

***"I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord;
and have comforted myself."***

Psalm 119:52

The Lord's dealings with his people were a frequent subject of meditation to the Psalmist (Ps. lxxvii. 5, 11, 12; cxliii. 5), and now were they his present support under "the scourge of the tongue." (Job, v. 21.) Evidently they are put upon record for the encouragement of future generations. (Ps. xlv. 1-3; lxxviii. 3-8; cv. 5, 6; cxlv. 4. Joel, i. 3.) We are ready to imagine something peculiar in our own case, and to "think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, as though some strange thing happened unto us. But when we *remember the Lord's judgments of old*, with his people, we *comfort ourselves* in the assurance, that "the same afflictions are accomplished in our brethren, that have been in the world" (1 Pet. iv. 12; v. 9); and that "as the sufferings of Christ have abounded in them, so their consolation also abounded by Christ." (2 Cor. i. 5.) They also encountered the same *derision of the proud*, and always experienced the same support from the faithfulness of their God. We do not sufficiently consider the mercy and gracious wisdom of God, in occupying so much of his written word with the records of his *judgments of old*. One class will pay a prominent attention to the preceptive, another to the doctrinal, parts of revelation--each forgetting that the historical records comprise a full and striking illustration of both, and have always proved most supporting grounds of consolation to the Lord's people. The important design in casting so large a portion of the small volume of Revelation into an historical form, is every way worthy of its author. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience *and comfort of the Scriptures* might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4); and how admirably adapted the means are to the end, the diligent student in the Scripture field will bear ample witness. Wilfully, therefore, to neglect the historical portion of the sacred volume, from the idea of confining our attention to what we deem the more spiritual parts of scripture--would show a sad deficiency of spiritual apprehension, and deprive ourselves of the most valuable instruction, and most abundant comfort. This neglect would exclude us from one eminent means of increasing "patience," in the example of those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises;" of receiving "comfort," in the experience of the faithfulness of God manifested in every age to his people: and of enlivening our "hope," in marking the happy issue of the "patience of the saints," and the heavenly support administered unto them.¹ So far, therefore, are we from being little interested in the Scriptural records of past ages, that it is evident that the sacred historians, as well as the prophets, "ministered not unto themselves, but unto us the things which are now reported." (1 Pet. i. 12.)

Let us select one or two instances as illustrative of this subject. Why were the records of the deluge, and of the overthrow of the cities of the plain, preserved, but as exhibitions to the church, that "the Lord"--the Saviour of Noah, the eighth person, and the deliverer of just Lot--"knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished?" (2 Pet. ii. 5-9.) What a source of comfort then to the tempted people of God is the remembrance of these judgments of old! Take again the wonderful history of the overthrow of the Egyptians, and the consequent deliverance of God's ancient people. How often does the church recollect this interposition

¹ In this view, the recollection of the Lord's *judgments of old* "puts a new song into the mouth" of the Church, of "thanksgiving unto her God." Isa. xxv. 1-4.

as a ground of assurance, that under similar circumstances of trial, the same illustrious displays of Divine faithfulness and love may be confidently expected! She looks back upon what the "arm of the Lord hath done in ancient days, and in the generation of old," as the pattern of what he ever would be, and ever would do, for his purchased people. (Isa. li. 9-11.) Thus also God himself recalls to our mind this overthrow and deliverance as a ground of present encouragement and support--"According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things" (Mic. vii. 15)--and the Church echoes back this remembrance in the expression of her faith, gratitude, and expectation for spiritual blessings: "*He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*" (Verse 19.) Such is the interesting use that may be made of the historical parts of Scripture! Such is the *comfort* to be derived from the *remembrance of the Lord's judgments of old!* And is not the recollection of his *judgments of old* with ourselves, productive of the same support? Does not the retrospect of his dealings with our own souls serve to convince us, that "all his paths are mercy and truth?" (Ps. xxv. 10.) The assurance is therefore warranted alike by experience and by Scripture--"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.)