

REMEMBER ZION; &c.

PART I.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
—Psalm cxxxvii.

WHAT a picture of sorrow in these few words! How pathetically they describe the anguish of the Jewish captives in Babylon! Thousands of men, women and children torn from their native land, and carried captive to a foreign clime, wretched and destitute, they meet together by its dark and troubled waters. And as they gaze on the scene of their bondage and oppression, and think of their once happy homes of freedom, from which they were now separated for ever, the remembrance of their beloved land, and especially their holy and beautiful city, brings floods of tears from their eyes. Above all, how dreadful to the pious Israelites to reflect that they must not only be deprived of all the comforts of home, and the privilege of worshipping the true God on Zion, but might probably be forced by their conquerors to conform to Babylonian superstition in a land of idolatry. For to crown their misery, their insulting foes, with cruel mockery, demand of them mirth, profanely calling for the sacred songs of Zion, thus scoffing at their worship, and interfering with their religion. Shocked at such a proposal, which seemed nothing less than an insult to God himself, the pious sufferers, with one voice, exclaim, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land!" and with hearts bursting with sorrow throw their harps aside, or hang them on the willows that grew on the banks of the river. Undismayed at the prospect of suffering before them, they declare, as one man, that nothing should tempt them either to dishonour God by such profanity, or to forget their duty to Zion. It is true that, in consequence of neglecting her worship, they were in affliction, but now that Zion will be doubly dear to them when far separated from her. In the most tender and affecting language they declare that, should they ever forget her, or be tempted to serve Babel rather than Zion, they desire to be deprived of their very powers and faculties:—"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!"