

draweth near." Yes, if there be stability in a divine decree—merit in the mediation of Christ—if any truth in the doctrine of his reign—any power in the agency of his Spirit, the prediction shall be fulfilled. Prior to the ultimate triumph of the gospel, indeed, unnumbered events may transpire which have not yet been conceived. It is possible, even, that the affairs of the kingdom of Christ may at times assume a doubtful aspect, and his people may begin to wonder how *he* can retrieve them. But he sees no difficulty—he feels no perplexity. At any moment, he can touch some secret spring, which shall, silently and imperceptibly, but most effectually, change the whole aspect of his affairs. Looking on to the end, he sees *nothing desirable which he has not provided for*—nothing adverse which he has not provided against. The history of the world, to the latest period of time, is written already in his mind. Every province of idolatry and error has its limit and its date appointed there. The angel is already selected who shall eventually shout, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." The chorus is appointed whose voices are to resound, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Halleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Brethren, if we listen, we can hear that voice too: for even now are they rehearsing for the glorious day—and every hour increases the chorus, and every echo that reaches us rebukes our indolence as witnesses for God, and proclaims the dignity of our office, and the certainty of our success.

5. And then, think what the consequences of that success would be. Civilization? The missionary of the cross, indeed, is the missionary of civilization. This the gospel taught first at imperial Rome—cleansing her amphitheatre of human blood; and evincing that her boasted civilization had been only a splendid barbarism. Morality? The missionary of the cross is the missionary of morality. The gospel produced charity even in Judea, humility at Athens, chastity at Corinth, humanity at Rome. And wherever it has gone, in our own day, liberty, morality, education, the arts of civilization, and the blessings of commerce, have followed in its train. It has extinguished the fires of the suttee, called away the cannibal from his unholy feast, and among its latest trophies are the broken slave-chains of a million men. It elevates the barbarian into a man, and raises the man into a useful member of society. It turns the wandering horde of the wilderness into a civilized community, and calls it to take rank among the nations. There is but one art which the gospel does not promote: as the peace-maker of the world, it steps between the ranks of war, and, taking the weapons of death away, it declares that men shall learn war no more; and, joining their hands in amity, it says to them, "Love as brethren." Oh! could mere human civilization effect results such as these, how soon would her image be set up, and what multitudes would fall down and worship! But these are triumphs for the gospel alone, and triumphs which it achieves incidentally, by aiming at greater things than these.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It raises the savage into the man, by making him a new creature in Christ Jesus; it prepares him for civilized society, by making him a member of a Christian church. In the zeal of its new-found existence, that church becomes a witness for Christ to others; the word of God sounds forth into all the regions round about; and similar triumphs result, only to be followed by similar labours and triumphs again. Thus, every step of present success is a new facility for a further advance, and an additional pledge of universal triumph.

Oh, there is a day—call it the millennium, or by any other name—there is a period yet destined to bless the earth, when it shall no more be necessary to witness for God, for all shall know him; the knowledge of his glory shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Happy state of Christian triumph!—a day without a cloud—the reproach of indolence wiped away from the church, and of ignorance from the world. Truth shall have completed the conquest of error—Christ shall have given law to the world—and, impress-

ing his image on every heart, shall receive the homage of a renovated race. Brethren, these are visions—but they are the visions of God—and let nothing rob us of the inspiration to be derived from gazing at them. They are visions—but visions painted by the hand of God—dear, in every age, to the church of God—gazed on, in death, by the Son of God. Yes, then they were brought and set before him, and such was the joy with which they filled him, that he endured the cross, despising the shame. Then, on the lofty moral elevation of the cross, all the ages of time, and all the triumphs of his church, passed in review before him. He saw our missionaries go forth in his name to distant climes—again he looked, and saw them surrounded by ten thousand converts to his grace. He saw the veil fall from the heart of the Jews; and heard their bitter mourning, as they stood looking at him whom they had pierced. He saw Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; and heard her, as the slave-chain fell from her loins, exulting in a double liberty. He heard his name shouted from land to land, as the watchword of salvation, and marked how its every echo shook and brought down the pillars of the empire of sin. He saw the race of Ishmael, that now traverses the desert tracts of Arabia—the castes of India, with their numbers infinite—the national Chinese—the Tartar hordes—the unknown and snow-concealed inhabitants of the north—the tribes of Europe—and all the islands of the sea; he saw them flocking into his kingdom—his grace the theme of every tongue—his glory the object of every eye. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied; his soul was satisfied! Glorious intimation! Even in the hour of its travail, it was satisfied. What an unlimited vision of human happiness must it have been! Happiness not bounded by time, but filling the expanse of eternity! His prophetic eye caught, even then, a view of the infinite result in heaven! His ear caught the far, far-distant shout of his redeemed and glorified church, singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" Brethren, if we would do justice to our office, as witnesses for God—if we would catch the true inspiration of our work—we, too, must often cross, as he did, the threshold of eternity—transport ourselves ten thousand ages hence into the blessedness of heaven, and behold the fruits of our instrumentality there, still adding new joy to angels, new crowns to Jesus, new tides of glory around the throne of God. Realizing that scene, we should gird up our loins afresh, as if a new command had come down from heaven, calling us by name to be witnesses for God.

(Conclusion in our next.)

#### SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

[FOR THE WESLEYAN.]

#### THE HARPS OF ZION:

#### REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY PASSAGES IN THE 137TH PSALM.

A more affecting picture, or one better calculated to subdue the haughty spirit, and bring down every lofty imagination, cannot be conceived, than the circumstances in which the captive Israelites were found, as contemplated in this Psalm. We hear the voice of their task-masters, asking them, in their uncouth and barbarous dialect, to sing one of their national melodies: "For they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion;" and we see the wretched captives looking up to the willows, upon which their tuneless harps are suspended. We see them raise an imploring look; and while they endeavour to awaken tenderness in the hearts of their revilers—"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"—the spirit of interceding grace is poured forth upon us, and we are constrained to cry out, "Remember them, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people." OLD MEN, tottering under accumulated years and infirmities, and beneath whose feet the grave is opening—YOUNG MEN and maidens, that should, with harp and timbrel, be making a joyful noise unto the Lord their rock—PRIESTS and LEVITES, who were wont to wear the linen ephod, and wait upon God in holy things—PRINCES and RULERS, to whom the tribes of the people had looked up with veneration and love—all, all these are now captives in a strange country: far, far

from the cradle of their ancestors, from the land which their forefathers tilled, and from the graves of their household. The recollection of former days rushes upon them; a thousand undefinable sensations spring up in their heart; the visions and dreams of a period never to return haunt their memories; and as these lead their thoughts, like the footsteps of wanderers, through their once beautiful temple, their splendid city, and their pleasant fields and vineyards, their last remaining hopes die within them; and the last vestiges of expectation are blotted out, even as images traced upon the sand are washed away by the waves and billows that roll over them. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."

During their dispersion in Chaldea, the Jews were accustomed to hold their religious meetings on the banks of the rivers. Ezekiel, too, beheld his vision of living creatures and extraordinary wheels by the river Chebar; and that of the ram and he-goat was shewn unto Daniel, by the river Ulai. Indeed, this practice of assembling in such places, for prayer and other forms of divine worship, was continued in the time of the Apostles, as is evident from the history of Lydia's conversion: "And on the sabbath day we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither."—Acts xvi. 13.

*The feelings and sentiments which the conduct of the expatriated Israelites evince, were awakened in them by the love which they cherished for their country.*

Pure and unsophisticated patriotism is a rare and inestimable virtue; and differs as much from that which assumes its name and deforms its beauty, as light does from darkness. Popular tumult and political ambition commonly take this word into their lips: and with it, do they try to cover their unconstitutional designs; as the Scribes and Pharisees endeavoured, by wearing phylacteries, to conceal their impiety. The disinterested love of country never totally forsook the Jews—NATIONAL PROSPERITY passed away "like the morning cloud and the early dew;" PEACE, grieved at beholding Ephraim vexing Judah, and Judah vexing Ephraim, reluctantly retired; and RELIGION, insulted in all her ceremonies and statutes, folded herself up in the luminous cloud that dwelt "between the Cherubim and Seraphim," and slowly ascended to heaven; but PATRIOTISM lingered among them, as if unwilling to depart—subsisted amid the wreck of every other virtue—and, like a solitary star, shed a pale light on the darkest periods of their history. GRIEF now brought tears to their eyes, as the rod of Moses stirred up the hidden fountains of the rock; and, therefore, they wept while they "sat down" "by the rivers of Babylon." EVIL DAYS had come upon them, and the springs of pleasure were all dried up; and, therefore, they "hanged their harps upon the willows;" but when they were asked to sing "one of the songs of Zion," the LOVE of their country animated their hearts, and enabled them to reply, with all the fervour of patriots, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." This virtue binds the Indian to his native place, although it be "a waste howling wilderness"—it enables the Arab to discover variety in the monotonous deserts through which he is perpetually wandering—and it inclines the Laplander to prefer his dwelling of ice and snow, to the most superb mansion that architecture could erect. Patriotism incited Quintus Curtius to leap into the yawning gulf, which threatened to swallow up the republic; it impelled Winkelred to fall upon the spears of the Austrians, at the battle of Sempach, by which a breach was made for his countrymen, that enabled them to gain a complete victory; and it exercises over every virtuous man, a magnetic influence, that is constantly attracting his affections towards the place of his birth.

*The love which the Israelites bore towards their country, caused them to weep when they remembered it.*

It was precious in their sight, because God had promised it to them: first, in Abraham, (Gen. xii. 6, 7,) and again in Jacob, (Gen. xxviii. 13.) In pursuance of these promises, Joshua, as captain of the host, led them into it; during the administration of Solomon, they enjoyed full and peaceable