALM CXVII.

CONTENTS.

In this short but sweet Psalm, the nations of the earth are called upon to praise God for his mercy; and the people of God are more immediately urged to be active in this service.

O PRAISE the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

2 For his merciful kindness is great towards us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

I cannot find any authority to confirm the Jewish opinion that this Psalm is purposely limited to two verses, to intimate the two nations, Jews and Gentiles, that are to be both brought alike into the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom. But certain it is, some of the Jewish writers confessed that it contained a call to the Gentiles concerning the Messiah. And it is not a little remarkable, that of so short a psalm the apostle Paul should quote one whole verse of it, and make application of it to

the Gentile church. See Rom. xv. 11. But passing by these considerations, it will be more immediately to our purpose to observe the great extent to which *the glorious gospel of the ever blessed God* is here directed. It is *to all nations*, agreeably to what our Lord commanded: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* Now as God the Father promised his dear Son to give him for a light to the Gentiles, and to be his salvation unto the ends of the earth, here the blessed truth is explained. And his servant the apostle afterwards told the Ephesian church, that though the gospel, and the great design of it in its vast extension, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it was afterwards revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; yet certain it was, that *the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel.* Compare Mark, xvi. 15. Isaiah, xlix. 6. Ephes. iii. 5, 6. Here is also a particular call to his people Israel. And the foundation for both is one and the same; namely, God's merciful kindness; meaning salvation by Christ Jesus, the mercy promised from ages and generations; and in the everlasting nature, extent, and perpetuity of it, all nations and people have cause to rejoice. Hence therefore the psalm begins and ends with the same *Hallelujah! Praise the Lord.*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! contemplate the blessed contents of this psalm, and let the saving interest we as Gentiles bear in it, bring it home to our hearts with a tenfold joy and satisfaction. In order to see its blessedness as it concerns us, let it be only considered that by nature we were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. We knew nothing of the scriptures of truth; were strangers to the offers of grace, strangers to the very name of the Lord Jesus, and ignorant even of our want of his blood and righteousness. Oh! how happy to be brought nigh by the blood of Jesus; and to hear and know the joyful sound, and to walk in the light of God's countenance. And wilt thou not praise God for his mercy? Shall we not follow up the gracious call of this Psalm, and bend the knee in thankful remembrance for God's unspeakable gift? Blessed, for ever blessed, be God for Jesus Christ!

PSALM CXVIII.

CONTENTS.

As Christ himself quotes a part of this blessed Psalm in reference to himself, we can be under no mistake to be on the look-out for Christ through every part of it. The great scope of it is, to manifest what confidence there is to trust in Jehovah at all times, and upon all occasions.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Here, as in many psalms of a like nature, is an invitation to praise Jehovah; and the several orders of the people are especially called upon to this service. The house of Aaron is mentioned by name; but perhaps this is in accommodation to gospel times also, when Jesus hath made his people kings and priests unto God and the Father. Every man may find in the history of his own life enough to demand the unceasing tribute of praise. Rev. i. 6.

5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.

It is impossible to overlook Jesus in this verse. Surely to none so applicable as to him are these expressions; and to none can we refer them with equal propriety. Who had so large a place, or such freedom, as Jesus, and especially in the triumphs of his resurrection!

6 The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.

8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD, than to put confidence in man.

9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD, than to put confidence in princes.

10 All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.

11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

12 They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.

14 The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

18 The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go in to them, and I will praise the LORD.

20 This *is* the gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

I make no pause in these verses, because I think they contain a beautiful subject, in reference to the Lord Jesus in his ministry; and it were a pity to interrupt the reading. Let the Reader, when he hath read them, contemplate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and see whether there is not a very plain allusion to our Lord in what is here said. Nay, doth it not strike him that Christ is the speaker? It is said that this patient sufferer doth not fear men nor princes. And how was this manifested, when both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together! Acts, iv. 27. Observe, how this patient sufferer speaks of one particular person; and who but Satan could this mean, with whom Christ had a personal conflict, and overcame him by his death, and will shortly overcome him in all his members? Heb. ii. 14. Rom. xvi. 20. And to whom are the everlasting gates opened, nay, who can demand their opening, but He who is Lord both of quick and dead? Psalm xxiv. 7, 8. In him, and by him indeed his people may, and certainly will, enter. Isaiah, xxvi. 2.

22 The stone *which* the builders refused, is become the head *stone* of the corner.

23 This is the LORD's doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes.

This is a most remarkable passage; and as such the former verse is again and again quoted by the sacred writers. Our Lord himself becomes the authority, and hence his servants follow him. See Matt. xxi. 42. Hence the Evangelists Mark and Luke, the Apostles Peter and Paul, refer to the same. See Mark, xii. 10. Luke, xx. 17. Acts, iv. 11. 1 Peter, ii. 4. Ephes. ii. 20. But what I would chiefly desire the Reader to remark is, the doctrine which our Lord founds upon it. Christ is the stone which Jehovah laid in Zion; and which the prophet Daniel described, (chap. ii. 34) as *a stone cut out without hands*. The Jewish builders refused this stone; and now this same rejected stone is become the head of the corner; for *salvation is in no other*. See Isaiah, xxviii. 16. Dan. ii. 34. Acts, iv. 10—12. Reader! pause over this most momentuous scripture, and while beholding all these grand witnesses to the truth of it; behold Christ most completely an-

swering to this character. Christ is the foundation stone of his church; the first stone laid *in point of order*; for every believer is built upon him. Coloss. ii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 11. 1 Peter, ii. 4, 5. Christ also is the foundation stone *in point of strength*; help is here laid *upon one that is mighty*, Psalm lxxxix. 19. Ephes. ii. 20. And Christ is the foundation-stone, *to knit together, and to keep compact, the whole building*. He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. My soul! what sayest thou to these blessed truths! Art thou founded on this rock? Art thou united personally to Jesus? Art thou growing to a holy temple in the Lord? Bless then the Lord for these distinguishing mercies, and cry out with the Psalmist, *This is the Lord's doing*; for it is all of Jehovah's ordering, and truly *marvellous it is in our eyes!*

24 *This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

The day here spoken of, it should seem, is the glorious day of the gospel; to which the eyes of the patriarchs and prophets were unweariedly looking, called in scripture, *The day of the Messiah, The day of the Lord's coming*. Reader! if the very prospect of that day filled the souls of the faithful, before Christ came, with such joy, with what rapture ought you and I to welcome and celebrate it, in ordinances, in sabbaths, and in every means of grace, which Jesus hath brought in with this day of his coming.

25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

With such hymns of praise should faithful souls be always welcoming Christ. And as the multitude proclaimed Hosannahs at Christ's public entry into Jerusalem, so should every heart meet Jesus, in public and in private, at home and abroad; every where, and in all things, we should always be on the look-out for Him, who hath come to us, and is always coming, in the name of Jehovah, to bless and save his people! And, Reader! ought we not, from the daily enjoyment of his presence by faith, to be looking for, and hastening to, the coming of Jesus visibly, to take us home to himself, that we may be for ever with the Lord? See those scriptures, Matt. xxi. 8, 9. Song, ii. 9—17.*

27 God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

What is meant by *binding the sacrifice*, is not so generally understood; for no part of scripture explains it. And certain it is that Jesus, the one, and the only one glorious sacrifice, needed no binding; for his undertaking was perfectly voluntary. Perhaps it might mean, (for no doubt the allusion is to him) the engagement which Jesus, as the Head of his church, entered into, in covenant transactions before all worlds; that he should be led, and as such, bound, as a lamb to the slaughter.

Lo I come (saith he) to do thy will, O God! Isaiah, liii. 7. Psalm xl. 7, 8. In beholding Jesus thus engaged, let us follow him, present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1.

28 Thou art my God, and I will praise thee:
thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

In the same firm belief with the Psalmist, that this God in Christ is our God in Christ, let us adopt his plan, and end the Psalm, as we began it, in the assurance of his everlasting unchanging love, of all covenant purposes, of redemption in his dear Son; and sing aloud his praises, *whose mercy endureth for ever.*

REFLECTIONS.

SURELY this Psalm opens a most blessed view of Jesus; and it is hardly possible to go over the perusal of it, if the soul be at all awakened to the renewed enjoyment of her Lord, without being led by it to follow the footsteps of Him whom we love, through all his eventful ministry, until we see this rejected stone the head of the corner. Blessed Spirit! I would say, do thou, merciful Lord, in thy one gracious work of glorifying Jesus, lead out my heart, while reading this blessed scripture of thine, to trace Him, whom my soul loveth, through every part of it. And in the very opening of it, do I not see my Lord and Saviour assuming my nature for the purpose of salvation, and calling upon the Father, as this Psalm records, in his distress; until the Father heard and answered, and brought him forth into a large place? Do I not see the Father on his side, when strong bulls of Bashan beset him around, and when the assembly of the wicked enclosed him? And though all nations compassed him about, and were like bees, so thick upon him; yet in the name of Jehovah, how did our Lord overcome them! And shall I not with such believing views of the Lord Jesus, feel my whole soul going out after him, in love, and praise, and obedience, and affection; welcoming the coming Saviour, and standing astonished at such stupendous deeds as are connected with salvation, which are marvellous in our eyes?

Precious Jesus! thou foundation-stone, which Jehovah thy Father hath laid in Zion! on thee, Lord, may my soul rest her whole stress, for strength and help, for union and prosperity. Let those who know thee not, like the foolish Jewish builders, go on to reject thee. Alas! on whomsoever ultimately thou shalt fall, thou wilt grind them to powder. But oh! grant me, Lord, to rest wholly on thee, and as a lively stone, to be built up daily upon thee. Be thou to me, the rock of ages! Be thou to me, that blessed mountain, cut out without hands, that is to fill the earth! Fill thou, my soul, my whole heart, and all its affections! And be thou that one stone, upon which are seven eyes, that I may be everlastingly feasting myself with contemplating thy beauties, thy glories, thine excellencies, thy suitableness, and all-sufficiency, until I come to behold thy face in glory; that when I awake in thy likeness, I may be satisfied with thee.

PSALM CXIX.

CONTENTS.

*This Psalm is so very peculiar and distinguished from every other, that it would form a long chapter of contents to give the summary of it. Before the Reader enters upon it, I beg him to remark some of its most striking particulars. As, first, its great length, being more than double in point of quantity, the longest of all the Psalms besides. Next, the Reader should remark the division of it into twenty-two portions, corresponding to the Hebrew Alphabet, each portion consisting of eight verses, and beginning with the Hebrew letters, regular and in order as they stand in the grammar. The third particularity to be remarked, and which deserves much to be noticed, for the better apprehension of the Psalm throughout, is, that there are ten words, which every verse but one (namely the 122d) hath one or other of them in it: *namely*, the words WAY, LAW, TESTIMONIES, COMMANDMENTS, PRECEPTS, STATUTES, JUDGMENTS, WORD, RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH. Fourthly, and above all; one verse in it (namely, the 139th) demands the first and greatest attention, because it contains the words of Christ, My zeal hath consumed me; the well known words of Jesus. See John, ii. 17. Psalm lxi. 9. And it should seem as if the Holy Ghost had graciously designed, by the introduction of these memorable words in the midst of this Psalm, to lead the church to perceive the Lord Christ in and through every part of it. With these several particularities in view, and especially this last, let us enter upon the perusal, and may He who hath the Key of David open its blessed contents to our diligent researches after Him, that we may have expounded to us, by that infallible Teacher, the things herein contained concerning himself.*

ALEPH.

BLESSED are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

Aleph is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and designed, perhaps, on that account, to mark the first part of this Psalm. Some have thought that the division of this Psalm is according to the poetry of the Hebrews; but if so, we have lost all knowledge what that poetry means. The Holy Ghost, however, leads us to what is much more important to know, namely, how these scriptures shall make us *wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus*. The blessedness of the undefiled, or, as the Hebrew word might have been rendered, the *perfect*, is the first object in this psalm. And to whom shall we look for this undefiled, this perfect character, but to Him *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens?* Heb. vii. 26. Secondly, and subordinately to our view of Jesus in this verse, we may indeed safely consider all his redeemed in him, as blessed also; for they walk in him, and are one in him, who is himself *the way, the truth, and the life*, John, xiv. 6. I detain the Reader in this place to offer a short observation upon the word *Law*, one of those *ten words* which form so important a part in this

Psalm. By the word *torah*, a law, if we are to understand the law delivered by Moses, nothing can serve to prove more pointedly, that the whole must refer to Christ; for he, and he only, was perfect and undefiled in the law of the Lord; and *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. If we accept the word in this sense, wherever we meet with it through the whole Psalm, with reference to Jesus our law-fulfiller, what a beauty doth it throw over the whole of this blessed scripture, in beholding all pointing to Him, as so many rays of light to one centre, and forming a constellation in the person of Jesus, as being blessed as our glorious head, and blessing all his people in him! Precious, precious Jesus!

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

I beg the Reader very particularly to remark the alteration here made in the manner of expression, from what it was before. Here it is said, Blessed are *they* that keep his testimonies: implying *numbers*, namely, *the people of the Lord*. In the former verse the word *are* is in *Italics*, and might more properly have been *is*. And the *learned* Reader will know that the word *ashrei*, blessed, is only found a *noun-plural*, and is a proof of the beauty and fulness of the Hebrew language, because blessedness is not made up of any thing *single*, but from an assemblage of many things in one. And the *learned* Reader will know also, that this word is so used in the first verse of the first psalm; for the word is the same: "Blessed is the man," &c. But to return to the psalm before us; if I am right in supposing the first verse speaks wholly of Jesus, and this second verse wholly of his people; what a lovely and most interesting scripture hath the Holy Ghost given us? For then the sense will be, "Blessed is the Lord Jesus, the undefiled," &c. And then follows, "Blessed are they, his people, his redeemed, who keep his testimonies, and who seek him (that is Jesus) with their whole heart." And is not the whole analogy of scripture to this effect, *men shall be blessed in him?* There is not a blessing out of him; Psalm lxxii. 17. Ephes. i. 3. For the right apprehension of the word *testimonies*, we may have recourse to various scriptures. The tables of stone were called *the tables of testimony*, Exod. xxxi. 18; no doubt they were intended to refer to Christ; and in like manner there was a *tabernacle of testimony*, Exod. xxxviii. 21. And when Jesus tabernacled in substance of our flesh, was not that scripture fulfilled? *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them*, Rev. xxi. 3. Moreover, *the testimony of Jesus is said to be the spirit of prophecy*, Rev. xix. 10. And indeed the very word *testimony* is derived from a word, or root, intimating somewhat *future*. Therefore when it is said in this Psalm, "the people of God keep his testimonies," it carries with it an idea of believing *in* and resting *upon* God's testimonies of grace here, and glory hereafter, in and from the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

This is a precious verse. The new creature in Christ lives upon Christ; and as long as the soul thus lives upon him as his life and

source, he walks in him, and is living *to* him and *with* him. 1 Peter, ii. 2.

4 Thou hast commanded *us* to keep thy precepts diligently.

If we accept the word *precepts* in the first and most obvious sense of it, the diligent attention to the commandments of God will be, living to Christ. For when the Jews demanded of our Lord *what they must do, that they might work the works of God?* the Lord Jesus gave this answer, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*, John, vi. 28, 29. Faith in God's Christ is the foundation for right obedience to his precepts, Heb. xi. 6. But I rather conceive, that as the word *precepts* is derived from a root signifying a *superintending* or *visiting*, it refers to that act of a gracious soul, that is always on the look-out for the visits of Jesus in the influences of his Spirit. Here it may well be supposed that we are commanded to be diligent! here it may well be said by gracious souls, when visited and refreshed in the renewed tokens of Jesus's love: *Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness*, verse 40. But this could never be said of the moral or ceremonial law of Moses!

5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

Here again, we cannot possibly conceive that the word *statutes* hath a reference to the statutes of Moses. *The law* (saith an apostle) *having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect*, Heb. x. 1. But if we explain the word, as the original will allow, as referring to the *design* and *will* of Jehovah in the gracious plan of salvation in the one ordinance of Christ; then it will be evident, that the sacred writer desireth above all things, to have his whole mind directed to Jesus, and to be kept in those statutes which proclaim salvation wholly in and by him.

6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

Here we find what confidence the truly regenerated soul is put in possession of, when living upon Jesus as Jehovah hath appointed. All the commandments will be alike the delight of such a soul. And the holiness of Jehovah will be as dear and precious to the believer as any other of the divine perfections; because *in the Lord shall one say, I have righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come, and all that believe in him shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end*. Isaiah, xlv. 17—24.

7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

If by *judgments* were meant the strict letter of God's law, how is it possible to conceive that the Psalmist should express himself, as he hath in this Psalm, in love with them? *My soul* (saith he) *breaketh for the*

longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times, verse 20. But if by judgments, considered with reference to Christ, the believer beholds God's righteous servant justifying many in bearing their iniquities; what a different aspect is immediately put upon the term. Then it may be truly said; I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself, verse 52. As if he had said, Because I now see in thy judgments how Christ hath fully answered them; then the Lord Jehovah can be just and yet the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. iii. 26.

8 I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

The sum and substance of all this divine meditation, here folds up in this pious resolution, formed by grace; seeing that in Jesus, his people are undefiled, are enabled to keep his testimonies, to love his precepts, to delight in his statutes, and have respect unto all his commandments: Oh! the happy state of the redeemed in Christ Jesus, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit!* Keep me then, Lord, in this way *by thine almighty power, through faith unto salvation. Rom. viii. 1. 1 Peter, i. 5.*

BETH.

9 Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

The question here put, and with which this second part opens, is not simply intended for the youthful part, but for all. And the answer, in referring to Christ the *uncreated* word, and to the scriptures of Christ the *written* word, plainly manifests its reference to be universal. And I cannot but beg the Reader, that as he passeth through the whole of this beautiful Psalm, whenever he comes to the expression, *WORD*, he will pause over it, and examine whether it is not spoken of the person of *Him*, who is the eternal *WORD*, that in the beginning was with God, and is God. Oh! how blessed to look to him in all things! John i. 1.

10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

After the explanation which I endeavoured very humbly to offer in the first part, concerning the several words there made use of, and which we meet with again here: it will only be necessary to examine the terms with reference to these devout breathings, to see their correspondence. And I pray the great Teacher of his people to give both him that writes, and him that reads, *a right understanding in all things*. Blessed Lord! I would say for both, grant us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that we may never forget thy word, but may be everlastingly feasting our souls upon the fullness of Him *that filleth all in all*.

GIMEL.

17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that* I may live and keep thy word.

18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

19 *I am* a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

20 My soul breaketh for the longing *that it hath* unto thy judgments at all times.

21 Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

23 Princes also did sit *and* speak against me: *but* thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

24 Thy testimonies also *are* my delight, *and* my counsellors.

Here are again many very gracious and fervent breathings after divine favour, which need nothing explanatory by way of comment. Some of them very highly correspond with what might be supposed to be the language of Jesus as the great head and surety of his people. And when we consider the grace and condescension of the Son of God, in his assumption of our nature, and that *it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren*, we cannot but feel a particular satisfaction, and holy joy, whenever we see him going before us in all the paths of duty. Reader! how shall you and I find equal encouragement as when we look up to the ever-blessed Jesus, who, *though Lord of all, yet became servant of all, that we through his poverty might be made rich?* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

DALETH.

25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.

27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.

30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid *before me*.

31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.

32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

These verses compose the *fourth* part of this divine Psalm. Whether David, the supposed writer of it, thus complains in himself; or whether it means the Son of David, who in another part declares, that *he is brought into the dust of death*, I am not able to determine; Psalm, xxii. 15. But if, as the sinner's surety, Jesus was thus brought down to the earth, well may it be supposed that our souls cleave to the dust. O for grace, everlastingly to be sending forth the prayer of faith, to be quickened with continued renewings in Christ Jesus! The melting of soul, and the enlargement of the heart, are sweet and gracious feelings, when under divine influences. Lord! I would say, grant these blessed effects from day to day, in Christ Jesus!

HE.

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; *and* quicken thou me in thy way.

38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is *devoted* to thy fear.

39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments *are* good.

40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

How very beautiful is this portion of the psalm, considered as descriptive of the work of the Holy Ghost. It is his blessed province, and from his great love to the persons of Christ's people, he delights in it, to *teach*, and to *lead* to Christ, and to *give* us a spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of him. And he not only thus teacheth the way, but makes us, by inclining our hearts, to *go* in the way, and in the path of his commandments. And it is most blessed indeed to wait, and to observe the tendencies of his visits and his grace towards us. His it is to *quicken* also the soul, and to renew us again after many relapses, and the wanderings and coldness of our minds. Oh! blessed and almighty Teacher! of thy grace and goodness, do thou work all these tokens of thy favour in me, and bless me in Christ; for it is *thou that worketh in us, both to will and to do of thy good pleasure*, Philip, ii. 13. John, xiv. 26.

VAU.

41 Let thy mercies also come unto me, O LORD; *even* thy salvation, according to thy word.

42 So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.

43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of thy mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.

44 So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.

45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

46 I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

47 And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.

48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

The Reader will not need information that Jesus is Jehovah's salvation unto the ends of the earth; Isaiah, xlix. 6. And the answers of Jesus to those that reproached him, are fully set forth in the gospel; Psalm, lxi. 7—9. Christ is not only the law-fulfiller; but the law of God was in his very heart; Psalm xl. 8. And as Jesus hath made his

people free, they are free indeed; John, viii. 36. What a memorable testimony was that of Jesus before Pontius Pilate, when he witnessed a good confession! 1 Tim. vi. 13. It is very blessed to behold the Lord Jesus in all those leadings in the exercise and path of duty. While we see Jesus delighting himself in his Father's law, fulfilling and obeying every tittle of it in our nature, for us and for our salvation; with what holy confidence may we come before the throne, and seek acceptance in him the beloved! Hence the whole church is represented as crying out, with uplifted hands, to Jehovah, *Behold, O God, our shield! and look upon the face of thine anointed,* Psalm lxxxiv. 9.

ZAIN.

49 Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

50 This *is* my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

51 The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

53 Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.

56 This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

While we contemplate the ever-blessed Jesus thus hanging upon the promises of the Father, we may in him, and through him, humbly adopt the same language, and remind God our Father of all his covenant-promises in Christ. See particularly Psalm xxii. 7—11. Jesus always cast himself thus upon his Father's covenant engagements. Hence through the whole course of his life, and in death, Jesus had an eye to that support promised him. And hence God's promises. See Psalm lxxxix. 26. But, unless we look at Christ as the whole of the covenant, not a promise can we plead; neither can we expect relief, but in and from him, and for his sake; 2 Cor. i. 20. Never was there any thing more true than what is here said of the derision of the proud, considered with reference to Christ. He was counted a blasphemer, a sabbath-breaker, a friend of publicans and sinners; and was made the song of the drunkard; Psalm lxix. 11, 12. What a sweet verse is this, which speaks of Christ comforting himself in the remembrance of Jehovah's judgments of old, namely, the everlasting covenant, that when Christ *had made his soul an offering for sin, he should see his seed,* Isaiah, liii. 10. And ought not the believer to take comfort from the same cause, amidst all the exercises he meets with in his warfare?

There is a rest, even Jesus, that remaineth for the people of God, Heb. iv. 9. Isaiah, xxviii. 12. And doth not this verse, which speaks of horror taking hold upon him, refer to Christ's soul agonies in the garden? Who shall enter into the full apprehension of Jesus's exercises in that solemn season? Luke, xxii. 41—44. But as Jesus reposed himself in God's faithfulness and covenant love to himself and people; so, Reader, let us take these statutes, founded on the love, and made secure to Jesus and his people by the oath and promise of Jehovah, and make them our songs also in this house of our pilgrimage. This will give us sweet remembrance from the Holy Ghost, the Remembrancer in the night. And this we shall assuredly enjoy, because our great Law-fulfiller, both in his obedience and death, hath secured the everlasting salvation of his people!

CHETH.

57 *Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.*

58 *I intreated thy favour with my whole heart; be merciful unto me according to thy word.*

59 *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*

60 *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

61 *The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law.*

62 *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*

63 *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.*

64 *The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.*

This eighth part of this lovely Psalm opens most beautifully, in which we clearly behold Jesus as the speaker. The royal Prophet, under the Spirit's influence (as Peter was commissioned to explain) in the person of Christ, declared Jehovah to be his portion in another Psalm. And here the same is repeated. See Psalm xvi. 5, compared with Acts, ii. 22—31. Reader! it is blessed to see Jesus thus claiming the Father as his portion, for in this we find our claim in Jesus as our portion. And having the key at the door, in this part of the Psalm, to open to Christ, we may safely go through the whole of it, with an eye to him. And so far will this ever be from lessening our interest in what is said, that it strengthens our claims tenfold. Nay, without reference to the ever-blessed Jesus, no son or daughter of Adam can presume to say what is here said: *For who hath made his heart clean? Who is it that hath made haste and delayed not to keep the Lord's commandments? Who is it that hath never forgotten God's law?*

Prov. xx. 9. But when we behold Christ in his all perfect obedience; and by faith behold Christ the common head and representative of all his church, as one with his people, who are beheld and accepted in him; we enter into the full enjoyment of these sweet and precious scriptures, and take interest in all that concerns him. And how blessed then becomes the promise of the Father: *I have said* (saith Jehovah) *mercy shall be built up for ever.* How? *I have made a covenant with my chosen: I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever.* Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4. Oh! the mercy of God in Christ!

TETH.

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

68 Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

69 The proud have forged a lie against me: *but* I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.

70 Their heart is as fat as grease; *but* I delight in thy law.

71 *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

72 The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

As the *first* verse of the foregoing portion proved that Jesus was the speaker; so the *last* verse of this portion as plainly points to the same. None but the ever-blessed Jesus had such testimony to give as this. But of him the Prophet sang, *The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found on his lips*, Malachi, ii. 6. And hence the church intreated, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*, Song, i. 2. And wherefore? Because (saith another scripture) *grace is poured into his lips, therefore God hath blessed him for ever?* Psalm xlv. 2. Reader! is it not precious thus to view Christ, and to know our interest in him? What a beauty appears in this whole Psalm, in beholding Jesus as the sum and substance of it! for then we behold an exact correspondence. We see the precepts of Jehovah kept with *a whole heart*; not one departure, not a single omission. The excellencies of our Jesus are all pure and unmixed: whereas with the best of his people, so much imperfection mingles, that there is nothing to be depended upon. But Jesus is *the altogether lovely*; comprehensive of all that is fair, and holy, and good; and excluding every thing that is unpleasant, and unamiable. Oh! for grace to look to Christ; and from the continued communications of his love, to feel, and know, and enjoy, our interest

in him!—Let not the Reader hesitate over these scriptures in making application of them to Christ, because he hears the confession: *Before I was afflicted I went astray*, and the like; let him recollect, that in all those scriptures the holy Sufferer is speaking as the sinner's surety, enduring the curse which the law denounced against the sinner, and consequently confessing in the sinner's name the divine justice of God, in taking vengeance for sin. Hence, being made sin, and then a curse for his people; he thus speaks in the sinner's person: see Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21. Hence we find in other scriptures similar expressions: *Mine iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me*, Psalm xxxviii. 3, 4. That the Prophet is speaking in the person of the Redeemer, in these and the like scriptures, is evident from the other parts connected with them: see verses 13, 14, compared with Isaiah, liii. 7, and Matt. xxvii. 12, 13, 14. Reader! when you have duly pondered these grand points of redemption, I trust and hope, your views of these portions of the Psalm will be more plain. May the Lord give both you and me *a right understanding in all things!*

JOD.

73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

74 They that fear thee, will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.

75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and *that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.

77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law *is* my delight.

78 Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: *but* I will meditate in thy precepts.

79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.

80 Let my heart be found in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

With most peculiar reference to the ever-blessed Jesus must we read the opening of this portion. *A body hast thou prepared me*, was said by Christ when beholding the redemption work he came to perform. Heb. x. 5, compared with Psalm xl. 6. And in another scripture the same truth is expressed, only with a variation of words? *My substance*

was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Compare Psalm cxxxix. 15, 16, with Luke, i. 35. And how delightful is the succeeding verse in reference to the Lord's people; all in whom the Lord hath put his fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, must rejoice in Christ, *the mercy promised*, to whom all the faithful were looking with earnest expectation. Prov. ix. 10. Luke, i. 27. ii. 25. The following verses are in sweet harmony with the same doctrine.

CAPH.

81 My soul fainteth for thy salvation: *but* I hope in thy word.

82 Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

83 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; *yet* do I not forget thy statutes.

84 How many *are* the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?

85 The proud have digged pits for me, which *are* not after thy law.

86 All thy commandments *are* faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.

87 They had almost consumed me upon earth: but I forsook not thy precepts.

88 Quicken me after thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

The opening of this portion is also very beautiful, in reference to the Lord Jesus, who waited with longing expectation for the time of his being manifested unto Israel. Hence we find him, in the days of his flesh, longing for the time of his baptism, as he graciously called it; and as being straitened until it was accomplished, Luke, xii. 50. He seemed to long for the hour; and hence, through the whole of the Old Testament dispensation, all the ordinances instituted were types and shadows of good things to come, as if to tell his people that he waited with anxiety for the period to arrive, when he should enter upon the work of redemption, which he had covenanted with the Father to perform, for the saving of his church and people. Reader! it is a blessed thing, when the souls of the redeemed faint for Jesus and his salvation, in their ardent desires after him, as Jesus fainted with holy longings for finishing the work the Father gave him to do. Psalm xlii. 1, 2. It is no small beauty in this portion of the Psalm, that as the first verse opens with an account of the soul's fainting with longing desires; so the last verse ends with earnest cries, for the quickening influences of the Spirit. Reader! I do not know what correspondence your experience

may have to these things; but I know that the souls of God's people, who most desire to feel the faintings after Jesus, will complain most of standing in need of his quickening influences. Oh! for grace to improve the love of Jesus to the soul, by going in that love after farther discoveries of his love and grace, and panting after larger, fuller, and more frequent manifestations of it continually. Precious Jesus! grant me this mercy, and let me have continual actings of faith upon thy glorious person and righteousness, until my whole soul is filled with thee, and thy love! Song, ii. 5.

LAMED.

89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

90 Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

91 They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.

92 Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

93 I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me!

94 I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.

95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies.

96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

Here is a beautiful address to Jehovah, in contemplation of his own eternal nature, the everlasting purposes and unchangeableness of his councils, and all his ordinances, providences, and dispensations, as purposed in Jesus, the uncreated Word, before the world began! And in the contemplation of these, the great Surety of sinners may be supposed as here speaking, that unless the faithfulness of Jehovah had sustained him, he must have perished in the vast undertaking. Never can the people of God be too firmly, or too frequently, established in the assurance of these great things of God. When Christ undertook the redemption of his people, and engaged, as such, to take their name and their nature; he had an eye to the Father's engagements and promises through the whole. Not only had Jehovah promised to fit him for the work, by causing *the Spirit of the Lord to rest upon him*, and giving him *the Spirit without measure*; but to assist him through every part, and to carry him safely through all: and in the end *to make his throne as the days of heaven*. Hence therefore, with reference to these gracious purposes, the Prophet may be supposed, in this portion, to be introducing Christ as looking forward to the period of his advent with firm dependence, and embarking in the vast design in full assurance,

agreeably to what is said in the succeeding verses. Compare Isaiah, xi. 2. John. iii. 34. Psalm lxxxix. 29.

MEM.

97 O how love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day.

98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they *are* ever with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Reader! let us listen to these sweet words, as the words of Jesus. Let us beg of God the Holy Ghost to give us grace to feel and know our interest in what he here saith, from our interest in him. And let us look up to God our Father, while we hear Jesus thus expressing, in our nature, his love to the law of the Father, his regard to all his commandments, and his uniform, undeviating rectitude in all he came to perform, and plead in his name and righteousness for every covenant blessing which becomes the right of his redeemed, by virtue of divine promises in the salvation by Jesus. Yes! thou blessed Lamb of God! thy Father's law was the whole of thy delight by day, and the heavenly bodies, in their travelling circuit, witnessed thy meditation by night. All that were before thee were servants only, ministering to thy word: Prophets and Patriarchs knew nothing compared to thy knowledge, the wonderful Counsellor of thy people. Give me to taste of thy grace and love, thou divine almighty Teacher, and may the meditation of my heart be so sweetly engaged on thee, that my lips may drop as the honeycomb, and the name of Jesus be the first and last in my mouth all the day.

NUN.

105 Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

106 I have sworn, and I will perform *it*, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

107 I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

108 Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.

109 My soul *is* continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

110 The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

111 Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.

112 I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, *even unto* the end.

I pass over several very interesting observations which might be offered on the verses in this portion, (for there is not a part of them but is well calculated to make our meditation sweet); but I pass them over to call the Reader's attention, and my own, to that very precious thought, contained in these expressions, as considered with reference to Jesus: *Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offering of my mouth.* I beg that I may be clearly understood on this grand point. According to my apprehension, it is the willingness of Christ in his *human nature*, which is here spoken of, and which is highly proper to be considered, and well weighed and pondered in our thoughts; for it gives validity, importance, and efficacy, to the meritorious sacrifice. The human nature of Jesus, as distinct from the divine nature, had a distinct will also: for although, in the assumption of the human nature for the purposes of salvation, the Son of God coming into the world, putting his name among creatures, and entering into covenant engagements before the world began; though these purposes were solely in the acts and transactions of the Persons of the Godhead, yet the free will and full consent of the human nature, when taken into union with the Son of God, and becoming one Christ by the junction of both, became necessary to make the offering of Christ's body a free-will sacrifice. Now, without enlarging on this subject, doth not such a view of Jesus in his human nature, thus speaking, and thus acting, refresh the soul? *Thy law, saith Jesus, in another Psalm, is within my heart; not put there, but habitually there, formed there; or in a stronger expression, as the margin hath it, in the midst of my bowels.* Psalm xl. 8. Either of which phrases would be unsuitable, and indeed improper to be applied in the least respect to the *divine nature*, and can be only meant of the *human*. So that God's holy law is natural to his holy nature. And his zeal for that law made all his services, in the human nature as well as the divine, altogether free and voluntary. May my soul feel the blessedness of this

view of Jesus! Here then is seen in our great Head and Husband, a holy nature, devoted to Jehovah. And such (by virtue of his people's union with him) are his people also. Hosea, ii. 19, 20. Jerem. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30.

SAMECH.

113 I hate *vain* thoughts: but thy law do I love.

114 Thou *art* my hiding-place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

115 Depart from me, ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.

116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit *is* falsehood

119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.

120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee: and I am afraid of thy judgments.

After the observations which have been proposed upon the foregoing portions of this most blessed Psalm, the Reader will not be surprised, neither, I hope, offended, if I go on to accept this portion also as having respect to the person of Jesus, first speaking himself, and then as the proper devout sentiments of all his people; for without considering our relation to him, sure I am, the sentiments can never suit the minds of a fallen race, like the sons and daughters of Adam. Hate vain thoughts we may, and a certain degree of love to God's law may also be within. But these sensations can only arise in our minds through our relationship to Jesus. *How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* is the inquiry of the prophet, Jerem. iv. 14. And Paul hath set it down as a truth perfectly incontrovertible, that *the carnal mind is enmity against God: that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; and they that are in the flesh cannot please God*, Rom. viii. 7, 8. And though the mind be renewed by grace, still *in the flesh dwelleth no good thing*: The man that thinks otherwise, only manifests that he is a stranger to his own corruptions, and Paul's experience. None but Jesus could truly take up the language of this sweet portion. He whose nature was altogether *holy, harmless, unde-*

filed, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, and in the midst of whose bowels his Father's law was by nature formed, could say, I hate vain thoughts: thy law do I love.

AIN.

121 I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.

122 Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.

123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

125 I *am* thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

126 *It is* time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.

127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.

How sweetly do these words become Christ! but who, except Christ, could ever use them? One might be led to conclude, from the very many similar examples we meet with in the book of Psalms, that this precious book of God would be more generally regarded than it is, by those who are in the habit of frequently reading it, as speaking in the person of Christ. Who, for instance, that reads the fifteenth Psalm, of the man that *walketh uprightly, worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth from his heart*; or again, the *twenty-sixth Psalm*, where the speaker saith, *I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord*; who would possibly conceive that any man should be so blind as to fancy that any, but the ever blessed Jesus, could assume such language? Reader! I know not what views you may have hitherto taken up with, of moral goodness among men; but I pray God to give you in due season a real conviction of heart, that nothing short of the righteousness of Jesus can correspond to such language, and therefore none but Jesus can be supposed to say, *I have done judgment and justice*. How Jesus longed for the salvation of his people, every part of his ministry manifested; so that when he said, "his eyes failed for it," it shewed the love he had to his redeemed. And how his holy soul delighted in glorifying his Father's laws, and in magnifying that law, and making it honourable! Sweet and precious consideration to the minds of his people!

PE.

129 Thy testimonies *are* wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

131 I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

134 Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.

135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.

136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

The verses in this portion form a beautiful reduplication of the same delightful truths. It is Jesus speaking through the whole of them, in his human nature, as the Head and Representative of his people. And when we consider that it is herein he comes home so very sweetly caressed to our hearts, because we see in him the holiness of our nature, and our acceptance in him; nothing surely can be more blessed than to be always looking unto Jesus as the perfection of beauty! But, Reader! think, when Jesus hath thus engaged and entered into covenant agreements for his people, that they shall be accepted in him, and be made comely in his comeliness; how wretched the return, in slighting him and his righteousness! It forms an interesting portrait of Jesus in the days of his flesh, his mourning over Jerusalem: and if this passage refers to him, *rivers of water run down, because of the ingratitude and inattention of his people*, it may serve to teach us how great is his love. Lamb of God! grant that I may never grieve thy Spirit by a neglect of thy love, and rebellion against thy gracious commands. Oh! for grace to follow thee in the regeneration: and as *He who hath called us is holy, so may we be holy in all manner of conversation!*

TZADDI.

137 Righteous *art* thou, O LORD, and upright *are* thy judgments.

138 Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded, *are* righteous and very faithful.

139 My zeal hath consumed me: because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

140 Thy word *is* very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

141 I *am* small and despised: *yet* do not I forget thy precepts.

142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and thy law *is* the truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: *yet* thy commandments *are* my delights.

144 The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

In this portion is that memorable verse which throws a light upon the whole Psalm, and fully authorises us to apply many parts of it directly to the person of Jesus. The passage is, *My zeal hath consumed me*. Independently of the royal prophet, David, in another Psalm, applying it to Christ (Psalm lxi. 9) and of the disciples in the temple doing the same (John ii. 17); certain it is, none but Christ could ever with truth use such language. No! thou blessed Lord! none but thine heart ever so glowed with zeal for God's glory. And thy zeal for thy Father's glory, added to the love thou hast had from everlasting to the eternal welfare of thy people, made thine heart burn with holy ardour, so as to prey upon thy strength, and at an early age induce all the marks of a worn-out frame and debility of body. Oh! Lord! grant me a portion of thy earnestness; I beseech thee, that, like one of thy servants, I may not count my life dear to myself, but determine that *Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or death; that to me to live may be Christ, and to die may be gain*, Phil. i. 20, 21.

KOPH.

145 I cried with *my* whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.

146 I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.

147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.

148 Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches, that I might meditate in thy word.

149 Hear my voice according unto thy loving-kindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.

150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief, they are far from thy law.

151 Thou *art* near, O LORD; and all thy commandments *are* truth.

152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

These verses give us an interesting view of Jesus, and are descriptive of some of those conflicts, under which he was constrained to lift up his voice to God his Father, with strong cryings and tears. Learning as a Son (saith the apostle) obedience by *the things which he suffered*. When we consider the extent of those sufferings, their cause, and the vast and eternal ends to be accomplished by them; and when we consider moreover the nature into which Christ put himself, and the load of guilt in that nature, which Christ took upon himself when he died, the *just for the unjust, to bring us unto God*; we may estimate in some degree, how Jesus, the holy, patient, meek, and suffering Jesus, might be supposed to *cry with his whole heart*, and to cry out from the deep of soul distress, *Save me! hear my voice, according to thy loving-kindness!* and thus to cast himself upon his Father. Dear Lord! help me, in my little exercises, to keep in remembrance thy bright and glorious example. Make me to consider thee, who didst endure *such contradiction of sinners against thyself, lest I be weary and faint in my mind*. Oh! thou gracious High Priest! may I ever keep in view thy blessed pattern, and the sweet and consoling instruction it carries with it; that *in that thou thyself hast suffered, being tempted, thou art able to succour them that are tempted*.

RESH.

153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.

154 Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.

155 Salvation *is* far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

156 Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.

157 Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies; *yet* do I not decline from thy testimonies.

158 I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.

159 Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy loving-kindness.

160 Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and

every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

The same cries of soul are continued through this portion as in the former; and we may, without any forced construction of the words, consider what is here said as peculiarly applicable to the meek and suffering Jesus. Indeed, without respect to Him, the language would lose all its energy: for in relation to all the church of Christ, and all his people, we may well take up the language of the prophet, and say, *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* Lament. iii. 39. But when we see Christ acting in all he did and suffered for us, and in our stead; when we recollect that though Jesus thus cried, and thus suffered, in himself, *he had done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*; who but must take interest in these cries of the Son of God, when for us, and not for himself, those sufferings and cries were all induced! I detain the Reader to make one remark on a passage in this portion, which indeed we have met with several times before: but one observation may serve for all, I mean the cry put up for the Lord's quickening Spirit. No less than *nine times* in the several portions of this Psalm, do we find this cry of the soul; *Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness*. Blessed Spirit! I would say, do thou mercifully quicken those souls of ours, which cleave to the dust. Penetrate them, - Lord; enlighten them; soften, revive, and bring them forth from all their languishing circumstances: thou knowest that none can quicken, none can give life, none can keep alive, none can restore his own soul. Raise up then, thou almighty Lord! raise up our souls, that by thy grace and power, we may ascend in heavenly affections and desires after Jesus, that our lives being *hid with Christ in God, when Christ who is our life shall appear, we may appear with him in glory*. Coloss. iii. 3, 4.

SCHIN.

161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

162 I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

163 I hate and abhor lying: *but* thy law do I love.

164 Seven times a day do I praise thee: because of thy righteous judgments.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

166 LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.

167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways *are* before thee.

Still prosecuting the same subject of suffering, here are the same petitions lodged before the throne. The apostle to the Hebrews was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to teach the church some very sweet and leading truths, by way of accommodating the example of Jesus to his people: *It became him* (saith the apostle) *for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* And, as if this was not enough, that every poor, exercised, tried, and buffeted believer might know where to apply in his affliction, with an assurance of being heard and answered; the apostle was taught to and, that those exercises of the ever blessed Jesus were intended partly by way of example, and partly by way of being the better fitted to administer aid to his afflicted ones. *Wherefore* (saith the apostle) *in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;* Heb. ii. 16, 17. Reader! let you and I think of this, and if possible never lose sight of it. Our great Intercessor was once a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He knows what our troubled days now are by his own. And he can and will give all suited grace, strength, and final deliverance. Precious Jesus! methinks I now hear thee by the ear of faith, in thine high priestly office, saying, *Holy Father! keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are,* John, xvii. 11.

TAU.

169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.

170 Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.

171 My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.

173 Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

174 I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law *is* my delight.

175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

There is but little variation in this portion from the former. Jesus taught his disciples, *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, Luke, xviii. 1; and here he sets the example. I do not think it necessary to enlarge upon this portion, nor indeed, after what hath been said, to detain the Reader with any further observations by way of comment. And shall only from one general reflection upon the whole, desire to close this Psalm, with recommending both the Reader and the few imperfect remarks interspersed in the review of it, together to the grace of God wherein we stand. If this beautiful Psalm be, according to the ideas here given of it, designed as specially looking to, and descriptive of, the person, offices, character, and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ; I shall find cause to bless God if such views as have been offered tend, as the Holy Ghost plainly in that case designed this psalm, to endear the Lord Jesus more and more to the heart, and thereby to form him therein *the hope of glory*. In this case the meditations suggested so often by the statutes, testimonies, precepts, judgments, and the like, which run through the whole Psalm, will have a still greater tendency to endear Jesus and his fulness to the soul. And while we make him, what the whole Bible makes him, the *Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end; the first and the last; the author and finisher of salvation*; we shall be following up God the Father's will in his appointment of Christ as the one ordinance of salvation to sinners; and God the Spirit's design in glorifying the Lord Christ in all. Reader! the Lord mercifully grant these blessed ends may be accomplished, from our review of this sweet Psalm; and blessed be our Jesus for manifesting himself to us through every part of it, that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ! Amen.

PSALM CXX.

CONTENTS.

Here are the breathings of a devout soul under distress; and the soul finding confidence at the mercy-seat, reproves some ungodly person that assaulted him.

A Song of degrees.

IN my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

I detain the Reader at the opening of this Psalm, just to make a short observation on the title, which is quite new, and which is first placed at the head of this Psalm, and then at the head of *fourteen* others which immediately follow. It is called *a song of degrees*. But what the term means is all matter of conjecture: the most generally received opinion is, that those *fifteen* songs were composed for the temple service. The great point for believers to be interested about, is to discover Christ in them. And if we find him in *any and in every degree*, the Psalm will be blessed. If we discern nothing of him through the Psalm, it will not in any degree prove profitable. I venture to think, however, that principally with reference to Jesus by the Spirit of prophecy was this Psalm written. Some have thought that David wrote it

about the matter of *Doeg*, in his accusing David to Saul, 1 Sam. xxii. 9, 10, 18. But really the subject of David's personal distresses, however great to himself, could not be sufficiently interesting to become a subject for the temple service. If, however, we drop *Doeg*, and hold up *Judas*; and if we consider the exercises of the Lord Jesus, David's Lord, on account of this traitor; in this sense the Psalm becomes truly great and interesting; and we shall then find occasion to bless the Holy Ghost that, a thousand years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, he graciously taught the church such things concerning her Lord. The first prominent feature in this Psalm, is the cry of the soul, and the sure answer of Jehovah: so saith Paul concerning Christ, *who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, was heard in that he feared*, Heb. v. 7.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips,
and from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall
be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of
juniper.

If we read another Psalm to this effect, and which hath been always considered as referring to Jesus, we shall find how the holy sufferer complains of false witnesses rising up against him. Psalm xxxv. 11—18. And the awful event which terminated the life of the traitor Judas, may well be compared to what is here said of sharp arrows from God and coals of juniper, meaning no doubt eternal misery. Acts, i. 16—19. Mark, ix. 42—48.

5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I
dwell in the tents of Kedar!

6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that
hateth peace.

7 I am for peace: but when I speak, they are
for war.

Reading these words with reference to Christ, we may well suppose that the exercises of his holy soul from day to day, were great in the society of those with whom he was constrained, as the sinner's surety, to sojourn. Hence we find him saying, *O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you?* Matt. xvii. 17. But chiefly with Judas whom Christ knew from the first should betray him, and whom Christ called a *devil*. John, xiii. 11. John, vi. 70, 71. Reader! if such were the exercises of Jesus, think it not strange that his people are constrained to dwell as in the tents of Kedar, the Ishmaelites of the present day. As Kedar was the son of Ishmael; so the opposers of the Lord Jesus now are found in the posterity of those born after the flesh. And Jesus saith, *Let both grow together until the harvest*. But it is sweet to discriminate grace from nature: and as they are frequently found together in the same house,

the same family, nay, the same person; doth not the same Lord overrule such events to his glory, and his people's everlasting welfare? Gen. xxv. 13. Gal. iv. 28, 29. Matt. xiii. 30. Gal. v. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over the solemn consideration which this Psalm suggests, of the wretched life, and more wretched death of the opposers of Christ and his gospel. In the traitor Judas we behold a lively representation of all. They are by the agency of the evil spirit, who is said to work in the children of disobedience, enlisted into his service, wear his livery, and delight themselves in opposing the children of the kingdom. And what is the sure end of those men? *The wages of sin is death.* O my soul, come not thou into their secret! unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.

But let me turn from the sad contemplation of such men to look at Jesus, and in his soul exercises with the ungodly find consolation to carry my mind through all the trifling oppositions I meet with in the tents of Kedar, and the neighbourhood of Mesech. Yes! thou adorable Lord, in thee and thy bright example I have an everlasting resource to bear me up, and bear me out, and carry me through every difficulty. Let the world frown, and the ungodly oppose; yet a little while and such will be clean gone; I shall look after his place and he will be cut off. Lord Jesus, be thou my home, my dwelling-place, my habitation, my joy, my portion, my all; *so shall no plague come nigh my dwelling, neither the foot of the ungodly cast me down.*

PSALM CXXI.

CONTENTS.

This is a very beautiful Psalm, if read first with reference to Jesus, and then as suited to his people in him. Its general contents are, the full confidence there is in God's Christ, at all times, for his people. Some have recommended it to the traveller; and some have thought it suitable for the soldier and mariner. But every traveller to Zion may profitably use it; and so may every true soldier of Jesus Christ while Christ is kept in view.

A Song of degrees.

I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

In the margin of our old Bibles this first verse is read by way of question; "Shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills? Whence should my help come?" And if the verse be read in this way of inquiry, the answer is given in another scripture: *Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel,* Jerem. iii. 23. But though this would be a beautiful method of inquiry, and as delightful an answer to a seeking soul to prompt the heart to rest on Jesus; yet I rather think the Psalm hath a more pointed direction to the Lord Jesus. The temple, it is well known, was

built on the holy hill of Zion. Mount *Moriah*, that memorable mount, was not far remote. And as the temple in which was the ark, was an eminent type of Christ; may we not consider this verse as the pious resolution, arising from the teaching of the Spirit of some Old Testament saint, who saw the day of Christ afar off, rejoiced and was glad, and therefore was looking to God's Christ as his help, and rock, and Saviour? Read in this point of view, it is yet sweeter than the former. But, Reader! is there not a still higher view of these words, if we read them as the words of Christ himself? Looking unto Jesus in his human nature, as the sinner's surety, and husband, and representative; voluntarily standing up for the Redemption of his people; the Lamb of God cries out, *I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help*: that is, staying himself upon the Father in his covenant promises, to carry him through his vast undertaking, which, like the strong mountains and everlasting hills, abide for ever. For is it not to Jesus that very scripture is spoken? *The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* Isaiah, liv. 10. I do not presume so to say, but I think it makes the Psalm more beautiful, so to read it. And as it tends in this point of view to endear Christ, so it tends no less equally to endear to the believer the love of God the Father. For it shews the hand of God the Father to have been with Christ as his helper, and stay, in all redemption-work. And it gives faith a warrant to stay upon Christ, when thus beholding Christ as the Christ of God.

2 My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

From the opening of the Psalm under the several views which I have humbly offered, every part that follows will be easy to apprehend, without enlarging the comment. Every believing soul who looks to God in Christ for help, may well answer himself in this second verse, and say, with full assurance of faith, *My help cometh from the Lord.* And if the church of Jesus may safely assume this language while looking to her Lord; surely Christ in the days of his flesh might well be supposed to ground his dependence upon the covenant love and promises of God his Father. John ii. 41, 42.

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD *is* thy keeper: the LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand.

6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

8. The LORD shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.

How beautiful, how truly beautiful and soul-refreshing are these words, if considered, first, as spoken by God our Father to the person of his dear Son, as the Mediator and Head of the church; and then as spoken to all his people in him. Reader! do let me entreat you to pause over this beautiful Psalm, and see whether, under the divine teaching of the Holy Ghost, it doth not correspond to the general analogy of faith, to read it with reference to the ever blessed Jesus. And if so, what a most delightful scripture is it, to behold the sacred persons of the Godhead (as in other scriptures) thus addressing each other: Isaiah xlii. 42, 49, &c. Psalm lxxxix. Jesus having taken our nature into union with the Godhead for the purposes of redemption; now in that nature looks up for the promised help, to carry him safely and honourably through it. And God our Father, beholding with inexpressible complacency his dear Son as the sinner's surety, thus speaking to him in such a divine way of blessing, keeping, preserving, and conducting him, amidst the sun's heat, and the moon's influences, from every danger safely through the whole. Oh! for grace to look up and bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for this unequalled gift of his dear Son. Oh! for grace to adore the holy and eternal Spirit, both for having brought poor sinners acquainted with this love, and for giving us hearts to believe the record God hath given of his dear Son. And oh! for grace to be ever looking unto thee, thou dear Emmanuel, who though thou wert rich, yet for our sakes didst become poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich. Reader! while thus making Jesus the sum and substance of this divine Psalm, forget not that it is as the head of his church and people, that he thus appears. All the promises here made to him, are in him made to his people also. God in Christ is the keeper, the shade, the helper, the stay of all his redeemed. *He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness before him,* 1 Sam. ii. 9. In all the exercises of his faithful, in going out or coming home, Jesus will go before them, and the God of Israel will be their rereward. Oh! the blessedness of the Israel of God; oh! the glory, grace, and love of the God of Israel.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! methinks I would pass by all lesser considerations, to behold Jesus in this one sweet point of view, as thy Surety and thy Saviour, thus becoming the head of his church, and resting upon Jehovah's faithfulness for carrying him through the work of redemption. It is blessed, it is profitable, it is happiness itself, to contemplate Jesus in all his wonderful condescension. When the Son of God condescended to become man, he became subject to all that man is subject to, sin only excepted. And the holiness and purity of his nature, totally precluded the possibility of sin. But the weakness of our nature, and the infirmities of that nature in hungering, thirsting, weariness, and the like, as connected with a sinless nature—this, my soul, thy Surety,

thy Jesus knew. Behold him then, in this state, ready to engage in the service of Jehovah his Father, for the salvation of his chosen; and, as this Psalm represents, looking for help, and resting for that help on the faithfulness of Jehovah. And when thou hast looked to thy Jesus in this character long enough to feel thy whole affections going out after him in every tender regard; then contemplate thy covenant God and Father answering thy Redeemer's request, in all those blessed assurances here given, of support and power. And oh, my soul, rest for all thy own needful supplies, for every grace here, and glory hereafter, upon both these grand pillars, and ground of thy faith, the Father's covenant engagements, and the Son's merits and death. Receive Jesus as Jesus, the Father's gift to poor sinners, in all the glories of his own person, the sufficiency and efficacy of his satisfaction, and Jehovah's salvation to the ends of the earth. And while the Holy Ghost sets his seal to these blessed truths as they are in Jesus, commit all thy concerns into his Almighty hand, that in thy going out and in thy coming in, in time and to all eternity, Jesus may be thy hope, and thy portion for ever.

PSALM CXXII.

CONTENTS.

We have here the expressions of joy which the Israelites made use of, when inviting one another to go up to the house of God. The Psalm ends with a prayer for the peace and prosperity of the church and people.

A song of degrees of David.

I WAS glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

Beside the general title of this psalm as a song of degrees, it is added of *David*: by which we are to conclude that David was the author of it. And indeed it should seem probable from another consideration that he was the writer of it: for it was in the days of David that Jerusalem was first recovered out of the hand of the Jebusites. See 2 Sam. v. 6. Hence, therefore, from that time Jerusalem became the sacred spot of worship in the Zion of God. Hence, as Moses had foretold, the Lord chose to put his name there. Deut. xii. 11. This may serve to explain to us the cause of that holy joy, which all Israel felt and expressed in going up to worship. Reader! may we not gather a sweet lesson from it? Ought we not to catch the same flame and delight, both to go ourselves, and to invite every child of God to go with us, to the ordinances of Jesus? And both in going and in coming, ought not our conversation to be about Zion's king. *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* Have you seen the king in his beauty? Was he held by you in the galleries of his ordinances? Family worship, and public worship, ought to distinguish the followers of Jesus. It is sad to see a place vacant which God's people occupied. Psalm lxxxvii. 2.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

Reader! do mark with what rapture the Song speaks of even *standing* in the Lord's house. And was it so delightful to those who only had types and shadows of good things to come; what then ought to be

our joy under the full blessings of the gospel in Jesus? Prov. viii. 21. 34, 35. And if such the joy here below, what will it be when we enter the new Jerusalem which is above? Rev. xxi. 2—5.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

It is pleasant to observe how the Old Testament saints delighted themselves in dwelling upon the praise of their beloved Jerusalem. *Beautiful for situation* (saith one of them) *the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion; God is known in her palaces for a refuge*, Psalm xlvi. 2, 3. Hence they called it not only the *royal* city, as containing the throne of judgment; but the *holy* city, as furnishing a throne of grace. But the chief beauty was the divine presence. And as all this was a type of the gospel church, we ought to take part in this delight, and to consider well our higher privileges in enjoying the reality; Jesus, the desire of all nations, being come, and filling not only the house, but the hearts of his people, by the indwelling residence of his Spirit. Haggai, ii. 7. Ephes. iii. 17.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek thy good.

Having celebrated the praises of Jerusalem, the Psalmist here calls upon all the people to pray for its prosperity; and as a recommendation, declares that blessings shall attend all who do so. And finally he himself resolves, that, whatsoever be the resolution of others, he will seek its welfare. If we spiritualize these verses with an eye to the Zion of Jesus, and his brethren and companions, how doth the subject arise in glory! Blessed, indeed, is it to see the tribes going up thrice in a year to the Jerusalem of old; and the Lord defending their houses during their absence from every foe. Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24. But in the gospel Zion, Jesus holds a feast every day, and all the day, and through him we may have access continually to the Father by one Spirit. Ephes. ii. 18. And when the Lord shall finally bring home his people to the Jerusalem that is above, where the promise ruins, the ransomed of Zion shall return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; then will the church sit down upon the throne of Jesus, and dwell with him for ever. Reader, do see those sweet scriptures, Isaiah, xxxv. 10. Rev. iii. 12, 21, and xxi. 10, to the end.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, it will be no unprofitable improvement of this subject, if from a view of the love and zeal of the faithful Israelite towards his beloved Jerusalem, you and I examine whether we feel an equal warmth of affection to Jesus and his ordinances. Depend upon it, that among the present awful decays of vital godliness, the general disregard to the welfare of Zion becomes no small cause of those decays. If we were asked, as the church of old was, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* what would be our answer? If we love Zion, or in other words, love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, shall we not rejoice to promote his glory through the earth? Shall we not invite every one to come and take part in Jesus? Zion's children are new-born children; so saith the scripture: *When the Lord writeth up the people, it shall be said, This and that man was born in her.* Sweet thought! the children of Zion, the children of the great king, even Jesus, are new-born; they have turned their backs upon all other cities; their faces are Zion-ward; they speak the language, wear the garments, follow the employment of Zion's children. Their names are written among her citizens, and enrolled in the charter. Precious, precious Jesus! hast thou made me free of Zion? then am I free indeed. Oh! give me to see that thou hast written upon my soul thy new name; that I am washed in thy blood, clothed in thy robe of salvation; and have proved and do daily prove to whom I belong, in following thy courts, and dwelling in thy house, and sitting under the light of thy divine countenance. Then will that blessedness be my portion, and I shall *go from strength to strength, until every one (both sons and daughters) in Zion shall appear before God.*

PSALM CXXIII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm seems to send forth the cries of the soul under exercises. But amidst them all, we may perceive very strong expressions of firm confidence in God.

A Song of Degrees.

UNTO thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

It is a blessed thing when the soul, under exercises, is going out in dependence upon the Lord. The prophet remarks, under the burden of *Hadrach* (by which may be understood the Lord's exercised people under their burdens), that *the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be towards the Lord*, Zech. ix. 1. Hence, those many calls of the Lord to his people to be always looking unto him. *Behold me! behold me!* saith Jesus. *Look unto me and be ye saved!* *Behold the Lamb of God!* Isaiah, lxxv. 1. John, i. 29. Isaiah, xlv. 22. There is a most sublime beauty in this title given to the Lord: *O thou that dwellest in the heavens.* See Isaiah, lvii. 15.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

How do servants look unto their masters or mistresses, for every thing that concerns them? For employment, direction, help, food, countenance, shelter, in short, for every thing which poor needy servants, may be supposed to require. So then, but in an infinitely higher degree, would my soul look unto thee, thou blessed Lord and Master, Jesus! I need thee far more than all servants. Thou art my life, my light, my strength, my hope, my confidence, my portion, my guide, my protector, Saviour; in short, my all in all. Without thee, how, or in what shall I be employed? Who will sustain me, blessed Jesus, if thou dost not? What bread can my soul feed upon, but thou that art the *bread of God*, and the *living bread*, which cometh down from heaven. And shall I not be naked, and without a garment to cover me, to all eternity, except thou wilt clothe me with thy robe of righteousness? And who will guide me, unless thy blessed Spirit graciously condescend to direct thy poor pilgrim, through the waste and howling wilderness of this world? See, Lord! what a wretched state I am in but for thee. And shall not my *eyes wait for thee* with more earnestness than all the servants upon the earth are looking to their earthly masters? Yes! precious Jesus! I desire that my whole soul may be waiting for thee, *more than they that watch for the morning; yea, I say, more than they that watch for the morning*, Psalm cxxx. 6.

3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, *and* with the contempt of the proud.

Reader! it is lovely not only to have our eyes directed *unto* Jesus, but waiting *upon* Jesus; not only to give in our petition to the heavenly court; but to hang about the door until the king send out an answer. Earthly beggars teach us this lesson very powerfully. They never give over their clamorous importunity, whilst the least hope remains of being heard. But I fear that you and I too seldom follow up our petitions with holy waitings. Precious Spirit of all truth! do thou incline our hearts both to watch and pray; and gladly to hang on, and hold out, amidst every discouragement, until Jesus shall say to us, as he did to the poor woman, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, Matt. xv. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! for faith to be looking unto Jesus as those look to the world, who live upon its smiles. My soul! hadst thou but half the concern

to please thy heavenly Master, as faithful servants of the world do their earthly lords ; what blessings, even from the fountain-head of happiness, wouldest thou be living upon, and in the daily enjoyment of! How will a frown from a kind master wound a loving servant; and how will a smile encourage and gladden his heart. And is there a master so kind, so loving, so gracious, so abundant in goodness, as Jesus? And yet how little dost thou live to his glory; how little are thine eyes directed to his praise, or waiting for his favour!

Blessed Jesus! let this sweet Psalm be blessed to my perusal. Henceforth, Lord, let me learn to imitate the solicitude and affection of earthly servants, who are more earnest to oblige a fellow creature, than I have been to seek thy favour, which is better than life itself. Oh! thou that dwellest in the heavens, cause my soul to be lifted up unto thee. Draw me, Lord, that I may run after thee. And let the exercises of every thing I meet with here below, be sanctified to endear Jesus to my heart; that while the masters and mistresses of earthly servants have their respect and homage from those that serve them, my soul may cry out, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds.*

PSALM CXXIV.

CONTENTS.

It should seem from several expressions in this Psalm, that it was written upon some occasion of deliverance from trouble; for which the sacred writer blesseth God; ascribing all the glory to him.

A Song of Degrees of David.

IF *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say;

2 If *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

What situation soever it was the church refers to (for it is not particularly noticed), it is equally instructive to see how faith refers the whole of her deliverance to the Lord. And very sweet it is, in any, and every trial and victory, to trace the divine hand leading us through, and bringing us out of all. But, Reader, be the mercy here alluded to what it may, you and I may truly say, respecting redemption-work, "If Jesus had not been on our side, when hell was up in arms against us, and our own corrupt passions joined in the dreadful conflict, we must have been swallowed up, and lost for ever." Precious Jesus! well was it for us, that *many waters could not quench thy love, neither all the floods drown it!* Song, viii. 7.

6 Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.

7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

8 Our help *is* in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Reader! shall we not join this song, and evermore take up the same confidence: "Blessed, for ever blessed be God for Jesus Christ! And henceforth our help, and hope, and strength, shall only be in him. He that hath delivered, doth deliver, and in whom we trust he will yet deliver," 2 Cor. i. 10. Yes, blessed Jesus! henceforth may I find grace to leave all with thee. My soul, the church, every believer, all, all are and must be safe in thy eternal and almighty hands! Like the church of old, I will sing, and sing aloud, *Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song, he also is become my salvation*, Isaiah, xii. 2.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Deliverer of thy people! thou art our salvation, and the salvation of God our Father to the ends of the earth. And what thy Father appointed, thou hast accomplished: thy love, and thy mercy, have been the glorious procuring cause of all thy Church's deliverance, and of all their joy. Let it please thee then, most gracious Saviour, to be our help and confidence for ever. Let the church, which thou hast purchased with thy blood, be still dear to thee. Let the souls of thy people, whom thou hast justified with thy righteousness, be still thy jewels. And while we cry out with holy joy, *Blessed be the Lord, who remembered us in our low estate*; may we always be discovering new causes to close the holy song: *for his mercy endureth for ever*. Our soul is escaped from the beast of prey, and the fowler's net; and therefore Jesus shall be our glory, and we will still say, *Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ*.

PSALM CXXV.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is a very proper supplement to the former, for it celebrates the divine goodness in defending his people, and securing them from their enemies.

A Song of Degrees.

THEY that trust in the LORD, *shall be as* mount Zion; *which cannot be removed, but* abideth for ever.

2 *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever.*

The sacred writers all delight in using strong images and figures, by which to represent divine things: as in this instance, God's covenant engagements in Christ are compared to strong mountains, *the mountains of Jerusalem*, fixed and immoveable. His promises indeed are all of this kind: *yea and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. So sometimes the Lord represents his faithfulness and presence as *a wall of fire round about*, Zech. ii. 5. Such is Jesus, to encircle his people, so that they can never be approached for their hurt. The Lord shewed this to the prophet's servant, when the invisible host of heaven, which is always taking its stand about the Lord's people, were made visible to his eyes, at the request of the prophet, 2 Kings, vi. 15—17.

3 For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

This is a precious scripture to prove how the Lord watcheth over his people for good, and by his preventing and restraining grace knoweth *how to deliver the godly out of temptation*, 2 Peter, ii. 9.

4 Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be good*, and to *them that are upright* in their hearts.

5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: *but peace shall be upon Israel.*

The prayer of the faithful, and the prospect of the ruin of the ungodly, are strikingly blended in one view. The same scripture that promiseth to feed his people, declares that their enemies shall be hungry. See a string of rich and blessed promises to this amount, Isaiah, lxxv. 13—15.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! contemplate in this Psalm the security of the Lord's people, and beg of thy gracious God to give thee an everlasting, steady, and unshaken faith in him. Thou hast been sweetly taught, that there is nothing to be depended upon but Jesus: and having, through grace, made a covenant God in Christ thy portion; see to it, that He, the rock of ages, is thy rock, thy confidence, thy strong hold, and thine abiding-place, for ever. So that strengthened in his strength, and made powerful in his might, thou wilt be more than conqueror through Him that loveth thee. Learn Paul's maxim, and under the Holy Ghost's sweet influence, from day to day bring it forth into continual exercise: *I can do nothing of myself, but I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me. Rejoice in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

PSALM CXXVI.

CONTENTS.

It is more than likely that this Psalm hath a reference to some great event in the Church's history: and hence it hath been generally supposed to refer to the return of the people from Babylon. But this is mere conjecture. Certain it is, that it suits the Church's deliverance upon every occasion, and the deliverance of every believer. And every poor sinner, redeemed by Christ, may well take up the same language.

A Song of Degrees.

WHEN the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

If this Psalm was written with a view to record the wonderful and gracious dealings of the Lord with his people, in delivering them from the Babylonish captivity, certain it is, that that event was as sudden and unexpected as a dream. For when Cyrus (as we read in the book of Ezra) gave commandment for the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and to rebuild the temple, it might well excite the astonishment of all that heard it. Nothing but the over-ruling power of God could have prompted him to such an act; and nothing but God's over-ruling power could have brought them out. See Ezra, i. 1—6. But passing over this event, great and astonishing as it is in itself, as a proof of God's kind providence over his people; I would call the Reader to a yet more marvellous instance of God's sovereignty in the kingdom of his grace, and desire him to ponder with me the wonders of God's love, in turning the captivity of sinners by the proclamation of mercy in the person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cyrus was mentioned by name, between two and three hundred years before he was born, and declared to be God's anointed for opening the two-leaved gates, upon which occasion God would loose the loins of kings. And in the night that Belshazzar was slain, was this memorable prophecy fulfilled. See Isaiah, xlv. 1—3, compared with Dan. v. 6—30. But what was all this in comparison to the salvation of Jesus? He was set up from everlasting. And our whole nature was in worse than Babylonish bondage, when God sent his Son to deliver us from darkness, and to bring us into his marvellous light; to bring us out of the prison-house, and make us free. And when any, and every poor sinner is thus brought out, so great, so unexpected, so unlooked for, and so marvellous doth the whole seem to him, that it appears too great, and too good to be real, so that it seems but as a dream, or a vision of the night.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

But as soon as the awakened, liberated sinner is made sensible of the reality, how will praises burst forth from his joyful heart! The carnal world who look on, know not what to make of it, what to think, or what to say : but they are compelled to confess that God is in it. And the people of God are ever ready to ascribe all to sovereign grace. Psalm cxv. 1. Ephes. ii. 8, 9. Titus, iii. 5—7.

4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

This forms a very suitable prayer, after the experience of such unlooked for mercies. *The streams in the south* most probably refer to those subterraneous waters that empty themselves, and are seen no more. Babylon no more retains her captives. The spiritual Babylon hath a period also, when it shall be known no more. Rev. xviii. 2, 20, 21.

5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

These are sweet and general truths, which are not limited to the history of this event of the Church, but may be applied to the Church of God in all ages. *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*, Matt. v. 4. And most unquestionably that grace which induceth sorrow for sin, will bring forth joy in the view of Christ's righteousness. Jerem. xxxi. 9. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! in the perusal of this Psalm, I would beg of you, as I desire to examine myself, to look and see whether we really bear a part in the triumphs here recorded. The effects of this deliverance are very strikingly defined; the joy of the soul was such, that from its greatness it seemed but as a dream. Such is the real joy when Christ converts, and brings the sinner from the captivity of sin and Satan. Convinced of sin, and converted by the Holy Ghost to the belief of salvation by Jesus; no sooner is the soul made sensible of the mighty redemption, but light, and life, and joy, and peace, appear in the heart through the power of the Holy Ghost. Reader! what saith your experience to these grand concerns? Are you still in bondage and prison-frames to the thousand evils of a fallen Babylonish state; to sin, to divers lusts, and pleasures; to the alarms of conscience, the fear of death, and a judgment to come? Or hath *one like the Son of man* made you free, and brought you out? Oh! to grace, what mercies do the redeemed owe! And what will they eternally owe when grace is consummated in glory! *Though now, if needs be, they sow in tears, and are in heaviness through manifold temptations, yet are they looking forward to the certainty of reaping in joy. These light afflictions, which are but of a moment, are working out for them a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.*

PSALM CXXVII.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm contains a pious and devout acknowledgment, that all blessings are from the Lord. Neither the builder, nor the soldier, nor the master of a family, can be successful in their several callings, but from the divine mercy.

A Song of Degrees for Solomon.

EXCEPT the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

Under two striking similitudes, the sacred Writer points out the vast necessity of looking stedfastly, and continually to God, for his blessing upon every concern. He instanceth the cases of the builder, and the soldier. No builder like him that buildeth for eternity; no soldier like him that fights, or watcheth for an immortal victory: but whence for either shall we hope for success, except we be founded in the Lord Jesus Christ?

2 *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

Anxiety and care will never improve either by exertion, *for the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.* Eccles. ix. 11. Zech. iv. 6.

3 Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.

4 As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man: *so are* children of the youth.

5 Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

How truly blessed is it to a gracious parent, when the Lord giveth gracious children! What a blessed meeting will that be in glory, when such shall surround the throne! The Lord Jesus is introduced by the Prophet, as presenting his seed, his people, which the Father hath given to him, in that day, saying, *Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me.* And the apostle quotes it by way of confirmation in allusion to Christ: Isaiah, viii. 18, compared with Heb. ii. 13. And may we not say of under pastors in Christ's household, who labour in the word and doctrine; how truly blessed to see the fruit of those labours, at that day, in precious souls, won by the word, under the Spirit's quickening and regenerating power, to Jesus! It will be a

blessed surprize to many a faithful servant of Jesus at that day to behold such! And parents also! no doubt many among them will find cause to bless the Lord, and not be ashamed *when they speak with their enemies in the gate.*

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! art thou building for eternity? See that Jesus be the foundation-stone. Art thou warring a good warfare? See that thou prove thyself a good soldier of Jesus Christ, by taking to thee the whole armour of God. Hast thou a family of children rising up about thee? Oh! dedicate them to the Lord, and see that they are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In every department, and in every case, look to the Lord Jesus for all, and make him the Alpha and Omega of all. Oh! the blessedness of children begotten of God: adopted into his family; the image of Jesus impressed upon them, and the Spirit of Jesus in their hearts. Jesus will then *give his beloved sleep*; dearly they are beloved by Jesus, for they are the gift of his Father, and the purchase of his blood; and he will guide them, protect them, provide for them: when they wander, he will reclaim them; when they grow cold, his love will again warm them. They shall be always under his almighty eye; and his almighty arm will always be stretched forth for their guidance and defence. My soul! art thou the faithful builder on Jesus; the diligent watchman for Jesus, and of the family of faith in Jesus?

PSALM CXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

Here is a happy state described, full of blessings. Blessings in the man himself: blessings in the wife of his bosom; blessings in his offspring; and all out of Zion, from the Lord.

A Song of Degrees.

BLESSED is every one that feareth the LORD;
that walketh in his ways.

2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands:
happy shalt thou be, and *it shall be* well with thee.

3 Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine by the
sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants
round about thy table.

4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed
that feareth the LORD.

5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and
thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days
of thy life.

6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children,
and peace upon Israel.

The Reader will forgive me, if I observe once more, (and particularly upon this beautiful Psalm) that to see Jesus in it, will give a double sweetness to our afterwards viewing it as referring to the people of Jesus. Neither shall I think any apology necessary for the allusion, when I consider the authority of God's word upon this occasion, in numberless instances: for is not Christ expressly said to be *the Husband of the Church*? Doth he not himself say to the Church, *I have betrothed thee to me for ever*? Nay, is it not said by his servant the Apostle, that *Christ so loved the Church that he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish*? See Isaiah, liv. 5. Hosea, ii. 19. Ephes. v. 25 to the end. When we consider the Son of God as having, by the assumption of our nature, wedded that nature into a more intimate and everlasting union than any other connexion possibly can be; it may serve to teach us, in some measure, how blessed the alliance, and how eternally secure. Hence therefore, may it not be said, "Blessed is the man Christ Jesus who hath feared the Lord, and accomplished redemption! He shall see therefore of the soul-travail he endured, and be satisfied." Isaiah, liii. 11. His wife the Church shall be to him most fruitful; even as the clusters of the vine, or as the dew drops of the morning, Psalm cx. 3. And it is Jehovah himself; even the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace, that shall thus bless him: and bless him out of his own holy hill, Zion. Yea! he shall see it, and the Lord Jehovah will fulfil all his covenant promises, in pouring his Spirit upon his seed, and his blessing upon his offspring. There shall be showers of blessings! Such are the precious things contained in this Psalm, if we read with an eye to Jesus and his Church. And the Reader will not suppose the mercies to be lessened in this point of view, if, in consequence of our relation to Jesus, we behold also our interest in them. Isaiah, xliv. 3, 4. Psalm lxxii. 6. Isaiah, lix. 21. Psalm lxxxix. 36, 37.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do not hastily pass by the blessed view of Jesus as the Bridegroom and Husband of his Church; for some of the sweetest views of happiness, even eternal happiness, are to be found in it. It is indeed a mysterious union; but it is a most blessed one; an indissoluble, eternal union. And as it is founded in the everlasting purposes and councils of Jehovah, it may well demand our greatest affection and regard! By virtue of this oneness with Christ, his people are interested in every thing that concerns him as the Mediator. He hath paid our dreadful debt; he hath disannulled our former marriage with sin and the law; he hath entitled us to all dowry, and in his blessedness made all his people blessed. Oh! thou almighty Bridegroom! how gracious hast thou been to our poor nature! Take, Lord, the whole hearts and affections of thy people in return, and let this be the highest desire of

all thy redeemed to say with the Church, *My beloved is mine, and I am his: my Maker is mine Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and my Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called?*

PSALM CXXIX.

CONTENTS.

The Church under affliction, speaks with some pain of the frequency of it from persecutions: but towards the close of the Psalm she takes comfort from the consideration that the Lord will recompense her enemies.

A Song of Degrees.

MANY a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say :

2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me.

It is beautiful to observe how the Scriptures sometimes speak of the church, and sometimes of Christ the head of the church, as one and the same. Hence the church is sometimes called by Christ's name; Jerem. xxxiii. 16. compared with Jerem. xxiii. 6. And as in name, so in interest, all Christ hath as mediator, is his church's, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Now the afflictions of the church are first spoken of in this psalm; and afterwards the personal sorrows of Jesus. Before Christ's incarnation, the seed of Hagar persecuted the child of promise, Gal. i. 29; and from Christ's birth his own persecutions took place, Hosea, xi. 1, which scripture the Evangelist Matthew refers to Christ, Matt. ii. 14, 15.

3 The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.

4 The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

Surely here we find Christ most emphatically pointed out: Jesus, the Prophet, described as *giving his back to the smiters*; and in the hall of Pilate we know that Jesus was scourged. Isaiah, l. 6. John, xix. 1.

5 Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.

6 Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:

7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

8 Neither do they which go by say, The bless-

ing of the LORD *be* upon you : we bless you in the name of the LORD.

These expressions are delivered in the Spirit of prophecy; as if the sacred Writer had said, such will be the sure consequence of all Zion's foes; they must perish for ever. And to which every true follower of the Lord Jesus cannot but say *Amen*. So spake Deborah in that divine song; *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.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul! look back and see what part thou hast borne in the afflictions of the Church. Depend upon it, among the truest evidences of the renewed life, a sincere love to Zion forms a principal part. If I truly love Jesus, I must love every member of the mystical body of Jesus; and as one of old said it, and all find it, the remembrance of Zion, taking part in her sorrows, and participating in her joys, proves a connexion with the King and Lord of Zion: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right-hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* And oh! thou glorious Head of thy Church and people! shall I not find the blessedness of meditating on thine unequalled sorrows; when, for the redemption of our souls, *the ploughers ploughed upon thy back, and made long their furrows!* Didst thou give *thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair?* And shall my soul look on, and feel no interest, no concern! Gracious Lord! let it be among the first of my thoughts to follow thee both to the cross, and to thy throne: to the doleful Gethsemane, and to the joy on which thou hast entered and taken everlasting possession. And let my soul feel all that sweet consolation in the consciousness, that I not only partake of what is thine, but that thou partakest of what is mine. Thou hast fellowship in all my exercises, trials, wants, difficulties: my sufferings are thine, for the lowest member of thy mystical body cannot be afflicted but the Head feels; and thou hast said *he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of thine eye.* Hence, dearest Lord, let my soul rejoice in tribulation, when I know that that tribulation Jesus appoints, Jesus supports, Jesus takes part in, and Jesus will bless. Hallelujah. I am *my beloved's*, and my beloved is mine. He takes part in all that concerns me, and, my soul, do thou take part in all that concerns him. If Jesus feels for my sorrows, he gives me to participate in his blessedness. What though I now sow in tears, I shall finally reap in joy: like the true spiritual mower, I shall bring home the full sheaves of corn to Jesus's granary, and my bosom will be filled with his love. Amen.

PSALM CXXX.

CONTENTS.

This most precious psalm contains the deep breathings of the soul under a sense of sin; the holy triumphs of the soul in the view of the

propitiary, the redemption by Jesus: and the earnest recommendation of a soul that, having found mercy himself, holds forth encouragement to others.

A Song of Degrees.

OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.

2 LORD, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

Deep calleth unto deep, saith one of old. And when a poor broken-hearted sinner, from the depths of sin, crieth to the depths of divine mercy, sweet is that frame of soul, and sure to be heard. For it is God the Holy Ghost which convinceth of sin. It is the same almighty Teacher who puts the cry in the heart to seek for mercy. And he that thus leads to the way, leads to the end; and both point to Christ, and bring to Christ, with an assurance of salvation. Numerous are the examples of this kind in the word of God. The Psalmist speaks of the *horrible pit* out of which he was brought, Psalm xl. 1—3; the Prophet Jeremiah *cried from the dungeon*, Jerem. xxxviii. 6: and Jonah from what he called *the belly of hell*, Jonah, ii. 2—4. And as our Lord declared this state of Jonah to be typical, may we not make application of it, and say that the people of Jesus, resting in hope of the glorious resurrection, by reason of their oneness with his body as the first fruits, may now be supposed to cry from under the altar, *How long, O Lord, holy and true?* Rev. vi. 9, 10.

3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?

I beg the Reader to take notice of the different Printing of the word Lord in this verse; the former is JAH, the latter is *Adonai*. For particulars respecting the difference of the two names, I refer the Reader to what was offered in the Comment on the 110th Psalm. And in addition to what is there said, I request the Reader to remark with me the great earnestness of soul which is here manifested, when crying to be heard, and deprecating divine displeasure against iniquities, the soul lays hold in so short a compass of both those glorious names.

4 But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

I do not know in the whole volume of the Old Testament a verse more strongly marked with faith in Christ, or more immediately directed to the great assurances of redemption by Him, than this most beautiful one. For as Christ is the propitiatory, and the propitiation which Jehovah hath set forth, the language which this verse breathes, is the direct answer of the soul to God's declaration. Jehovah saith, *I have given him for a covenant of the people! Behold my servant, whom I uphold!* To which the poor sinner, with full assurance of faith, replies, *There is forgiveness*; there is the propitiation *with thee*, which thou hast set forth; there is Jesus thy dear and ever blessed Son, *that thou mayest be feared*, not a fear of bondage, but of love, fearing to offend. Let the Reader ponder over this verse, and repeatedly meditate upon the blessed things contained in it. Let him consult those scriptures

which explain it; and may the Lord give him to enter into the full enjoyment of all its blessed truths. Compare Exod. xxv. 8, 9, 21, 22. with Heb. ix. 5—12. Rom. iii. 25. 1 John, ii. 2. Isaiah. xlii. 1—7.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

6 My soul *waiteth* for the LORD more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*

How very beautiful in language, as well as delightful in doctrine, are these expressions! When a soul is looking by faith to the man at God's right hand, whom the Lord *hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood*; he waits with earnest, but patient expectation. *He that believeth* (saith the Prophet) *shall not make haste*, Isaiah, xxviii. 15. He need not; for in believing he stayeth upon God's Christ, he knows that the mercy is sure, and therefore he waits the Lord's time for bestowing it. He that prepared the mercy, is preparing the heart for the proper reception of it. In believing this, he already by faith enjoys it; and therefore cries out, *I look for the Lord: my soul doth wait*; but while I wait, his word is my warrant, my security, my sure confidence. Oh! blessed frame! Reader, may the Lord give it to you, to me, and to all his people. *Lord! increase our faith!* The figures and similitudes in this verse, to shew *how* the soul of a true believer waits, are uncommonly beautiful and expressive. What is it to wait for the morning? Let those speak who lie in agonies of pain through a long night, or those who sit up in the dying chamber of a dear departing friend; or those who travelling in a dark dreary night, are hardly conscious of their way. Such cases as these may afford some idea of a soul in darkness, until Jesus makes it light: waiting for the first dawn of mercy: longing to hear that voice, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.* My soul, I would press the thought upon thee; dost thou so wait for Jesus, and for the renewings of his love?

7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD *there is* mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

We may consider these blessed words in a double sense. *First*, as the encouragement which one poor sinner may be supposed to give to others, who having experienced divine mercy himself, goes forth and proclaims it abroad. It is as if he had said, "Let Israel hope, let every poor sinner, in whose heart God the Spirit hath put a concern for his salvation, hope; and where a cry to God to obtain it in Christ is put into the soul, let every one of this description hope; for Jesus is in heaven: Jesus the propitiation, whom God hath set forth, is there. I have found redemption in his blood, and I have found it *plenteous* redemption indeed to my soul: and therefore let none despond, let not the greatest sinner doubt; for I, the chief of sinners, have experienced it. Let Is-

rael hope in the Lord." But if we consider it in another sense, as the precept of God himself, the words will be equally sweet. Christ is thus proclaimed as the One all-sufficient ordinance of heaven. It is of Jehovah's own providing; mercy is with him; Christ our passover, sacrificed for us, is with him; and it is Jehovah himself that speaks thus to a poor sinner, *Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom*, Job, xxxiii. 24. So that there is Jesus, the promised mercy, the first-born in the womb of mercy, yea, the very mercy of mercies; He, *the Lord our righteousness* is with Jehovah, the sinner's surety and ransom. And this redemption in his blood, is full redemption, an all-sufficient redemption, plenteous redemption! And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins, not from one only, or ten, or ten thousand, but all. Hence his name is JESUS, *for he shall save his people from their sins.*

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! hast thou been brought by the Holy Ghost into such views of thy fallen, ruined, and undone state, as to behold thyself in the depths of sin? And hast thou from thence sent forth the cry of thy soul for pardon, mercy, and peace, through the blood of the cross? And hath thine eye been opened by the same almighty Spirit, to behold Jesus the mercy promised, the propitiation, which God hath set forth for the salvation of sinners? Dost thou know Jesus indeed as the Father's gift, and that *there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby thou mightest be saved?* Look up, my soul, and with an eye of faith, even from the deep of sin, cry to the deep of mercy! See! behold! Jesus is with the Father, the advocate, the propitiation, the full ransom for sin! Behold him still wearing *the vesture dipped in blood*, as if to say, look at these marks, and know that my blood and righteousness are of eternal efficacy! And under such blessed assurances do thou tell thy God and Father, what thy God and Father hath first told thee, that there is mercy, there is Jesus, his dear and ever blessed Son with him, so that thy redemption is secured. And do thou, my soul, proclaim abroad the glorious tidings, that other poor sinners may also come and find Jesus *the mercy promised*. Go forth and say, as one of old did, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*. And blessed Lord! cause me to wait for thee, to long for thee, and to be always found watching for thy gracious visits, more than they that wait for the morning, or the thirsty earth for the falling showers! Come, Lord, and refresh my longing soul, and be thou to me all I need, and all I can desire; *wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that all my glorying may be in thee, O Lord!*

PSALM CXXXI.

CONTENTS.

This short but sweet Psalm speaks the humblings of the soul, induced by grace, and taking confidence in the Lord's mercy.

A Song of Degrees of David.

LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.

It is a paradox to men of the world, but the fact is undeniable, that the soul when most humble is most bold; he that is most depressed, is most exalted; most empty, and yet most full. For he that hath the lowest views of his own merit, hath the highest views of Christ. And he that hath learned the first lesson in the school of grace to be most humbled under a sense of sin, will be most bold to plead Christ and his righteousness. Neither can a child of God be properly prepared to receive out of Christ's fulness, until he is self-emptied, and comes with nothing, that he may receive all. The figure of a *weaned child* is beautifully chosen to represent this; for, as our Lord taught, except we be weaned, and become as little children, desirous to be taught every thing, because we know nothing; we shall be wayward and perverse as babes at the full breast of an indulgent mother. Matt. xviii. 3. Lord, give me this weaned state, that I may hang upon the God of Israel, even a God in Christ for ever!

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Lord Jesus! whenever we think of humbleness, to whom shall we look for the brightest illustration of it, but to thee. Here, Lord, as in all things excellent, thou hast also the pre-eminency! Impart to my soul large portions of this grace, I beseech thee, O Lord; and let the same mind be in me which was also in thee. And the larger portions thou givest to me of this grace, they will work in me more exalted views of thy glory. Let me often think both of thy humiliation, in first taking our nature: and then of thy humiliation in looking upon me, visiting me, and forming thyself in my heart, the hope of glory. Oh! for grace thus to look to Jesus until every faculty of my soul be humbled to the dust before thee, and every power of my heart goes forth in praises to thee, the God of my salvation.

PSALM CXXXII.

CONTENTS.

Under the representation of the Ark, the Prophet points to the person and work of Christ; and in this rich gospel psalm comforts the church with blessed views of her Redeemer.

A Song of Degrees.

LORD, remember David, *and* all his afflictions :

I cannot allow myself, in reading over this Psalm, to bestow a single thought upon David, king of Israel, nor on Solomon his son, (who is supposed to have written it for the dedication of the temple) lest, through looking at the shadow, I lose sight of the substance. Surely it is of David's Lord, this Psalm wholly treats; and concerning it we may borrow the words of Jesus, and say, *a greater than Solomon is here*. Referring the Reader to the historical state of the church, when this Psalm was composed, I would beg of him, to look out with me, and examine whether the Holy Ghost had not an eye to Christ, when he gave these words to Solomon in writing it? 1 Chron. xxviii. 1—10. 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42. If we view Jesus as the David spoken of, in his afflictions; the gospel is full of them. And the soul of the believer finds comfort in reminding God of Jesus's sorrows, because they were the sorrows of his people, which he carried when he came forth as their surety. Isaiah, liii. 4. Very sweet and blessed is it thus to behold Christ, and thus to plead in Christ's name, when we go to the mercy-seat.

2 How he sware unto the LORD, *and* vowed unto the mighty *God* of Jacob,

3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;

4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, *or* slumber to mine eyelids,

5 Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty *God* of Jacob.

6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.

7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

If David king of Israel thus vowed, and thus engaged to Jehovah; surely it requires but little acquaintance with the scripture (when once the Holy Ghost hath brought us to the knowledge of David's Surety) to discover that he represented only the Lord Christ, in his suretyship engagements for his people. Was it not Jesus, who at the call of Jehovah stood up to build the temple of the Lord: and whose soul was straitened, until he had accomplished it? Could the Lord possibly mean Solomon, king of Israel, David's son after the flesh, when he said, *I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever?* Who doth not see in all this, that it is Christ, the seed of David after the flesh (but David's Lord after the Spirit) that is all along intended by these declarations? I pray the Reader to consult the following scriptures

upon this grand point; and if his mind find satisfaction from them, as I pray he may, I beseech him to be very jealous in future over himself while reading the word of God, and not fall into the error, too common in the church, but which in days of the gospel like the present, should be carefully avoided, I mean that of dwelling upon the type, to the prejudice of more clearly seeing the antitype. I know by experience that from being more conversant with things natural, than with things spiritual, we are too apt to overlook what is intended, from looking too much to what is said. It is of Christ the scriptures principally treat in every part, and therefore, after him we should be searching. The scriptures in elucidation of this Psalm, which I wish the Reader to consult, are 2 Sam. vii. 1—16. Psalm lxxxix. 2—4. And I particularly request the Reader to take notice of that part of this Psalm, as connected with the former, from the 19th to the 36th verse; all which most fully prove that Christ, and not David, is referred to. It is to God's Holy One the Lord speaks in vision; and of whose kingdom there will be no end, Luke, i. 26—33. Hence the multitude's salutation of Christ, Matt. xxi. 5—9. See also Zech. vi. 12, 13. Micah, v. 2. with Matt. ii. 1—6. So that the sacred writer sings in this Psalm of going into His tabernacles, whose birth-place was found at *Bethlehem-Ephratah*.

8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

10 For thy servant David's sake: turn not away the face of thine anointed.

11 The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David; he will not turn from it, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

12 If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony, that I shall teach them; their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.

13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired *it* for his habitation.

14 This *is* my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

18 His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

All these very precious promises, prayers, and praises, will find an easy explanation from the view of the scriptures just referred to, as well as other portions of the divine word, which come in to our aid, to illustrate and prove their application to the Lord Jesus, and to him only. When the call is, *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength*; who can want to be told that from the very first use of those words by Moses, the church understood the presence of Jehovah in Christ, whom the ark typified? see Numb. x. 35, 36. So again by Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42. And that we might not falsely interpret any part of this precious scripture, or refer any portion of it, but to the person of Christ; Peter was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to comment upon the oath of Jehovah to this very point, on the memorable day of Pentecost, Acts, ii. 22—36. Reader! behold Jesus as the person all along spoken of in this Psalm, to whom the promises are made, and in whom they are fulfilled, and then all the blessings arising from them in his name, and for his righteousness' sake alone, will be *yea and Amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

STAND still, my soul! and behold Jesus as the ark, the habitation, the sanctuary, the refuge, the resting-place for poor sinners, which the Lord Jehovah hath founded, and not man. Look at Jesus, even at thy Jesus, in every one of those characters. What a sure *dwelling-place* is Jesus for all his redeemed! May we not cry out, in the view of Him; may, are we not constrained so to do; *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations!* And is He not the *hiding-place* also to his redeemed, when they are hidden in the secret and mysterious union with his person, and interested in his righteousness? My soul, wilt thou not say, under this view, *Surely my life is hid with Christ in God, that when Christ, who is my life shall appear, then shall I appear with him in glory!* And is not Jesus the *resting-place* for every poor weary sinner, tired with the burden of his sins, and of all his own fruitless endeavours to take that burden off, until Jesus, the mighty burden-bearer, is beheld *bearing our sins in his own body on the tree?* Yes! Lord, here also I would say, Thou art the rest wherewith Jehovah causeth the weary to rest, and thou art the refreshing! Arise, Lord, into thy rest, would my soul humbly pray, thou and the Ark, the Jesus, of thy great strength. Clothe thy priests with the robe of Jesus's righteousness, and let every redeemed heart of thy saints shout with joy. Thou wilt bless, yea, thou wilt abundantly bless with all spiritual provision, their souls upon earth, as thou art feeding them now in glory, in the midst of the throne, with eternal food. Thine enemies, Lord, shall be eternally ashamed; but Jesus shall reign, and reign for ever. Amen.

PSALM CXXXIII.

CONTENTS.

Our old Bibles make a very brief account in summing up the contents of this Psalm, but they say a vast deal in few words; they call it The benefit of the communion of saints! And indeed the church being one in Christ, and with Christ, nothing can be more evident, than that this is the whole scope of it.

A Song of Degrees of David.

BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

3 As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

Reader! first behold Jesus in this Psalm. He is the glorious Head, from whose life-giving, soul-awakening, soul-cleansing, soul-transforming, and soul-strengthening influences, all communion is derived, so as to keep alive his members in him, and opening fellowship and communion with each other from him. The sacred writer makes use of a beautiful illustration, in explaining this blissful truth: the holy oil on the head of Aaron ran down to the lowest skirts; and Jesus, our almighty Aaron, was anointed with *the oil of gladness above*, and for, *his fellows*. The Spirit was given *without measure unto him*. *Unto us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ*, John, iii. 34. Ephes. iv. 7. This anointing is also fruitful, like the dew on the hill of Hermon: for Hermon, though a fruitful hill, must be replenished by the dew, as well as the souls of the redeemed by grace, or both will be dry, and unproductive. No communion shall we have with one another, no replenishing in ourselves, unless Jesus imparts to all. Sweet thought! Jesus is to his people as *a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass that tarrieth not for man; neither waiteth for the sons of men*, Micah, v. 8. Gracious Lord! refresh thy church, thy brethren, thy fellows (as thou condescendest to call them) and keep our souls alive in thee, and from thee; so that we may have sweet communion and fellowship with each other, to the glory of our great Head, in our Zion, from whence thou hast promised the blessing and life, in the king of Zion, for evermore.

REFLECTIONS.

THINK, my soul, how little of this fellowship and communion is found in the present day, in the languishing state of our Churches! Behold the cause! If there be no constant receivings from Christ, how

shall there be communications among the brethren? If the intercourse with the great Head be remitted, what shall the members have to impart! Oh! for grace to be looking unto Jesus, the life-giving Head of his Church! Oh! Lord Jesus, that thou wouldest visit thy people, thy ministers, thy churches! *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock at noon!* See, Lord! how thy people languish. Give us, Lord, a little reviving in our bondage; come among us with thy great power; stir us up to take hold of thy strength: so shall we have grace flourishing in our own hearts, and communications will go forth among the brethren; so shall we be prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of Jesus and his Church by grace here, for glory hereafter.

PSALM CXXXIV.

CONTENTS.

A short but interesting Psalm, in which believers are calling upon one another to the service and praises of Jehovah.

A Song of Degrees.

BEHOLD, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.

2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

3 The LORD that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion.

The Psalm opens with a call upon the servants, perhaps the Levites, who ministered day and night in the temple, to bless the Lord; and ends with somewhat like an answer to every one that was engaged in this employment. But as Jesus hath made all his people kings and priests to the Father, the call in these gospel days may well be supposed to be directed to every one. Reader! let us consider it in this point of view, and may the Lord, who calls, give us grace most joyfully to obey! I should observe, that before the coming of Christ, constant service or watching was observed in the temple without intermission: the Levites ministered by day and by night. The fire on the altar, and the lamps were constantly burning; see Levit. vi. 13. xxiv. 2—4. In the gospel Church, *the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning* supplies the place, Isaiah, iv. 4. Reader! let you and I see to it, that every where, and in all things, both by day and by night, we are lifting up holy hands in praises and love to our God in Christ. And may we each, personally for ourselves, and for all with whom we have to do, be on the look out, that our God may bless each, and every one, out of Zion.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSING work, is not only necessary, but grateful work among the faithful. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, for it becometh well the just to be thankful.* How, Lord, shall I ever testify, even through a whole eternity, the obligations I owe thee? What everlasting praise will the redeemed in heaven have to offer to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the blessings to which they are begotten. Oh! ye ministers of the sanctuary, of whom it is said, *Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord, men shall call you the Ministers of our God!* what lifting up of hands, what holy acclamations of praise, may ye be supposed to bring, that preach among the people *the unsearchable riches of Christ.* And ye no less who are ministered unto; were ye to hold your peace, in whose hearts *Christ is formed the hope of glory,* might not the stones of the earth be expected to cry out? Oh! for grace that every one, high and low, young men and maidens, old men and children, might praise the name of the Lord, *for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth!* And may He, that dwelleth in Zion, even Zion's King and Husband, bless each, and every one, that praiseth him! And the Lord of heaven and earth, who hath both the upper and nether spring blessings, bless his redeemed here with grace, and hereafter with glory!

PSALM CXXXV.

CONTENTS.

This is what is called an Hallelujah Psalm; so called, because what we translate, Praise ye the Lord, might have been preserved, Hallelujah! It consists of praises from beginning to end.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.

2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God,

3 Praise ye the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: sing praises unto his name; for *it is* pleasant.

The arguments here made use of, for giving praises to the Lord, are very plain and unanswerable. Jehovah is to be praised on his own account, for his greatness, goodness, glory. He is to be praised on our account, for that goodness, greatness, and glory, which he hath extended unto us. And it is not only a reasonable service, but a pleasant service, when we praise him.

4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

But the song riseth to a higher note in this verse, in the choice God hath made of Jacob, for his peculiar people. Yes! this is the great

mark for praise, distinguishing mercies. The Bible is full of this peculiarity of God's mercy to Israel. Deut. vii. 7, 8.

5 For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our LORD *is* above all gods.

6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

7 He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain: he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

The Psalmist here praises the Lord in the contemplation of the blessings of his *providence*, whose power is absolute, and admits of no control.

8 Who smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.

9 *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.

10 Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;

11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:

12 And gave their land *for* an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.

In these verses the Writer adores the riches of God's *grace*, as instanced in the history of Israel.

13 Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever; *and* thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.

14 For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.

And in these verses the reason is assigned, namely, his covenant-engagements. See those scriptures in proof, Exod. v. 1; Numb. xxi. 21—25; Deut. vii. 22, 23.

15 The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

16 They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;

17 They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.

18 They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

What a melancholy picture of human depravity and ignorance! If the Reader wishes to see a similar portrait, he may find it, Rom. i. 22—25.

19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron:

20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.

21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

From the wretched state of the idolatrous nations around, Israel, as a nation of Priests and Levites to the Lord, is called upon to mark its distinguishing blessings, and to make a proper use of them; and then the Psalm ends, as, it began, with *Hallelujah!*

REFLECTIONS.

How suitable is it for a peculiar people to be distinguished by peculiar tokens of deportment! Israel so distinguished, might well shew forth the praises of the Lord, who had so distinguished them. Never was a nation so favoured: never a people so blessed. My soul! what hast thou to speak concerning distinguishing mercies? It is blessed to acknowledge the Lord's goodness in giving us *fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness*. But these are blessings in common with thousands who know not the Lord, nor regard the gospel of Jesus. The great question is, what knowest thou of *redeeming love*? What thinkest thou of God's Christ, and of redemption by his blood? Oh! the grace of being called with a holy calling, of being taken into Christ's household, and made a child of God, and an heir of grace! Reader! may the Lord graciously lead us both to mark the tokens of distinguishing mercy; and to see and feel, and truly enjoy that happy state, where Jesus makes himself known, *and manifests himself otherwise than he doth to the world!*

PSALM CXXXVI.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm is so much to the same purport with the former, that it should seem to be but a repetition of it, with the chorus of praise added to every verse. The subject is the same, and the words for the greater part are the same: so that it is a beautiful duplicate of what went before, with the addenda of Hallelujah.

O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 O give thanks to the LORD of lords: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

7 To him that made great lights: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

8 The sun to rule by day: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

9 The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

In these verses the Psalmist is calling for praise to Jehovah from his numberless acts of goodness in the wisdom of creation. From the great works of God, the formation of the heavens, the earth, the sea, the lights of heaven, and the ordination of the servants of the Lord in the heavenly bodies; the Psalmist takes occasion to excite mankind to universal adoration. Sweet thought! how much Jesus, in his unequalled ministry, calls upon his people to unceasing praise and adoration!

10 To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

11 And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

13 To him which divided the Red Sea into parts: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

16 To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

17 To him which smote great kings: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

18 And slew famous kings: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

19 Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

20 And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

21 And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

22 *Even* an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

23 Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

From the kingdom of nature and providence, the sacred writer turns to the kingdom of grace, and in the history of Israel, in their deliverance from bondage, he sheweth how great that salvation must be, which is in the person, and by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Reader! what bringing out of Israel from Egypt, could equal the bringing out the souls of sinners from the worse than Egyptian bondage, even that of sin and death? What Red Sea, like the red sea of Christ's blood? What feeding in the wilderness, equal to Jesus feeding his people in this wilderness, with his own body and blood? And what enemies in Og king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites, equal to the enemies of God, and of his Christ, which bring the Lord's Israel into continued bondage, and excite their fears unceasingly? Well may every child of God, whom the Lord hath set free, cry out, *Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever!*

26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

The Psalm sweetly ends as it began: *Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above.* It is God that worketh in us, *both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* And therefore we may find cause to give thanks to our God in Christ, and join the song, *for his mercy endureth for ever!*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! in going over this Psalm, which is a beautiful repetition of the former, I hope that both your heart and mine have been led out to

see, that on every side causes are perpetually arising, to call up the voice of thanksgiving, and to lead the soul to God in Christ with hymns and anthems every hour. Say, Reader! can you adopt the chorus as your own? Doth the Lord's mercy endure for ever? Did Jesus remember you in your low estate? Hath Jesus manifested himself in a way of grace? and do you know him as your Alpha and Omega, your hope and portion for ever? It is truly blessed thus to see our mercies, that the soul may be kept alive to the remembrance of them, so as to call up love and adoration to the great Author of our mercies for ever. May a gracious God in Christ, who hath afforded so many and such unceasing causes to praise him, give us also the grace of his Holy Spirit to acknowledge his goodness in bestowing such unmerited tokens of love, that all hearts may join the universal song, and say with the church, *Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Amen.

PSALM CXXXVII.

CONTENTS.

There can be but little question concerning the date of this Psalm: speaking, as it doth at the opening of it, of Babylon, it seems very plainly to refer to the time of the Church's captivity there. In reading or singing this Psalm, it would be profitable to have the mind suitably affected, to take part with the Church's trouble.

BY the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

Ezekiel, who was of the children of the captivity, gives us the largest account of the river *Chebar*, on the banks of which Zion's sons and daughters were placed in their captivity, Ezek. i. 1—3. The mournful situation of the Church at that time was such, that they sat down and wept in remembrance of Zion! Yes! ordinances, means of grace, and the enjoyment of sabbaths, would be painful subjects of recollection, if the Lord, for the sin of a land, were to remove the candlestick out of its place.

2 We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof.

We may form some idea of a poor captive minstrel, hanging up his harp, as useless, by the representation of the far more deplorable state of an enslaved soul, led away captive by the enemy, or fallen into a state of deadness and indifferency to divine things. Creature enjoyments, nay, even ordinances, without Jesus, are lifeless and insipid. Where Jesus is not, there is no use for the harp; and where he is, there is melody in the soul without the harp.

3 For there they that carried us away captive, required of us a song; and they that wasted us, required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?

God's people are still subject to insult; but it is impossible to feel warmth at all times in the Lord's service where scoffers are. Sometimes, indeed, a holy indignation, and a zeal for Jesus, give freedom and liberty to the soul; but a cold frigid atmosphere of hearers, will make a minister's spirit cold also.

5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget *her cunning*.

6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

I hope the Lord's Israel at all times feels somewhat of this same spirit. It is blessed to feel the love of Jesus in seasons when Jesus is opposed, and to have this testimony in the worst of times. Peter, though he had been led captive by Satan for the moment, could, and did appeal to Jesus, who knew his heart, that he still did love him, John, xxi. 17. Reader! what saith your heart to this question, Is Jesus precious? To them who believe he is so, 1 Peter, ii. 7.

7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem; who said, *Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.*

8 O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy *shall he be*, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

9 Happy *shall he be*, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

These words are both a prayer and a prophecy. Edom is the seed of Esau, and as such there was, and is, and ever will be, the same hatred subsisting. But the Church looketh forward to the honr, when Edom shall be ruined; Babylon must fall; Israel shall be delivered. And as these events were typical of the Gospel Church in a ter ages; so the Babylon spoken of in the New Testament shall be destroyed. Rev. xviii. 2—10.

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! canst thou behold the sorrows and miseries of Israel in their captivity, and not call to mind that more horrible vassalage and slavery in which sin and Satan bound thee for many a year? Did Israel weep by the waters of Babylon, and hang their harps upon the willows, under a sense of the bondage into which their rebellion and ingratitude had brought them; and canst thou forget *the wormwood and the gall*, when, in a state of unawakened nature, thou wast fast bound in the misery and iron of a captivity, from which none but the arm of Jehovah

could have delivered thee? Apply this view of the Church's history to thine own state and circumstances, in what is past, in what is now, and in which thou mayest be blessed in the review of it hereafter. Think what thou once wast, when like the Church in Babylon, the strong man armed kept the house, and thou wast the servant and bondsman of sin. See by whose grace and mercy it is that thou art brought out. Remember who it is that hath said, *I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.* And call to mind to whose grace and finished salvation it must alone be ascribed, that the hopes of being brought home to the heavenly Jerusalem now arise, in looking forward to all the blessings of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ. Hail, thou holy, thou gracious, thou almighty Saviour! Blessed Jesus! when the *seventy years* of the desolation of thy church and people are accomplished; when the Lord, who hath in his own glorious person *finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness,* shall finally and fully turn the captivity of his redeemed; then, Lord, thou wilt call all thy people home, and plant them in thy holy mountain, even in heaven itself, which thou hast taken possession of in their name: and then shall all the Edomites, and the haters of the Lord, be driven from thy presence, while thy people shall rejoice before thee in everlasting hallelujahs, and endless happiness.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here at his devotions, with his hymn of praise. He not only blesseth God himself, but he utters a prophecy (no doubt, in allusion to the days of the gospel) that all the great ones of the earth shall bless him; and he closeth the psalm with declaring his assurance that the Lord, who had begun grace in his heart, would perfect it in glory.

A Psalm of David.

I WILL praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

2 I will worship toward thy holy temp^l, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth; for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

These are short, but most expressive words. Nothing, he saith, shall put his soul out of order in blessing the Lord; even in the presence of all the dunghill-gods of the earth, will he praise the Lord. But what I particularly request the Reader to remark with me, in these words, is the gospel strain of them. David considered himself, one of those whom Jesus makes his people; I mean, *kings and priests unto God and the Father.* Moses declared that the Israel of God should be unto him *a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation:* and the gospel of Christ confirms it. See Exod. xix. 6; Rev. i. 5, 6; 1 Peter, ii. 9. Hence when

believing souls see Jesus, who is our New Testament temple, and of whom the Old Testament temple was but a type; they are made priests to God and the Father, in Christ Jesus; and in and through their great High Priest, they are permitted, nay commanded, to *draw nigh with boldness*, Heb. x. 19—21. One observation more meets us in these verses: David saith, Jehovah hath *magnified his word above all his name*: Is not this the uncreated Word, even Jesus? Surely Jehovah hath made his dear, and ever-blessed Son most glorious, above all the other discoveries of his love! Oh! how sweet to trace Christ through every part of the sacred volume!

3 In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me: and strengthenedst me *with strength* in my soul.

Is this the person of Jesus, of whom the prophet speaks? Jesus, we know, in the days of his flesh, *offered up strong cries and tears, and was heard, in that he feared*, Heb. v. 7. Psalm lxxxix. 26. And may we not, even every child of God in Jesus, take comfort also in the same assurance, when we cry to the Lord in his name? John, xiv. 13.

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.

Scripture best explains scripture. Interpreting what is here said in reference to the days of Christ, the whole is confirmed. Psalm lxxii. 10, 11.

6 Though the LORD *be high*, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hands against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

8 The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth for ever*: for-sake not the works of thine own hands.

All believers in Christ can set their seal to these blessed truths. God's poor must be in his remembrance; they are his property, and they shall be his care. The Lord will perfect and make good all his promises concerning them. Exercised his people must be; but forgotten they shall not be. The Lord saith to each, and to all, as he said to Jacob, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of*, Gen. xxviii. 15. See the Apostle's blessed conclusion from the same, Philip. i. 6.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! learn a lesson this day from David; and looking up to God the Spirit to enable thee to carry what thou hast learned into con-

tinual practice, determine from henceforth to praise thy God and Saviour in the presence of all men. Make it thy uniform practice to know nothing among men, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Let all the world know whose thou art, and to whom thou dost belong. Be not ashamed to have it said, Jesus hath bought thee with his blood; but glorify him *in thy body, and in thy spirit, which are his*. And oh! thou blessed Saviour, give me the same confidence as thy servant David had. Wherefore should Old Testament saints, who saw thy day but afar off, have lived more by faith upon thee, than New Testament believers, who have seen thy redemption-work completed? Let it make me blush, if their faith exceeds mine. And oh! thou holy Father! hath it pleased thee to magnify thy Word above all thy name! cause me then, by the sweet influences of thy Holy Spirit, to glorify thee in Jesus above all. Oh! for grace to have such views of Jesus as the Father hath set forth in his holy word; and so to live upon Jesus, and trust in Jesus, that with the apostle I may daily sing the song of holy confidence and joy; crying out, *Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ*.

PSALM CXXXIX.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm was written by David; but it is evident that he was directed by the Holy Spirit to say in it much concerning Christ. In the former part, he dwells upon the divine perfections in the foreknowledge, and fore-appointment concerning Christ. In the latter part, Christ expresseth his agreement with the Father in the perfect holiness and purity of the thoughts and intentions of his heart.

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David.

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

I beg the Reader, before he enters upon this blessed Psalm, to recollect what I humbly offered upon the title, in former Psalms, *to the chief musician*. For if, as I then remarked (and as I think is more than probable) it be addressed particularly to the Lord Jesus, it will serve much to illustrate the several parts of it. And I yet more particularly desire the Reader, before he enters upon the persusal of it, to ponder well in his mind, whether, like several other Psalms, which the Holy Ghost himself hath explained unto us (Psalm xvi. Acts, ii. Psalm xxii. 18. Mark, xv. 24, &c.) it be not best thus to discover Christ, if, without violence to the original, the words may be applied to him? With these impressions on his mind, I beg the Reader to enter upon this most sublime portion of scripture. And while I venture to suggest (and I beg him, once for all, to remember I do but *suggest*, not *affirm*) in what sense the several passages contained in it strike me, I entreat him to look up with earnestness to God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to guide him into all truth, that his faith may be found *to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 5.

2 Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.

4 For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.

9 *If* I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mothers' womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

I would not make a chasm in the reading of these verses, because the latter of them, according to my view, throw a light upon the former. It may, no doubt, be truly said by David, and by every man like David,

that the Lord that made us, knows whereof we are made, and that nothing can escape his all-pervading eye. He knoweth our down-sitting, and our uprising, and understandeth our thoughts afar off; every where, and in all places, he is present, and seeth and knoweth all things. But though such thoughts might, and would be proper to be kept alive in our remembrance, if there were no other, nor higher reasons, than what such solemn considerations are calculated to inspire, to induce the corresponding effect upon the mind of man; yet, I venture to believe, a far more glorious subject is proposed to our consideration; and surely it is our wisdom, as well as our happiness, to make inquiry concerning it. If we suppose (as many other parts of scripture, and particularly the psalms, lead us to suppose) that a greater than David is here, shall not the true believer in Jesus find comfort and delight, if the least glimpse be seen in these expressions of Him, whom truly to know is life eternal? John, xvii. 2. Supposing then that we contemplate the whole of this Psalm as spoken by David, typically considered, as David's Lord, let us consider how the several expressions are applicable to him, from the authority of scripture. The speaker, be he whom he may, here saith, that the Lord covered him *in his mother's womb*; and he adds, *I am fearfully, and wonderfully made*. All this, it may be said, is generally and universally true, considered only as referring to the formation of the human frame, and the same, it may be said, is equally true of all God's works in creation. But the terms *fearfully and wonderfully made*, certainly imply somewhat of a more than ordinary work in the act of creation. Now if we refer to the individual body of Christ, and take in the other passages of scripture in confirmation, we find a suited correspondence to such particular and striking expressions. The apostle Paul, commenting upon the prophecy of David concerning Christ, as set forth in the 40th Psalm, saith, *Wherefore, when he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me*, Heb. x. 5. And how this body was prepared, the angel, who announced to Mary the miraculous conception, explained, when he said, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*, Luke, i. 35. Here was a body prepared, that might truly be said to be *fearfully and wonderfully made*. For this was not only a new thing (being contrary to the common mode of generation, and without the intervention of a human father) but is yet farther *fearful and wonderful*, in that it was without the act of the mother also, she being altogether passive in it. For it is not said that Christ was *begotten* of a woman, but *made of a woman*; and as such Christ is elsewhere called *the man from heaven*, 1 Cor. xv. 47. The Holy Ghost then being the great agent in this formation of Christ's body, it may be truly and properly said, that Christ was *fearfully and wonderfully made*. Christ was indeed *made secret, and curiously wrought* in the dark place of the virgin's womb, called *the lowest parts of the earth*. And moreover, that expression is exactly corresponding to this, wherein it is said, *Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all thy members were written*. The members of Christ's mystical body are said to be written *in the Lamb's book of life*, Philip. iv. 3. Rev. xxi. 27; this cannot be said with strict propriety of the mere formation of any man, nor any set of men, who by the divine volition are called into existence in a moment,

as when *God said, Let there be light, and there was light*, Gen. i. 3. Hence when God would make man, he said, *Let us make man*, Gen. i. 26. But we never read of a book, where the members of each were written before their creation. Put all these things together, and I conceive, that without violence to the words, we may infer that what is said in this Psalm, is said with peculiar reference to Christ.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

18 *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

Under the idea that we may consider what is said before in this Psalm as spoken in the person of Christ, how blessed are the expressions in these verses! When Jesus, as the Head of his church, contemplated the manner in which the body was given him, and the infinitely important purpose intended by it; he may well be supposed to break out in language like this: Precious to *him* are God's thoughts! the sum of them are incalculable as they relate, in love and mercy, to the church in him. To count them is impossible: but still he adds, *When I awake I am* where I was; that is, *with thee*. So infinite and eternal is God's love in and towards Christ and his church, that it can neither receive augmentation, nor admit of decrease. Reader! pause, and ask, what son of Adam can use language like this?

19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.

20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.

21 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

If we needed any farther evidence as to whom this Psalm can with any propriety be otherwise applied, what is here said in conclusion must direct our hearts to the blessed Jesus, and to him only. Who is there that enters into the interests of God with such oneness of soul as to say, *I hate them that hate thee, with perfect hatred?* Much less, who among a fallen race could step forward and challenge a scrutiny over his heart, even by the great Searcher of hearts, except Him who was *holy, harmless, undefiled; separate from sinners, and made higher*

than the heavens, Heb. vii. 26. Reader! pause over these considerations, and the Lord give both you and me *a right understanding in all things!*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! it may, and it will be highly profitable to your heart and mine, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to keep in view the consciousness of the divine presence, wherever we are, or however engaged. If this great article of the Christian faith were but properly kept alive in the mind, through grace, it would tend to check many an improper thought, which now, through the want of recollection, and the corruption within, breaks forth. But, Reader! if this Psalm leads your heart, as it doth mine, to the contemplation of Jesus, what blessings doth it open to our view in this prospect of the manhood of Christ. Think of his astonishing debasement! of his unequalled humility! Was Jesus indeed thus fearfully and wonderfully made? Was he thus formed in the lower parts of the earth; and were all his members written before the earth, or the habitable part of the dust of the world was formed? Were the counsels of his Father dear to him, and precious, in that these counsels appointed the redemption of his people by him, and all in him. Lamb of God! was this for *me*, even for *me*? Oh! what grace, what love which passeth knowledge, was in all this; and how precious ought the thoughts of thee, blessed Jesus, to be to me! and oh! how great the sum of them! Lord! give me grace henceforth to live to thee, to rejoice in thee, and unceasingly to view thee as the Lord my righteousness. I wou'd humbly adopt thine own words: See, Lord, that there be nothing of allowed wickedness in me, *and lead me in the way everlasting!*

PSALM CXL.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is here under affliction, looking to the Lord for help and deliverance, and taking comfort in the hope that the Lord hears, and will answer.

To the chief musician, A Psalm of David.

DELIVER me, O LORD, from the evil man:
preserve me from the violent man:

2 Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; continually are they gathered together *for* war.

3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adder's poison *is* under their lips. Selah.

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and

ords; they have spread a net by the way-side; they have set gins for me. Selah.

It will be truly profitable in this, as in similar psalms, describing the soul under exercises, to view Christ, our pattern, our example, our surety. It is He who hath carried our griefs, as well as borne our sins, and never can a soul find equal relief under any affliction, be that affliction what it may, as when looking unto Jesus. Sweetly doth the Holy Ghost teach this, when commanding the church to consider Him, who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest the people should be weary and faint in mind, Heb. xii. 3.

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.

7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; *lest* they exalt themselves. Selah.

9 *As for* the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

10 Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire: into deep pits, that they rise not up again.

11 Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.

This is a blessed appeal to the Lord! Where shall an exercised soul go in his affliction, but to a throne of grace? And how sure shall be the Lord's condemnation of the ungodly, when the cry of the sufferer ascends before the throne!

12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, *and* the right of the poor.

13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

Faith and confidence are always suitable accompaniments of prayer. When we have lodged our petitions before the throne, we should, like the prophet, get upon our watch-tower to wait the Lord's answer, Habak. ii. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

LORD! I pray thee, never suffer me to think of afflictions or sorrow for them, either in myself or the saints of God, without keeping in remembrance thine unequalled sorrows, wherewith the Lord afflicted thee in the day of thy redemption-work. Was ever sorrow like to thine, thou blessed Jesus? And, Lord, while I think of thy sorrows, let me think also of thy patience. Thou wast led *as a Lamb to the slaughter: and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so didst thou open not thy mouth.* And, blessed Jesus! let my soul feel all that sweet complacency and resignation in every exercise, be the exercise what it may, in the recollection that thou art looking on, thou knowest all, thou appointest all, and thou wilt finally bless all. Though mine enemies live, and are mighty, yet if thou wilt be my helper, under the shadow of thy wings I shall rejoice. Yes, Lord! thou wilt carry me through, and bring me out, and bring me home, and I shall be more than conqueror, through thy grace helping me.

PSALM CXLI.

CONTENTS.

The subject of this Psalm is very similar to the last. The soul of David is in distress from the persecution of foes. No doubt it was prophetically delivered, in reference to the Son of David, David's Lord; and the royal prophet certainly has an eye to Christ, in what he here saith of acceptance with God; for it can only be in him.

A Psalm of David.

LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as incense*; and the lifting up of my hands *as the evening sacrifice.*

That the writer of this Psalm was offering up these cries and prayers in the faith of a Redeemer, is most evident from what he here saith of the incense in the evening sacrifice. The Lamb of the morning and the Lamb of the evening, in the Jewish church, were clearly understood by every believing Israelite, to refer to Him, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* David therefore well knew that the lifting up of his hands could be no worthy offering, void of faith in that one all sufficient atonement; neither could the incense of his prayers be otherwise than offensive, unless perfumed with the incense of the Redeemer's merits. Reader! how refreshing and encouraging ought it to be to the souls of the faithful now, that only one and the same plan of acceptance forms the service both in the Old Testament dispensation and in the New. Exod. xxix. 38, 39. Rev. xiii. 8. Levit. xvi. 11, 12. Rev. viii. 3, 4. But, while looking at David in his devotions, do not

overlook the Lord Jesus at his, which are here strikingly set forth. Behold Christ in the days of his flesh, thus offering his holy person, lifting up his holy hands, presenting himself in the incense of his own merits, and giving himself a sacrifice, in the evening of the world, for the salvation of his people! Oh! how lovely thus to behold him! How truly blessed thus to come under the incense of his righteousness!

3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

4 Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

How earnest is a child of God, that he should act and live as becometh a child of God. He knows full well, that unless the Lord keep the heart, the lips will utter foolishness. And when the Lord disposeth the soul, the lips will praise him. Job, xxiii. 4—6.

5 Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness: and let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil, *which* shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.

Some read this verse very differently from our present translation. They render it thus: *Reproach will bruise me that am righteous, and rebuke me: but that poisonous oil shall not break my head, that is, shall not hurt me; for yet my prayer shall be in their mischiefs.* Supposing that this be the construction of the words (I do not presume to determine that it is) nothing can be more beautiful or expressive in pointing to Christ; to none else can the expression of *being righteous* be applicable. See Luke, xxii. 63, 64. xxiii. 34.

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

If these words be the words of Christ, delivered by David in the spirit of prophecy (and as they are spoken of one person, they should seem to be so) perhaps the sense is, “when the great ones of the earth are brought down by affliction, the words of Jesus and his salvation shall then be considered dear, though now despised.”

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth *wood* upon the earth.

8 But mine eyes *are* unto thee, O GOD the LORD: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

9 Keep me from the snares *which* they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

In the first of these verses we have more speakers than one; but the Psalmist, turning from the calamities there described, finds comfort in looking to the Lord; and takes sure confidence in the perfect conviction, that it shall be *well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked.* Isaiah, iii. 10, 11.

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED Jesus! under the incense of thy merits, and with a steady unwearied eye looking to thee and thy one all-sufficient sacrifice, would my soul desire, morning by morning, and evening by evening, to come before thy mercy-seat; and in language like this sweet Psalm, would I pray that my poor prayer, and my uplifted hands, should set forth my only hope, my only dependence on thee. Oh! for grace, blessed Lord, to be always *habitually* prepared for this employment, in being for ever clothed with thy righteousness, and having all the ascension-gifts of thy Spirit implanted in my heart! Then would the *actual* exercises of grace upon thee, and to thee, be manifested in the going forth of my soul in faith and supplication, in love and praise. Then should I cry out with the church: *Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.* And while my soul is looking unto thee, hanging upon thee, and longing for thee with an earnestness that nothing but enjoyment can satisfy, I shall praise thee with joyful lips. Jesus will then bring me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me will be love. Then the noise without, and even the smiting of those that would reproach me within, will only tend to make Jesus more precious. Mine eyes shall be looking unto the Lord, who will keep me from every snare, and at length bring me home to his heavenly kingdom!

PSALM CXLII.

CONTENTS.

The title of this Psalm best explains its contents. In the cave David pours out his soul before God. Here also, as Maschil means instruction, we shall find words leading us to Christ.

Maschil of David; A prayer when he was in the cave.

I CRIED unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

2 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me.

If the Reader wish to see the part David, king of Israel, bore personally in this Psalm, he will find the explanation in David's history. It is more than likely, that the cave here spoken of, was that of *Adullam*, for which see 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2; or if it was in the wilderness of *Engedi*, see 1 Sam. xxiv. throughout. But, when the Reader hath made all the improvements he may desire, in reference to David's personal exercises, I request him to consider the words, in these verses, as applicable to Jesus, and see whether higher instructions do not arise out of them. It was from the prison and from judgment, that the Prophet described Jesus as being taken, *when he was cut off out of the land of the living*. And whoever beholds the Lamb of God hunted by Jews and Gentiles from the judgment hall of Pilate to Calvary, will find a situation like this, but too accurately described in Christ. How did Jesus pour out his soul in prayer in the garden, and on the cross! How was his spirit overwhelmed, when the Father looked on, knew all, and appointed all! Who, in the contemplation of Jesus's agonies, connecting with the view our interest in them, can pause to look at David, when a greater than David is thus set forth?

4 I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but *there was* no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my refuge *and* my portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

Reader! look once more to Jesus, while reading this account. Call to mind how *one* disciple betrayed him, and *another* denied him, and *all* forsook him and fled! Hear the strong cries of Jesus on the cross, when casting himself upon his Father, as his refuge and his portion! Behold the Lord Jehovah bringing him out of the prison, in his resurrection; and trace the blessed consequences, in the righteous believing in him, and compassing him about, now the Lord hath exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name! Oh! how truly delightful is it thus to read Christ's history in early prophecy, and in the types of his servants in the old church! And how truly blessed, when to these we can add our own testimony in our firm belief in him!

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over this sweet Psalm, and take from it, for thy constant meditation, the many precious instructions it holds forth unto thee.

Look again and again at Jesus, as thou ponderest over the several verses, and behold thy Lord in the trying situations here described. And when thou hast gathered, under the Spirit's teaching, the several sweets this beautiful flower of scripture affords, feed upon the honey for thine own food, under exercises in the tribulated path. What though thou art reduced in circumstances, and thy spirit be overwhelmed within thee; though thou, like thy Saviour, canst find none on thy right hand, that will know thee; and on the left, evils, arising from sin, Satan, and the world, would bear thee down; say, is not Christ upon the throne? And doth he not see thee, know thee; nay, hath he not appointed thy very state to be what it is, on purpose to make thee know thy need and his love? O, blessed Lord! though all refuge fail me, and no man careth for my soul, thou carest for it, for thou hast bought it with thy blood, and thou wilt preserve it with thy grace; thou wilt be my portion, my God, my Saviour, my Jesus. Thou wilt bring me out of all the prison-houses of sin here, and death hereafter, and I shall praise thy name. Yes, my Lord! the end is sure. *I shall behold thy face in righteousness; still look to Jesus, and I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

PSALM CXLIII.

CONTENTS.

The Psalmist is still at his devotions, pouring out his soul under afflictions, and seeking strength against his enemies.

A Psalm of David.

HEAR my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.

2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

It is beautiful to observe, how the holy pleader begs for deliverance upon the footing of God's righteousness. Jesus, when he stood as the sinner's surety, did this: and in his name all his people do the same. Acts, iv. 12. God's righteousness, as well as God's grace, becomes the plea, when a soul hath an interest in the Redeemer's righteousness.

3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.

Jesus might well thus complain, because when he stood forth in our stead, he felt all that it was our due to have felt, had he not interposed.

The temptations of Satan were harassing to his holy soul, so that his spirit was overwhelmed. And above all, the Father's desertion, though but for a season, bore hard upon the Lamb of God. Psalm xxii. 1.

5 I remember the days of old ; I meditate on all thy works ; I muse on the work of thy hands.

6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee : my soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

It is very sweet and blessed, under present troubles, to call to remembrance former mercies. *Asaph* found this, Psalm lxxvii. 3—6. Hence that sweet promise, Gen. xxii. 14. Reader, let you and I look back, under any new troubles, to past deliverances, and behold the many *Ebenezers* which we have set up, that we may say, *Hitherto hath God helped us*. And in doing this we shall find occasion therefrom to say, with the apostle, *who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver*. 1 Sam. vii. 12. 2 Cor. i. 10.

7 Hear me speedily, O LORD : my spirit faileth : hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning ; for in thee do I trust : cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies : I flee unto thee to hide me.

10 Teach me to do thy will ; for thou *art* my God : thy spirit *is* good ; lead me into the land of uprightness.

11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake ; for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

12 And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul : for I *am* thy servant.

Here are the same hopes, the same confidences, and the same acts of faith, which all the other parts of the believer's supplications carry with them, that the issue shall be prosperous. And to those who view Christ as the foundation on which those hopes are built, the issue will never be doubtful. Jesus hath said, *heaven and earth shall pass away ; but my word shall not pass away*, Matt. xxiv. 35.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, do pause to mark the blessedness of that state, which can look up and plead for justification before God, upon the sole authority of God's covenant, and the person and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus himself pleaded both these, so hath he taught his people to do the same. As poor, polluted, guilty, sinners, we could have nothing to plead, but only cry for pure mercy. But, while we keep God's Christ in view, and behold him as Jehovah's salvation to the ends of the earth; we may, and we ought, indeed, to lodge all our appeals both upon Christ's merit, and the covenant faithfulness of God our Father. And, Reader, do mark it down, as a sure and certain thing, that when God the Holy Ghost leads out the soul to the full view of those united sources of our acceptance before God, nothing can afford a more solid and substantial resting-place, for maintaining fellowship and communion with God, by grace in this life, and everlasting glory in the life to come. Precious Lord, help me so to plead, so to come to the throne, and so to act faith upon God's record concerning his dear Son, that I may always come *boldly unto the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

PSALM CXLIV.

CONTENTS.

This Psalm hath much in it concerning Christ. If we read it wholly with reference to him and his church, we shall find it to be a very delightful hymn, suited to the times of the gospel.

A Psalm of David.

BLESSED be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:

2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

These military expressions are all suited to the spiritual warrior. Jesus, the great Captain of our salvation, had a personal conflict with Satan, and having been taught of Jehovah how to fight and overcome, he now is conquering him in and by all his members. Hence Christ is our shield, our fortress, our tower; and in his name we conquer: while of Jesus himself, it may and must be said, that what the Father engaged, the Father fully performed, and did beat down all his foes before his face, Psalm lxxxix. 20—23.

3 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?

4 Man is like to vanity : his days *are* as a shadow that passeth away.

These verses are as a clue enabling us to apply the whole to Christ. In proof, read Psalm viii. 4, explained by Heb. ii. 6, to the end. To add any other comment would be to hold a lighted taper before the sun. Blessed Spirit! help us to praise thee, that in thy glorifying of Jesus, thou hast thus unfolded to thy church this precious scripture.

5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down : touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them : shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.

7 Send thine hand from above ; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children.

8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.

In every sense this prayer is striking, and beautiful in whatever sense it be considered ; whether as the prayer of the church for the Lord to come down in the power of the Spirit, to bruise Satan, and sin, and the world, under the feet of his people ; or as the earnest longing and hope of the church, for the Lord Jesus's second coming, without sin, unto salvation.

9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God : upon a psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

10 *It is he* that giveth salvation unto kings : who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

The New Testament song is the same as that sung by Old Testament saints, namely, salvation. See sweet stanzas of it, Psalm xl. 3. Rev. v. 9.

11 Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.

Two mighty blessings are included in this short verse ; one, to see the overthrow of Zion's enemies ; the other, to see the prosperity of Zion's friends.

12 That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth ; *that* our daughters *may be* as corner stones, polished *after* the similitude of a palace :

13 *That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands, and ten thousands in our streets:*

14 *That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets:*

These are the blessed consequences of the reign of Jesus. His birth shall be as the dew-drops of the morning; and the Lord will give his people a name in his house, better than of sons and daughters, Isaiah, lvi. 5. If we translate the blessings spoken of, concerning temporal things, in reference to spiritual, then we shall have a clearer apprehension of the incalculable blessings in Jesus. Our sons, like plants, and our daughters, polished after the similitude of a palace, do not unaptly represent the children of Jesus, who are trees of the Lord's right-hand planting; and all the refreshing graces of the Holy Spirit are polished, as love, joy, peace, and every blessing of the covenant in Christ. These garners will be indeed opening an inexhaustible treasure of all that a regenerated soul in Christ can live upon. And the product of such grace in the heart will raise up everlasting revenues of praise to Jehovah, and happiness to the church, as thousands and tens of thousands of cattle figuratively set forth. Complaining will be done away, and the voice of sorrow and sin be heard no more in our streets. Oh! happy period of the church of God! Lord, hasten it in thine own time, to thine own praise, and thy people's joy;

15 *Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*

Moses hath a verse similar to this, Deut. xxviii. 29. Who so blessed, who so well taken care of, who so highly favoured, as the Israel of God? Reader! all these blessings were types of gospel mercies, and in Jesus we see them realized. Well may every child of God cry out, Happy art thou, O believer, that art in such a case; yea, happy is that soul whose God is the Lord! Reader! is this your portion? Can you call God your Father, Jesus your Redeemer, God the Spirit your teacher, sanctifier, and the glorifier of Jesus? Sweet testimony, when these things live in the heart, and Christ is formed there the hope of glory!

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul! dost thou long to war a good warfare? Look up then to the Captain of thy salvation, and behold how Jehovah armed him for the battle; and do thou go forth in his strength, making mention of his righteousness, even his only. He came forth at the call of his Father, full of zeal, when *his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.* And while thou art thus looking up to Jesus, he is looking upon thee, and will

teach thy hands to war, and thy fingers to fight. He will be to thee all thou canst need, therefore follow him, and behold the salvation of God. And oh! my soul, cease not to contemplate his love. And whilst thou goest on in the wilderness road, *fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life*; contemplate, as thou goest, the infinite love and grace, and condescension of Jesus: and while thou criest out as the Psalmist, *Lord! what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him*; contemplate the Man in those words, whose name is the BRANCH, whose name is indeed WONDERFUL. Yes! precious Jesus! all thoughts, all subjects, all contemplations, must be lost and swallowed up in thee, as all the rivers of the earth are in the ocean. Thou art a sea of wonders, a world of wonders, in thy person, offices, characters, relations. *I will sing indeed a new song*, and thou shalt be the whole sum and substance of it: for in thee, and by thee, and from thee, all blessings flow. Our sons and our daughters shall grow up in thy grace, and all our upper and nether springs shall be marked with Jesus. Hail! thou glorious Lord of all! *Mine own friend, and my Father's friend will I forget not: the fathers to the children shall make known thy praise.*

PSALM CXLV.

CONTENTS.

Agreeably to the title, this Psalm is full of praise. God's glory, greatness, majesty, grace, goodness, in short, all the divine perfections, are here set forth, in a most lovely and interesting manner; and if we consider the chief Musician, the first singer in our nature, thus leading the heavenly song, when he had finished redemption-work, and the Lord give us grace to follow him through it, that we may sing it with the spirit and the understanding also; it will become a blessed hymn of praise indeed.

David's Psalm of praise.

I WILL extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

I beg the Reader to observe the different method with which the title of this Psalm is marked from every other. We have several marked as *the michtams* of David, and several marked *māschil*; some *Prayers of David*, and some *Songs of David*; but this is the only one in the book of Psalms which bears the title, *David's Psalm of praise*. And as the *five following* (with which the book of Psalms concludes) have no title, I am rather inclined to think that this was meant to answer for all. This Psalm is the more remarkable, as it is composed in alphabetical order; the first verse beginning with the letter *Aleph*; the second with *Beth*; and so on to the end. It is said that the Jews had a tradition, that whosoever among them sung this hymn three times in a day, would infallibly go to heaven. Certain it is, that it is a most blessed hymn of praise; and by it the Holy Ghost put into the mouth of his people, most precious words, wherewith to come before the Lord. I venture to think

that it will aid the minds of true believers in Jesus, if, while reading it, that blessed Spirit should lead our souls to see Christ in the hymn; as if, when the Lord Jesus had finished redemption-work, which the Father gave him to do, and contemplating the whole now in the end of his labours, he begins this lovely song, and calls upon his church to follow him in the daily use of it, that their minds may be more and more engaged towards the close of this life in praises, until they arrive at the enjoyment of the everlasting praises of heaven. In this sense, I hope, I do no violence to the title of *David's Psalm of praise*. The Son of David opens the hymn with looking up to Jehovah, whom he calls his God and King, and declares his resolution to bless his name for ever and ever. It is Jehovah's name; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is blessed in all redemption-work. See Psalm lxxxix. 26. Isaiah, xlix. 5, 6.

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
and his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise thy works to another,
and shall declare thy mighty acts.

5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty,
and of thy wondrous works.

6 And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts:
and I will declare thy greatness.

7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness,
and shall sing of thy righteousness.

I do not think it necessary to enlarge upon the several perfections of Jehovah, which the prophet celebrates through this Psalm; for in this case I should amplify the subject to an extent very great indeed. And moreover the hymn itself so beautifully and plainly sets forth these perfections of our God, that I cannot but conclude the Holy Ghost intimates, from the manner and method in which they are spoken of, as if his gracious intention were, while the people are reading or singing them, to draw nigh with his sweet teachings, to make them life and spirit to the heart. Great God! cause both the Reader and the Writer to look up to thee for this mercy, and humbly to wait thy blessing upon it! I only detain the Reader to observe the different effects which the contemplation of these perfections of Jehovah are said to induce: If it be Jesus who is the speaker by the spirit of prophecy, he saith, that while *one generation to another* shall praise Jehovah's works, *I will speak of thy glorious honour*. And then it is added, *Men shall speak also*. A sweet thought ariseth out of this distinction: If Jesus, as the great head of his church, makes known to his people his Father's love, and mercy, and goodness; they shall then take up the wondrous theme, and from generation to generation proclaim it to their children. Even so, Lord, I would say, do thou bless thy church with thy divine teaching.

8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion;
slow to anger, and of great mercy.

9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Reader! do not fail to connect with the view of this verse, the first relation of it in the holy mount, Exod. xxxiv. 5—7. And do not fail also to connect with it the grand cause. What is the Lord's goodness, mercy, and compassion to poor fallen sinners, but Christ and his salvation? In Jesus hath not Jehovah proclaimed his name, and made all his goodness pass before us? Exod. xxxiii. 18, to the end. Numb. xiv. 17, 18. Psalm lxxxvi. 5, 15, ciii. 8, 9.

10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.

11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;

12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

All these are so many delightful relations of the grace and glory of Jehovah, with the blessings connected with his government, in the kingdoms of nature and providence, and of redemption.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Here again I only detain the Reader to remark, that while we read these scriptures, which point out Jehovah as the universal parent of nature; what a glorious addition to the subject doth it become, to take into the contemplation Jehovah under those endearing characters, as *the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace*. What titles are these! And what a blessed thing, when we know him under those characters in our own experience. Reader! think of God the Father under those precious titles. As a *Father of mercies*, he begets mercies as his people need them. And as the *God of all grace*, he hath all sorts of grace, and all degrees of grace; large, full, great, unceasing. *God is able* (saith the apostle) *to make all grace abound towards you*, 2 Cor. ix. 8. 1 Peter, v. 10 What a blessed consideration to every poor sinner, conscious of his need, whatever his need be, that God hath pardoning grace, quickening grace, strengthening grace, restraining and preventing grace; yea, all grace.

17 The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

18 The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

Every verse is full of the same assurances of divine goodness, mercy, and love. God in Christ is righteous, is nigh to his people, is attentive to them, knows them, loves them, guards them, blesses them, and will bless them to the end. Well may the Psalm conclude with praises. And if we hear Jesus's voice, in blessing Jehovah for the redemption of his people in him, and by him, every mouth and heart will join in the song, and bless a God in Christ for ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! have you been looking up to God in Christ while passing over the several portions of this hymn of praise? Was this indeed our David's Psalm of praise? And is it ours also? Oh! for grace to follow him in the regeneration, and to look up to him as God the Father's salvation to the ends of the earth! Yes! blessed Jesus! I would bless thee, I would adore thee, I would love thee! In thy obedience and death, I behold all the greatness, goodness, and glory of Jehovah manifested to poor sinners. Thou hast spoken of it, blessed Lord, in the days of thy flesh. I would be among the men that shall speak of thy mighty acts, now thou art in glory. I would tell every poor sinner, day by day, how gracious the Lord is! I would tell them that the Lord Jesus upholdeth them that fall; and raiseth up those that are bowed down. I would strive to encourage every poor broken-hearted sinner to make experiment of this mercy, by assuring them that the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him; yea, unto all that call upon him in truth. I would again and again repeat the blessed subject of encouragement, and assure them that Jesus will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and save them. Precious Lord! fill my soul with thyself; and let it be the one earnest desire of my heart, living and dying, and to all eternity, that my mouth shall speak the praises of the Lord, and bless thee now, and bless thee for ever!

PSALM CXLVI.

CONTENTS.

The subject, begun in the former Psalm, is here continued. Praise may and will be opened by the church in time, but it will never cease through all eternity.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

Hallelujah is the first and last word of this and all the remaining Psalms. A blessed method of adoring God, and what forms the employment of the church in heaven. Hence while the Psalmist recommends the plan, he resolves himself to follow it.

2 While I live, will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being.

3 Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

In order to heighten the subject, the Psalmist draws a comparative statement between the eternal, unfading, unchanging existence of Jehovah; and the momentary, perishing, and fluctuating condition of princes and every breathing creature. Reader! contemplate this, and learn from it what the scriptures hold forth concerning it, Psalm cii.

5 Happy *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the LORD his God:

6 Which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein *is*: which keepeth truth for ever:

7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:

8 The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind: the LORD raiseth *them that are* bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

9 The LORD preserveth the stranger: he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

10 The LORD shall reign for ever, *even thy* God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

There can be no hesitation to determine to whom these verses refer. The God of Jacob, is God's covenant name in Christ. And the offices

that covenant God hath performed, and is performing, as plainly manifest the Lord Jesus. See Isaiah, lxi. 1, compared with Luke, iv. 18, 19. And he that in the days of his flesh opened the eyes of the blind; and now in the day of his power openeth the eyes of the soul, is the King of Zion upon his holy hill; and will be Zion's Husband, Lord, and Redeemer, for ever and ever. Well may we say Hallelujah!

REFLECTIONS.

HAIL! thou glorious King of Zion, Jesus, before whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that thou art universal Lord, to the glory of God the Father! I would begin every hymn, and close every prayer with Hallelujah. Surely, Lord, every redeemed soul upon earth, as well as those in heaven, thus taught by thee may join the song, *for thou art worthy to receive all glory and honour, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* I behold, Lord, in princes and every thing around, the dying perishing circumstances of all the earth. The children of men must die; mountains shall depart; hills be removed; but Jesus liveth. He that is I AM, amidst all revolutions is I AM still. Precious thought! what a foundation is here for thee, my soul! It is He that hath opened thy blind eyes. It is He that hath loosed thee out of prison. He that hath been thy help, now is, and ever will be thy Redeemer, thy God, and the lifter up of thine head. Here rest then, and shout Hallelujah! This God is thy God for ever and ever: He will be thy guide unto death.

PSALM CXLVII.

CONTENTS.

The subject, though enlarged in this Psalm, is in substance the same as the two former. It consists of the praises of the Church upon earth looking unto her Lord, in imitation of the church adoring Jehovah in heaven.

PRAISE ye the LORD: for *it is good to sing* praises unto our God: for *it is pleasant; and* praise is comely.

2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem; he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

4 He telleth the number of the stars: he calleth them all by *their* names.

I consider this subject spiritually. For the building of Jerusalem is peculiarly the office of Christ. When the Lord promises to lift up an ensign to the people, it evidently refers to Christ. See those scriptures, Isaiah, xi. 12; whence Christ saith, John, xii. 32; hence also that

sweet promise, Isaiah, xxvii. 13; and hence, if we accept this divine Psalm in this spiritual illustration of it, all that follows may be interpreted with reference to Christ.

5 Great *is* our LORD, and of great power: his understanding *is* infinite.

6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:

8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.

9 He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry.

10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

11 The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

I do not think it needful to go over the several things here mentioned. If Jesus doth thus order, arrange, direct, and bless his church, and take delight in those that hope in his mercy; what can be more sweet and proper than to see the souls of his redeemed going out after him, in waitings, adorations, love, and praise? Oh! the blessedness of communion! Jesus gives of his fulness; and his people come with their emptiness to be supplied. Jesus is not only glorified when they actively praise him; but also when they passively receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. So, Lord, let my soul live upon thee and to thee! Micah, v. 8. Deut. xxxii. 2. Isaiah, lv. 10, 11.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Zion.

13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.

14 He maketh peace *in* thy borders, *and* filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

15 He sendeth forth his commandment *upon* earth: his word runneth very swiftly.

16 He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.

17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?

18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.

19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

20 He hath not dealt so with any nation: *and as for his* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

New and increasing claims are upon Zion, for renewed instances of divine favour. And, Reader! this is your case, and mine. Every day, nay every moment, Jesus visits his people, Isaiah, xxvii. 3: And how are we secured like the bars of Zion's gates, in the arms of Jehovah! Deut. xxxiii. 27. John, x. 28, 29. How are they blessed within, with the fine wheat of the bread of life, and the peace of God in Christ! John, vi. 51. Ephes. i. 7. How doth the Lord send forth his word to melt the soul; and cause the north wind, and the south wind to blow upon his garden! Luke, xxiv. 32. Song, iv. 16. Titus, iii. 5, 6. Surely every child of God can bear testimony to these things; and every child of God in the contemplation of discriminating grace will say, He hath not dealt so with any nation. Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to me and not unto the world? John, xiv. 22. And, under a deep sense of these things, shall we not say, Hallelujah?

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul; look round, and behold, in all the objects around and about thee, above and below; how innumerable and unceasing are the demands which call for the praises of Jehovah. See how, in infinite wisdom, he hath made them all! Behold how the Lord provideth for them. Contemplate the worlds in the upper region, and consider what this blessed Psalm records, that all those suns and stars, which are so many systems of worlds, Jehovah counteth by number, and calleth by their names! When thou hast duly pondered over this vast subject, turn thy thoughts to the Lord's Jerusalem, his Zion, which is graven on the palms of his hands, and whose walls are continually before him: consider how Jesus hath founded Zion, built her on himself, washed her in his blood, clothed her in his righteousness, made her a perfection of beauty; secured her, fed her, nourished her, and will bless her for ever. Then turn thy thoughts to thyself, a poor, trifling, insignificant member of Zion; and think, amidst all thy littleness, worthlessness, ingratitude, undeservings; Jesus still thinks on thee, loves thee, pities thee, blesses thee, and will bless thee. Hath he not done it, and is he not doing it? Hath he not healed thy broken heart, and bound up all thy wounds? Oh! for grace to bless him, to love him, to live to him, to adore him; and in the humbling, yet transporting thought of grace so distinguishing, while thousands know him not, and are not acquainted with his statues, oh to praise him with unceasing praises, and to begin and end life, as this Psalm doth, *Praise the Lord!*

PSALM CXLVIII.

CONTENTS.

Here is a farther continuation of the same hymn of praise. The Psalmist, in a beautiful gradation, calls upon all creation to join the song.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

The inspired writer, after opening the Psalm with *Hallelujah*, sets himself in order to call upon all ranks of creation to join with him in praise. He begins with the heavens themselves, those inanimate parts of God's system. Here (saith he) let Jehovah be praised. And most certainly they do praise him. Psalm xix. 1—6.

2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.

6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

He next looks to the heavenly host, angels, and the brighter order of celestial beings, who minister unceasingly to Jehovah. John, in a vision, beheld the hierarchies thus engaged, and heard their songs, which the Holy Ghost was pleased to commission him to deliver to the church, Rev. iv. and v. throughout.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

9 Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

10 Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:

From heaven, the sacred writer descends to the earth, and calls upon every thing, and every object he meets with, or can recal to his mind, to join the hymn, in honour of the One glorious Lord and Maker of all.

11 Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

12 Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory *is* above the earth and heaven.

In these verses, the sacred penman riseth to the higher order of beings upon the earth, the intelligent and rational parts of God's creation; and, in the several degrees of kings and peasants, young and old, bond and free, demands the tribute of praise to Jehovah, as to the first, best, and greatest of all Beings.

14 He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; *even* of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

Lastly, he calls upon the people of God, the Israel of Jehovah, concerning whom the Lord hath said, *This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise*, Isaiah, xliii. 21. And here, Reader, I pray you not only to observe the Israel of God, but the God of his Israel. Jesus is the horn of his people. And Jesus is the praise of all his saints. And if his people are near to him, as they are indeed, most near, and most dear, yet this only is in Jesus: One with him, they are near unto the Lord: they are brought nigh in his blood: they are his treasure, his jewels, his chosen, his redeemed. And well may they be called upon to praise him: for if they should hold their peace, *the very stones might cry out*, Luke, xix. 40.

REFLECTIONS.

STAND still, my soul, stand still, and ponder well the weighty claims there are upon thee in this blessed Psalm. All creation, indeed, may well praise God, for God hath created, formed, and arranged them all in the beautiful and regular order in which they stand. But what can be the song of creation, compared to that of redemption, which *thou* art called upon to sing? God hath sent his Son to redeem thee, to save thee, and to bring thee into everlasting fellowship, and the enjoyment of his presence and favour, in and through the blood and righteousness of his dear Son! Jesus hath died for thee, arisen for thee, answered for thee, justified thee, clothed thee, fed thee, blessed thee, and loved thee, and will love and bless thee for ever. And God the Spirit hath opened to thee his precious communications of grace; quickened thee, given thee a new life in Christ, united thee to the ever blessed Jesus; and is, and will be for ever, taking of the things of Jesus, to bless thee in Jesus, and to make thee a suited vessel for his glory in time, and to all eternity! Are these then the blessings of Jehovah, with which thou art distinguished? Art thou indeed among, and of the number of that

people, which this Psalm records; *a people near unto Him; or dwelling alone, as they are elsewhere called? Oh! think then, how thou shouldest live to his glory, to his praise, in his fear, in his love, who hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light! I charge it upon thee, my soul, this day, that thou live only to his praise; and that every act of thine be to his glory. Precious Lord Jesus! help me to praise thee, and to live a life of hallelujahs upon earth, until I come to shout them aloud in thy presence for ever!*

PSALM CXLIX.

CONTENTS.

If possible, the composition of this hymn riseth to higher notes than the former. The sacred writer, in the close of the foregoing Psalm, called upon the Zion of the Lord to praise him; but here the call is more earnest.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Israel, by name, is here demanded to come forward to the pleasant employment of praise; and Jesus, King in Zion, is to be their one glorious theme. I beg the reader to remark, that here is nothing said of Israel's being joyful in what their King had done for them. These things, in their proper place, became sweet subjects of praise. But the subject of praise, in which Israel is now to be engaged, is Jesus himself. Reader, pause over this apparently small, but most important distinction. The Lord is gracious in his gifts, gracious in his love, gracious in his salvation. Every thing he gives, is from his mercy, and is ever to be so acknowledged. But Jesus's gifts, are not himself: I cannot be satisfied with his gifts, while I know that to others he gives his person. It is Jesus himself that I want. Though he give me all things that I need, yet if he be to me himself all things that I need, in him I have all things. Hence, therefore, let us see, that Jesus not only gives us all, but that he is our all. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*

3 Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

I beg to call the reader's attention to a proper idea on the subject of dancing, from what is here said of it, and to observe, that even from hence, if there were no other passages in the word of God concerning it, a moment's recollection might convince him, that it never could mean that frivolous, childish, and (when we consider its tendency) may we not add, too often sinful custom, used in modern times. To praise

God's name *in the dance*, as this Psalm expresseth it, carries with it somewhat solemn, grave, and full of devotion. Thus *Miriam* went forth to lead the Israelitish women in the dance, after the destruction of Pharaoh at the Red Sea; and the words of the song which accompanied that dancing most decidedly prove, that nothing of a wanton or trifling nature could mingle in that solemnity: *Sing ye to the Lord* (saith *Miriam*) *for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea*, Exod. xv. 21. Now let the reader pause, and ask himself whether the dancing recorded in Scripture was in the least similar to the dancing of modern times? Could any of the frivolous characters of the present day, among our men and women, or the young children of both sexes, while (to use the language of the prophet, *with stretched forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking und minging as they go*) they trip it in the dance; could they be supposed to say, *Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath done gloriously?* And if such language would ill accord with their vain employments, must we not look for some better and higher meaning in the dancing referred to in Scripture? Isaiah, iii. 16. It hath been supposed, and the idea is not altogether destitute of propriety, that the dancing of the Scripture, was an imitation of the heavenly bodies, in the revolution of the planets. For when we consider, that, from the earliest times, the study of astronomy became not only a favourite science, but a most useful one to guide the traveller, there seems to be no small reason wherefore pious and devout minds might not be supposed to adopt some plan of exercise, which is called dancing, to express holy joy, and thankfulness to the Lord, upon any remarkable occasion, in their solemnities; and while singing to the Lord's praise, attempt to imitate those works of the Lord, in which the fixed stars perform their regular order and motion. I do not presume to say that this was the case; but I do venture to believe, that whether the idea be founded in certainty or not, the dancing of the Scriptures was as foreign from the dancing so called of the present day, as light is opposite to darkness. And I cannot but earnestly recommend to parents of the rising generation, to discountenance a practice the reverse of all godliness, as dancing is, and rather let their young ones be taught to bend the knee before God.

4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people :
he will beautify the meek with salvation.

Sweet thought! may we not, while reading it, take up Solomon's humble inquiry, *But will God indeed dwell on earth?* 1 Kngs, viii. 27.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory : let them
sing aloud upon their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,
and a two-edged sword in their hand ;

7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and
punishments upon the people ;

8 To bind their kings with chains, and their
nobles with fetters of iron ;

9 To execute upon them the judgment written : this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

These are all so many gracious calls to the redeemed, to praise God in Christ every where, at home and abroad; when upon their beds, and when elsewhere; in the church, and in the closet. And they seem to refer to the triumph of the church of Christ over all her enemies, both in this world and in that which is to come. It looks into the kingdom of glory, as well as refers to the kingdom of grace. The honour which all the saints of the kingdom shall have, will one day be final, and full; *when Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe.* In the faithful expectation of that day, let the saints of Jesus rejoice; looking for, and hastening unto, *that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing, of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.* 2 Thess. i. 10. Titus, ii. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, do you feel your heart warmed to join the host of the redeemed, here called upon to sing aloud redemption? Do you know it, and can you sing it? The Psalmist calls it, *a new song.* And so it is indeed; and it can only be sung by *a new heart.* If the Lord hath taught it you, there will be indeed rejoicing in him, that hath not only made you, but *new made* you: not only created and given you a being, but hath newly created you in Christ Jesus, and given you both a being and a *well-being* in the Lord, and in his great salvation. When John saw the Lamb on Mount Zion, encircled with his royal redeemed army, and heard them sing this same new song; he tells us, that *no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.* Pause, Reader! and while we read this blessed Psalm, and hear the saints of God called upon to such sacred melody, I pray you see to it, that you and I, if we have not learned it, may ask *the Chief Musician*, even Jesus, to teach it us. Jesus, I would say, help us to praise thee, and to sing to thy glory? Shall the redeemed around thy throne sing to thy glory, shall they chaunt aloud the sweet song of redemption, and wilt thou not teach me to warble the notes of it below? Lord, help me now to praise thee; and while the saints sing upon their beds, and the high praises of God in Christ are in their mouths, tune my heart to the same, and let the name of Jesus be upon my heart and on my tongue. Oh! for grace to say, *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp, I myself will awake early: I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people; and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.*

PSALM CL.

CONTENTS.

The Holy Ghost with this short but precious Psalm concludes this book of divine hymns and praises. It contains a general invitation to every thing that hath breath to praise Jehovah.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals.

6 Let every thing that hath breath, praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

No less than *thirteen times*, within the compass of *six verses*, is there a call to the praise of Jehovah! *How* the Lord is to be praised: *where* the Lord is to be praised: *for what* the Lord is to be praised; and *by whom* the Lord is to be praised: all set forth in these few stanzas. May the Holy Ghost open, unfold, explain, and direct the Reader's mind to a full apprehension concerning these things!

I should not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any farther observation upon the subject of praise in general; neither should I offer any comment upon what is here said, if there was not one point which I deem too interesting wholly to pass over, though I do not presume to propose any thing decidedly upon it; I mean, concerning the *musical instruments*, with which the Lord is said to be praised. Having in the preceding Psalm humbly offered my ideas concerning the *dancing* spoken of in the hymns of Saints, I venture to offer a thought upon the *melody* also, with which those hymns and songs of praise are commanded to be accompanied. I never have been able to satisfy my mind that the expressions here used of *psaltery and harp, organs and loud cymbals*, have the smallest reference to musical instruments. I am well aware that some Commentators have conceived that they find authority for their use, in what is said of the harps used in heaven, Rev. xiv. 2. But this, in my view, is advancing nothing; they might have as well contended that what is said of the streets of heaven being paved with gold, literally means so. Rev. xxi. 21. If musical instruments were used in the temple-service, we may humbly observe, that they were suited to a dispensation of types and shadows only; similar to what the apostle saith of other figurative services in the Church,

which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation, Heb. ix. 9, 10. According to my apprehension, under a gospel dispensation, and in a gospel Church, the only stringed instruments to be used, are the strings of the heart; that the loud swelling organ and the timbrel, mean the full chord of the renewed soul: so that when the Holy Ghost calls upon the Church to *praise God in the holiness of his sanctuary*, the believing soul who obeys this command, praiseth God in Christ for the holiness of his nature, and the holiness of the renewed soul in Jesus. When the demand is, *praise Him in his mighty acts*, the soul of the redeemed swells in the loud notes of a conscious interest in the mighty acts of Jesus's redemption. Here, Reader! let you and I join the song which the Church in glory are unceasingly singing, and with sacred timbrel and dance, with the stringed instruments of all the affections of the soul, praise God in Christ. Yea, let us strive who shall sing the loudest notes of faith, and love, and obedience. Looking up to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, let us bless Him *for* redemption; let us bless God the Son *in* redemption; and let us bless God the Spirit by the sweet enjoyment *of* redemption. Let us bless the holy undivided Three in One, with ardent lively faith, and holy triumph, and in a daily endeavour to forward the interests of the divine glory upon earth among men, until we come to the everlasting enjoyment of it in heaven. Thus may we, with *every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord*. And when that breath *which is in our nostrils* shall cease, the last accent on the trembling lips in Hallelujah, will join the first loud note of Hallelujah in the eternal world. Amen.

And now, Reader! the Lord having mercifully brought me on my way through my poor Comment on this most precious book of the Psalms; I cannot, I dare not indeed, take leave of it, until I have first bowed the knee in thankfulness to the great Author of all good, for all the grace, and mercy, and condescension manifested to me during those labours. And while I set up afresh my Ebenezer at this renewed instance of divine favour, I would fall down with the lowest prostration of soul and body, intreating pardon and forgiveness for the numberless errors with which, I am truly conscious, these poor writings abound. Lord! forgive all that is wrong; for all that is wrong is wholly mine! Let nothing of error here found prove injurious to thy Church and people! And if there be a single line of the Holy Ghost's teaching to the glorifying of God in Christ, Lord, own it, and bless it to the Reader's good, for that is wholly thine, and to thy name be all the praise.

Perhaps, many that sit under my poor ministry (if they should condescend to read these feeble offerings on the Psalms) will recollect some of the observations here brought together which they have heard by word of mouth in my Evening Lectures. I write, as I speak, without much attention to style or manner. For if Jesus be but glorified, the whole, both of preaching or writing, according to my apprehension of what is right, is fully answered. And if God the Holy Ghost, whose

blessed office it is to glorify Christ, should graciously condescend to bless this little work, when I am no more, and make it an instrument in His almighty hand of spreading the sweet savour of JESUS'S name among the people; and if any of those, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, should, as they read these lines after my decease, call to mind what they have heard in my personal ministry, and say, "we remember those words as they came warm from his heart, which we now read, while his ashes are mouldering in the cold grave"—the very thought comforts my soul in the moment of writing, and prompts me to hope that the prayer of faith I leave behind me for the Lord's blessing on my poor labours, will have its answer in mercy, and that *God in all things may be glorified in Jesus Christ.* Amen.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.