addressing the whole mystical body of Christ, the Apostle here particularly mentions one by one, in name, as members of Christ's pody, his flesh, and his bones. Oh! how infinitely more to be valued is this record of Christ's people in the book of God, than the being enrolled among all the great ones of the earth.

Reader! do not overlook what Paul hath said, in honorable testinony of those, who by awakening, and regenerating grace, were n Christ before him. How sweet is early grace! How blessed o know the Lord from our youth! Little children! if peradventure he Lord should, put this Poor Man's Commentary in the way of any such, who like Josiah, or Timothy, have been brought acquainted with the Lord God of your fathers from your youth; do not fail to mark and bless God for the distinguishing grace! And you no less of iper years, who even like Paul, can observe those that were in the mowledge of Christ before you; yea, if even at the eleventh hour! bless God for his distinguishing mercy. He that came in at the eleventh hour, was made equal with him which had borne the burden and heat of the day! And why so, but because it is all of free grace. He that is called early, is not called for his deservings. And he that is called late, is called then for God's grace, and not his merit. All is to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath made us accepted in the beloved.

And now, for the moment, we take leave of the Apostle. Farewell Paul! We have cause to thank thee for thy ministry. But we bless Paul's Lord infinitely more, who appointed it. Oh! for grace, rightly to value and love the servant; but to pass by the servant, and love and adore the Master. Precious Jesus! he is indeed thy minister. Oh! make those sweet writings blessed to the souls of thy people. And may they minister in thine Almighty hand, to all the Churches, to bring glory to the Father, Son, and Spirit, now, and for ever. Amen.

THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE city of *Corinth*, which formed a part of *Greece*, in the province of *Achaia*, was a place of great opulence. And from its situation on an isthmus, or neck of land to the sea, opened a large source for trade and commerce; and, as

is but too common, where opportunities for the indulgences of corrupt nature are found, *Corinth* was remarkable for abounding with luxuries, pride, and uncleanness. To this place, however, God the Holy Ghost in his providence sent *Paul* to preach the Gospel; and the Apostle continued his personal labours in it for about two years. And, as the Lord who sent *Paul* to *Corinth*, had a people there to receive him, so a church was formed during his abode there,

while the Apostle went in and out among them.

After his departure, as appears from certain parts here and there in his Epistle, some irregularities crept in among the people; which Paul as a watchful minister of Christ set about to reform. But beside this, God the Holy Ghost had other views, when guiding the mind and pen of the Apostle, in dictating this Epistle. The Church of God, in every age, hath found cause to bless the Holy Spirit for so precious and invaluable a portion of his sacred word. The interesting account the Apostle hath given of the institution of the Lord's Supper, of Spiritual gifts, and of the Resurrection, (not for the present to mention other subjects treated of by Paul in this Epistle,) renders it most blessed indeed!

The time in which the apostle wrote it, and sent it to the Church, is not so clearly known, as to determine with exact precision. Some have supposed, that it was in the first year of the reign of the emperor Nero, which corresponded to the year of our LORD GOD 55. Some place it later. But the chief concern we have, is to know that it was divinely written, under the immediate inspiration of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And this every day's testimony in the hearts of GOD's people, nourished and refreshed by its gracious contents, abundantly

confirm.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any further preface, but invite him for himself to come and see. Very fully persuaded I am, that, if the Writer of this Poor Man's Commentary, and the Reader of it, are both led by the Lord's hand, while going over this precious book of God in the perusal of it, and the same Almighty Lord which guided Paul's pen to write, shall graciously guide our hearts to read the sacred contents; like the man the Apostle speaks of in one of the Chapters of this epistle, the secrets of our hearts will be made manifest, as we attend to the ministry of this word, and falling down on our face, we shall worship God, and report that God is in it of a truth. The Lord (if it be his holy will,) vouchsafe this mercy for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle openeth his Epistle after his usual Manner, with Salutations. He holds up Christ, and very blessedly speaks of his Cross.

PAUL, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's.

3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Several very weighty and important things meet us at the very entrance on this scripture. Paul, though called by Jesus himself from darkness to light, would not have thought this a sufficient ordination to the ministry, had he not been called also by the Lord to be an Apostle. He, therefore, in the opening of his Epistle to the Corinthians, makes mention of his call to the Apostleship. He joins with himself, in proof of the humbleness of his mind, and his love to the brethren, Sosthenes, whom he calls brother. We have an account of a Sosthenes, Acts xviii. 17. at that time the chief ruler of the synagogue. If this be one and the same person, (which indeed seems probable, from being of the same place, Corinth,) it is likely, that since that period, he had been converted to the faith of the Gospel. But what I beg may be more particularly regarded by the Reader is, the special limitation which this Epistle hath to the Church at Corinth. Paul doth not write to the Corinthians, as Corinthians; neither to the men of Corinth as of a province or place; but to the Church of Gon then in Corinth. It is the Church, not the world. And this is most essentially necessary to be kept in view all along, and through every part of this, and all the Epistles. For to the inattention to this important point, is to be ascribed the gross perversion and misapplicaion of certain passages here and there scattered over the Apostolic writings, in considering them as of general meaning, when most evilently they belong, in special reference, only to the Church of God. As for example. In this very Epistle, chap. xv. ver. 22. the Apostle aith, For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made ilive. And no truth can be more firm, and certain, and sure, when ipplied to the faithful in Christ Jesus. For, as the Church, as well is the world, is involved in the common death with all mankind, by eason of sin; so by virtue of the Church's union with Christ, the Church becomes equally interested in the life, which is in, and by CHRIST JESUS. But what hath this to do with the unregenerate, and

such as have no union with Christ Jesus? There must be an union with Christ, before we can have communion with Christ. The Church, as well as the world, prove our union with Adam, by reason of sin, and as such partake alike in death, which is the sure consequence of sin. And, if we can equally prove our union with Christ by regeneration, as we do our oneness with Adam by generation; then, and not else, we take to ourselves the blessedness of this scripture: For as in Adam all die, even so m Christ shall all be made alive. But without this testimony, we have no part nor lot in the matter. I beg that this may be specially noticed by the Reader, according to its vast importance, not only in this place, but through the whole of the Apostolic writings. It is to the Church Paul writes. And it is of the Church, when speaking of privileges in Christ, Paul speaks.

But we must not stop here. The Church is said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus. What sanctification means, is elsewhere shewn, particularly by Jude, when he saith, sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. Jude 1. The Church of God in Christ hath been sanctified, set apart, chosen, and ordained by God the Father before the foundation of the world; and these acts of God the Father in his blessed covenant-offices, included all that related to the Church, during the whole time-state of the Church, until grace is swallowed up in glory. So that Christ is made, (as the close of this very chapter expresseth it,) of God to the Church, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: verse 30. See also 1 Cor. vi. 11. And what a blessed and comprehensive view doth this sanctification in Christ Jesus carry with it, through all the departments of the Church, from before the world, through the whole period of time, in, and through the whole eternal world, to which

the Church is hastening?

One word more. The Apostle saith, Called to be saints. Yes! For before this call, the Church, though sanctified by God the Father, and betrothed to God the Son, yet being born in the Adam-nature of a sinful, fallen state, is in that state of sin, and must be called out of this state of nature to a state of grace, by the regenerating power of God the Holy Ghost. And until this is done, the Church is not brought into her high privileges, but in every individual instance of Christ's mystical body, is living without God, and without CHRIST in the world. But, when this sovereign act of God the Holy GHOST hath passed upon the soul of a poor sinner, and the Lord the Spirit hath quickened one of Christ's little ones, whom God the FATHER had chosen to holiness in Christ before the world began, and whose redemption Christ in the time-state of the Church had purchased with his blood; then is the child of God called with an holy calling, and from an unholy sinner is made an holy saint in CHRIST, and translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Ephes. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. Coloss. i. 13. And this blessed state to which the Church is called, (as the Reader it is to be hoped will perceive,) becomes everlastingly safe and secure, being the joint work, and proceeding from the joint love, purpose, and will, of the whole Persons of the GODHEAD. And, therefore, the Apostle adds, that it is not to the Church of God which is in Corinth only, but to all Christ's church, and to every individual member of that Church in every place, who call upon Christ, the common glorious Head of his whole Church in heaven and in earth. A sweet intimation by the way, (and let not the Reader overlook it,) of the eternal power and Godhead of Christ! For the calling upon the Lord JEHOVAH, was made by the Prophet the token of salvation, in the great and terrible day of the LORD. And the Apostle not only in this place, but elsewhere, applies this to Christ. Compare Joel ii. 32. with Rom. x. 12, 13. And such is the Church of Christ. And to such, and such only, Paul sends this Epistle, both theirs, the Church at Corinth, and ours, all Christ's Church in every place, to whom the Apostle sends his usual benediction of grace and peace, which includes the whole blessings of the Covenant from all the Persons of the Godhead. So much for the introduction of this beautiful Epistle of Paul, wrote to the Church by his pen, under the immediate dictation of God the Holy Ghost. And I have been the more particular in the introduction of it, that the Reader might not only see, that it is addressed to the Church of Christ, with special reference to the Church, and not to the world; but also, how that Church is known by those blessed marks in those, who in every place as well as Corinth, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;

6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed

in you:

7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

What is here said, is so plain; as to need no comment; and so very blessed, as when opened to the soul of the regenerate by the Hoty Ghost, as to need no other endearment. Let the Reader look at it again and again, for it will bear reading every day. Observe, how the very heart of Paul is going forth in love to the Church, while blessing God on their account. His very soul seems to be moved in him, as well it might, that in such a place as Corinth, Christ had a Church. And, observe, how the Apostle expresseth himself on the occasion. I thank my God, said he, always on your behalf. And, observe, how he dwells upon the cause of his thanksgiving. It was not for their numbers, among those that professed a belief in Christ,

There might be many there, as it is to be feared is, and hath been in all ages of the Church elsewhere, who professed to love Christ, on whom no change by grace had been wrought. It is not the largeness of a congregation which implies soul prosperity. Great leanness is sometimes found amidst fat pastures of ordinances. Paul did not thank his God and Savior because they were many, but for the grace of God which was given them, and for their being enriched by the LORD, and for the testimony of CHRIST being confirmed in them. Reader! look into your own soul for these things, for it is by these, (and not by outward things,) men live, and in these is the life of the soul. And I pray the Reader not to overlook in this sweet and precious paragraph, how blessedly Paul speaks of God's faithfulness, and the Church's everlasting safety in him. Oh! what a soul ravishing thought it is, that He who hath called the whole body the Church to an union, and oneness, and fellowship with Christ in grace here, gives an earnest and pledge thereby, of the everlasting continuance of that interest, in all Christ's communicable glory hereafter. Reader! take it for your daily motto, and wear it in your heart from day to day; God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our LORD. The Reader will pardon me, I hope, if I call upon him before he dismisseth this part of the Chapter we have gone over, to take notice with me, how sweetly Paul dwells upon the name of his adorable LORD. No less than ten times, in the first ten verses of this chapter, hath he written his lovely name. He seems to hang upon it. as the bee upon some sweet flower, where the little creature finds so much food for honey, that though he is so laden with what he hath, that he can scarcely fly, yet so much remains, he cannot go away. So Paul dwelt upon the very name of the Lord Jesus. And, Reader! allow me to add, that such would be the love of every child of God, had we the same knowledge as Paul had. Let you and I, above all things, seek from the Lord a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him! See Paul's prayer for the Church, Ephes. i. 15 to the end.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul.

14 I thank God that I baptised none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in

mine own name.

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other,

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

I would rather seek for grace from God the Spirit, to improve what the Apostle here observed on the contentions which brake out in the Corinthian Church, in relation to the present infirmities of the Lord's people, than enter into an enquiry of what nature those contentions were. Certain it is, that the purest Churches have their spots, and too often, from the imperfection of all things here below, the Lord's children fall out by the way. Instead of entering into the discussion, whether those divisions are about infant or adult baptism, kneeling or sitting in services, partiality to ministers, or forms of worship; I would beg the Reader to observe with me, the method Paul took to heal those quarrels. Paul did I say? not so, it is not Paul but God the Holy Ghost who speaks by Paul. His is the office to glorify Christ, and here he hath done it most blessedly. All that is done, or can be done to bless the Church, to heal divisions, and to unite the whole body in love, can only be in Christ, the glorious Head from whom all grace flows, and in whom all blessings are found. And where faith in Christ is in true lively actings upon his Person, blood, and righteousness, there will be found a common principle knitting and uniting the whole body together. It is worthy our closest observation, that in that sweet recommendatory prayer of the LORD JESUS, in which before his death, the LORD committed the whole body the Church into his FATHER's hands to keep, and from whom Jesus had received it; this formed a most earnest part, and for which the Lond again and again repeated his desire, that his Church might be kept in sweet concord and union. Holy Father, (said Jesus,) keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. And the Lord puts up again the same request three times more in the after part of the same chapter. John xvii. 11. 21, 22, 23. And it is truly blessed to observe, how the Apostles of this divine Lord, followed the same steps in praying for, and earnestly studying to accomplish the unity of the Church. See Rom. xv. 5, 6. Philip. ii. 1, 2. Coloss. iii. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 8. 1 John iv. 7-12.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God

made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom;

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many

mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things

that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Never, surely, could the Apostle have chosen a more happy form of words to describe the vast difference between the divine wisdom of the Lord, as manifested in the salvation of the Church in Christ, and what is called the wisdom of the world, which uniformly rejects and despiseth it. And we see it every day. If these words of Paul had been written but yesterday, they could not more strikingly set forth

the different characters of the christless, despising salvation by the cross; and the precious souls, who taught of God, receive it with open arms, knowing it by heartfelt experience, to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God, for salvation to every one that believeth.

Reader! this is one among the hany of the believer's evidences to the truth of the Gospel. Fond as some men are, that all the world should be believers, the child of God would lose a very striking testimony if it were so. There must be heresies among you, (said one that could not be mistaken,) that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 1 Cor. xi. 19. Never must, never can, the offence of the cross cease. The children of the bondwoman will always hate the doctrine of the cross. The pride of the human heart, the self-righteousness of corrupt, unhumbled nature, will always revolt at it. And, while the thing itself is the wisdom of God, the wonder of angels, and the everlasting joy of the redeemed, both in heaven and earth; to them that perish it appears foolishness, and they perish in their foolishness. And to all such, the word of God speaks: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you! Acts xiii. 41.

Reader! what a distinguishing mercy it is to be made wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS? And we may see, and indeed we do see every day, under every ordinance where Christ is faithfully and fully preached, in the glories of his Person, and the compleatness of his finished salvation, as the whole of Jeho-VAH's purpose of grace, for the recovery of his Church and people, and where those who have been taught to feel and know the plague of their own heart; Christ becomes the all in all, and their whole souls are melted into holy joy, adoration, love, and praise; we behold no less, the wise in their own eyes, and the prudent in their own conceit, turning with the most bitter looks of hatred against the doctrine of the cross, and rejecting the counsel of God against their own souls. Christ becomes a stumbling block and a rock of offence, as much now, as to the Jews of old. So the Lord declared by his servants the Prophets it should be; and the Lord be praised, that he hath not left himself without witness: Isaiah xxix. 14. and xxxiii. 18. Precious Jesus, I would say, how sweet thy words to my soul. Blessed is he whomsoever shall not be offended in me! Matt. xi. 6.

By the expressions, the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men, we are not to understand, as if it implied either foolishness or weakness in God. But the sense is, that what the carnal and ungodly in their dimsighted view consider folly and weakness of Christ, and salvation by his cross, is higher in wisdom, and greater in power than all that human knowledge can conceive. So that what men call foolishness, is, in God's esteem, a rich manifestation of his wisdom and power, in conquering sin, death, hell, and the grave, by the very means, which to human wisdom appears the most unlikely and improbable; by Christ's death overcoming death, and by his rising to life again, opening a way to his people to everlasting life. And herein was demonstrated the highest wisdom and power of God. Wisdom in contriving, and power in accomplishing, by such unheard of, un-

thought of ways; the recovery of the Church from the Adam fall of nature; punishing sin, and yet pardoning the sinner; taking judgment on the surety, and liberating the principal; bringing praise to God from salvation, and overruling sin, which tends to dishonour the Lord; the very means of bringing forth a greater revenue of glory, in, and by, the Person, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and everlasting reign of grace here, and glory hereafter, of God dear Son. Surely, every heart which knows the blessedness of these precious things, will join the Apostle, and say, however, to them that perish all is foolishness; yet to us which are saved, Christ, the

power of God, and the wisdom of God!

I must not allow the Reader's attention to pass away from this most interesting view, which God, by the Holy Ghost, hath given of the cross of Christ, as the power of God, and the wisdom of God; before that I have first called upon him to remark with me, what is also said of the Lord's distinguishing grace in the holy calling. Every part of the Bible, indeed, is full to the same, for the whole is of electing love, from beginning to end. But here, the Lord the Spirit more especially calls upon the Church to notice it. The brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, are directed to behold it. And, while they are commanded to observe, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; they are no less taught from their own circumstances, to consider, that in their call, it was grace manifested to the foolish, and to the weak, and to the base things of the world. And, Reader! I beseech you to pause, and pass not away for a moment from the consideration of the Church of Corinth in those days, in which Paul sent this Epistle, and take home the same doctrine now, for it equally holds good in all ages of the Church. We have reason to bless God, that while he saith, not many are called from among the great, and noble, and wise men of the earth, that the Lord did not say, not any. For, though but few, yet there have been some. In the days of CHRIST himself, we find Joseph, an honorable counsellor, and Nicodemus among the rulers of the Jews. But, indeed, for the most part, we find the LORD's people gathered from among the humbler walks in life, poor in worldly circumstances, as well as poor in spirit, made rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. But it should be observed also, that the expressions here used by the Apostle, when he saith that not many wise men, and mighty, and noble, are called, he adds to the term, not many wise men after the flesh; and the same after the flesh, is to be subjoined to the mighty and the noble. For their worldly wisdom, and their might, and their nobility, are all earthly. Not that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation, neither that might which is founded in divine strength, neither that no bleness of soul which distinguisheth the Church of Gop. So, ir like manner, the foolish things of the world, and the weak, and the base, which are chosen; they are in worldly wisdom foolish, and in human policy weak, and in all their own attainments base and de spised; but they are in spiritual things, both wise, and strong, and dignified. The Holy Ghost by Peter, calls them, a royal priest hood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. And the LORD JESUS com mended John to write them to the Churches, as made kings and

priests unto God and his FATHER: 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 6. Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, through grace, to be enabled to enter into the proper apprehension of those words by the Apostle, when he saith, For ye see your calling, brethren!

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

I beseech the Reader to observe how blessedly CHRIST is here spoken of by the Holy Ghost, as made all these things to his people, and that by God himself. It is not only said, that CHRIST is the wisdom, and the righteousness, and the sanctification, and the redemption of his Church, but that God hath made him so. Here, indeed, is the blessedness of the whole. For, when God the Holy GHOST leads a poor sinner to God, in the perfections of Jesus; if it be demanded how, or by what authority, the poor self-condemned creature comes in another's perfections, and not his own? this is the answer: this is faith's warrant, Christ is made of God unto the soul these things. So that here is the authority in which all the Persons of the Godhead join. God the Holy Ghost, who regenerates the sinner, and makes him a new creature in Christ Jesus, leads him to the throne, in the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of Christ Jesus; and, taught of God the Spirit, the regenerated sinner pleads in Christ, and by Christ, on the footing of Christ's person and work, for acceptance before God, and in the covenant word, oath, and promise, of God the FATHER! And, how then can any soul fail of justification at the throne, who thus pleads God's grace, and Christ's righteousness, as the sole means of acceptance? Who doth not see all human glory tarnished, and divine grace praised, when as it is written, he that glorieth, thus glorieth in the Lord? Jerem. ix. 23, 24.

Reader! pause a moment longer over these precious verses, for they are most precious. You, and I, are both by nature and by practice, so lost and fallen in the Adam-state of sin and corruption, that we are not only miserably blind and ignorant of our state by nature, but so utterly senseless of our ruin, that until Christ, the sun of righteousness, arose on our benighted souls, so far were either of us from seeking redemption, we did not even know that we needed it. How blessed that CHRIST was made of God to us wisdom, to open to our view a sense of sin, and to make us wise unto salvation? But it would not have been enough to have made us sensible of our misery, and to have instructed us in the way of obtaining salvation by Christ out of it, had not the same Lord which taught us these precious things, taught us also, that He who made CHRIST to us wisdom, made him also our righteousness. Oh! the blessedness, when a child taught of God, can say, the Lord is my righteousness. But here again, a soul needed somewhat more. The child of God, though renewed in soul, is not renewed in body. The flesh still

lusteth against the spirit. I feel, I groan daily under a conscious sense of indwelling, inbred, corruptions. Oh! the grace, the mercy, when my Lord taught me that Christ is made of God sanctification also, and He who justifieth me, as freely sanctifieth me. And, finally, to crown all, and to counteract all the exercises, which at any time sin or Satan, the world without, or fears within, might suggest; how blessedly doth this scripture come in to our aid, that Christ is not only wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, but redemption. God's works, and not man's. God's providing, not our's. And He who gives the covering, puts it on. First gives a gracious acceptation to the persons of his people, in His dear Son; and then blesseth them with all spiritual blessings, in Christ; that they may be holy, and blameless before him, in love! Thanks! thanks be to God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ! 2 Cor. ii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I, as we enter upon the perusal of this inspired Book of God the Holy Ghost, first pause, and bless the Almighty Author of it, for giving so sweet and precious a portion of his holy word to the Church. Oh! for grace, to be always watching the footsteps of God the Spirit, who hath been from the first formation of the Church, to the present hour, watching over it, watering it every moment, and keeping it, night and day. And, oh! for grace, while we bless God for giving to his Church 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; to keep always in view, that these are but instruments; it is the Lord himself is the Almighty Minister, presiding over his Church: for all these worketh that One and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will! Lord! from thee, may my soul look for blessing, on thy servant's labors!

And Reader, let us also not lose sight of the Lord's distinguishing mercy, in this, and all the sacred, and inspired writings, sent to the Church. It is to Christ's Church, they are sent; not to the world. It is to them that are sanctified, as the opening of this Chapter shews, not to the unsanctified: to the called to be saints, not to them whose names are not written in the book of life. Oh! for grace here also, to watch the Lord's gracious regard to his Church.

And Reader! let you and I, as we go over the several beautiful, and soul-refreshing portions of this sweet Chapter, remark, the preciousness of Jesus in all, his Person, offices, relations, and characters, to his people; the blessed teachings of God the Spirit, in glorifying Christ Jesus to their view; and the faithfulness of God the Father, in calling his people to the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ. And, oh! for sweet communion, and fellowship, with all the Persons of the Godhead, in, and through Christ, that amidst all the diversity of forms, and contentions of the several Churches, like Corinth; our souls may be found resting wholly on Christ. And while the fleshly wisdom, and pride of men of the world, count

Christ and his cross foolishness; we may know the Lord Jesus to be to us, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, for salvation to every one that believeth. Thou hast indeed, O Lord, in the instance of all thy redeemed, chosen the weak and the foolish, yea, the base things, to confound the mighty; but the Lord's strength, is thereby made manifest, in creature weakness. And we bless thee, our God, that as we have nothing, and are nothing in ourselves, yea, worse than nothing, by reason of ignorance, sin, and unholiness: Christ is made of God to us, all we need, for grace here, and glory hereafter. Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: and all our glorying is in the Lord!

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle enters upon the Relation of his Ministry, which he had exercised among the Corinthians. He reminds them, that he passed by all human Eloquence in his Discourses before them, and had preached only Christ. He shews them how God the Spirit had confirmed his preaching, in their Hearts.

A ND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing word's of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

If any man might have been supposed qualified to have used the powers of human oratory in preaching; who so proper as Paul, who had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and who had studied, if we might venture to conclude as much from the elegant speech he made before Agrippa, (see Acts xxvi.) the art of rhetoric, which at that time was much in use in the schools? But what a lovely view is here exhibited, of the plan of Paul's preaching, in that, he simply preached Christ. Reader! how much to be wished were it, that all whom God hath called to the ministry, would adopt the Apostle's plan. And indeed, it is matter of astonishment, that men, savingly called themselves to the knowledge of Christ, in their own souls, and spiritually ordained, by the Holy Ghost, to preach to others; (and of all others it is of little consequence what men un-

commissioned preach,) should preach ought beside. When angels came from heaven, at the birth of Christ, to announce his arrival, they preached him as a Savior. Luke ii. 11. When the Son of God came preaching himself, it was the same glad tidings of salvation. Matt. xviii. 11. And when, after redemption-work was finished, and Christ was returned to glory, and the Holy Ghost came down, the whole burden of the Apostles' preaching was to the same amount: God (said they) having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities. Hence daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach, and to preach Jesus Christ! Acts iii. 26. Acts v. 42.

There is a peculiar beauty in the Apostle's expression, not only to preach Christ, but Christ crucified. There were a thousand excellencies in Christ Paul had learnt, and on which he had often dwelt, with holy rapture. But the cross included all. There Paul fixed his eye, his heart, his whole soul. And, what he felt so truly blessed to himself, he longed to communicate, to all the Lord's people. Christ crucified, was peculiarly suited, to poor sinful men. It was worthy of all acceptation! Reader! how little do those men know of the plague of their own heart, who preach aught beside! Might not a poor sinner say, in every congregation of such men, as Job did of those who read to him their dunghill lectures of patience: Miserable comforters are ye all: physicians of no value! Job xvi. 2. Job xiii. 4.

What a humbling account the Apostle gives of himself, when standing up to minister among the people! And such must it ever be, among all those who have an awful sense of the solemn charge, in holding forth the word of life among dying sinners. Who shall calculate and note down the tears, and prayers, and anxieties, and tremblings of faithful ministers, who watch for the souls of the people, as they who must give account. Men who rush into the service uncalled, unsent, like the sons of Eli, to be put into the priest's office, can have no apprehension what these things mean. I Sam. ii. 36. But Paul's conscious weakness, and fear, and much trembling, will be easily understood by those awakened minds, who never stand up to minister in the Lord's name, but with an holy jealousy over their own hearts; and never end their labors, but with a prayer, that their most holy things may be washed from their uncleanness, in Christ's blood! Exod. xxviii. 38.

How sweet a testimony was this to the Apostle's mind, of the Lord's speaking in the word, and by the word, when Paul saw the Lord's blessing on his labors. The demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, in every congregation of the faithful, is indeed the great refreshment, both to minister and people. Paul makes this a proof, of the most decisive kind, of the Church being chosen of God. See I Thes. i. 4 to the end. And Reader! it is this, and this alone, which forms the proper foundation, for security in the divine life. What begins in human wisdom and human strength, will end in both; which is folly and weakness, in the highest attainments. But, what begins in the Lord, will end in the Lord, and be bottomed upon an everlasting security. Isaiah xlv. 24, 25.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained

before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of clary

cified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the

deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are

spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet

he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The Apostle here enters upon the subject of the divine wisdom, in the ordination of the Church, which, while the way-faring man, when taught of the Lord, hath such an apprehension of, as is sufficient to make him wise unto salvation, and that he shall not err therein, becomes a subject of such impenetrable mystery, to the wise and prudent of this world, as they are called, that the highest human intellect, untaught of God, can never attain unto it. And this becomes a decided proof, of the necessity of divine teaching. And, it was this, which the Lord Jesus thanked the Father for, in the days of his flesh, because he had hid those things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Matthew xi. 25, 26. See also Isaiah xxxv. 8.

As this wisdom, which Paul professed to speak of, was known and understood by those that are perfect, though none of the princes of this world knew it; and yet Paul calls it the wisdom of God in a emystery, and the hidden wisdom: it will be highly proper, for the Reader to enquire, what apprehension he hath concerning it; that he may, among other marks of examination in relation to himself, try his faith by this standard also, whether it be founded in the wis-

dom of men, or in the power of God.

That every thing relating to the Being, and Perfections of God, must necessarily be matter of mystery to his creatures; and that no apprehensions whatever can be obtained of Him, but by such revelations as He is mercifully pleased to make of himself; is too obvious to need being insisted upon. But that in those revelations, which, in his infinite condescension, the Lord hath made of Himself, the wisdom of human intellect shall not of itself be able to apprehend, while humbler capacities, enlightened by the Spirit, shall understand; makes the subject, what Paul calls hidden wisdom, yet more mysterious. The whole, of what relates to the Church, both in the choice of the Church, the being, and blessedness of the Church, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and every thing connected with the present time-state of the Church, as well as that glory which is to follow; all forms a subject of mystery. But, when it be considered, that what is apprehended of those sublime things, can, at the best, be only such as our present unripe faculties are capable of receiving; the only astonishment is, that we know so much as we do know, under divine teaching, and not that we know no more. In a world like the present, and in a fallen state, such as man by nature is in; we can know nothing, but what is given us of The mystery of the divine nature, existing in a threefold character of Persons, is the first, and deepest of all mysteries. And it is no further revealed to us, than as an article of faith. To explain to us, the mode of this existence, is not done in all the holy Scripture. Perhaps it is impossible. Neither is it necessary. It demands our faith on the authority of God. It forbids our reasoning upon. Every attempt of this sort, is answered in the words of Scripture: Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? Job xi. 7. But thus far we learn, that as the word of God, reveals God, as existing in a threefold character of Persons, and in numberless parts of the sacred word, the actions of each glorious Person are given, and with a plainness and precision which

abundantly prove, both their personality, and Godhead: the man which doth not acknowledge this fundamental article of all faith, that Jehovah exists in a threefold character of Persons, and thereby different from all his creatures; doth not, in fact, acknowledge the Being of God, according to Scripture at all. He virtually denies there is a God, when he acknowledgeth not the Scripture revelation of God: and whatever wisdom he professeth to have, it corresponds but to that, which Paul here speaks of: the wisdom of this world

and of the princes of this world, which come to nought.

But it is not the mere lip-confession, or tacit acknowledgment of this fundamental truth, which constitutes, what Paul calls, the wisdom among them that are perfect. A man may be led to agree to a truth, and yet have no life-enjoyment of that truth. But the soul taught of God, hath a saving knowledge, and acquaintance with God; that is to say, the mind is led to apprehend, that those glorious Persons of the GODHEAD have revealed themselves, and do reveal themselves to the Church, in their several office-characters, and relations, different from what they do unto the world; and the child of God is brought into some acquaintance with those blessed manifestations. This is what Paul refers to, when he saith, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; that is, among them which are Christ's, and who are made perfect in Christ Jesus. Coloss. i. 28. And wisdom indeed it is, and truly called the wisdom of God in a mystery; when a child of God is savingly made acquainted with it, to discover, the whole Persons of the Godhead engaged in it, to make the Church everlastingly blessed, and happy, in Christ: that while hidden from the wise, and learned, in worldly wisdom, the humble are taught, that God ordained it before the world, unto our glory!

Reader! it will be your mercy, and mine, to have a clear apprehension, under divine teaching, of these precious things. And, since there is such a striking distinction, as the Apostle states there is in this Chapter, between the attainments of nature, and grace; between worldly wisdom, and that which is from above; between the natural man, and the spiritual; it must be of infinite importance, to ascertain the difference, and to know the things which (he saith) are freely given

unto us of God.

In prosecuting this enquiry, I need not go over a large field, on a point already known and understood; that by the new birth, or regeneration of the soul, a total change is wrought, on the renewed mind. I shall for once, consider this as granted; and that, what the Apostle saith elsewhere, my Reader is already convinced of. For if any mun be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new. 2 Cor. v. 17. But while this great truth is, and must be, most fully allowed, by every regenerated child of God, it is not so well understood, as the importance of the subject renders it necessary, that this new creature is wholly in the spirit, and not in the body. It is our spiritual part, which at regeneration is awakened, and brought forth into life, from the death of sin; and not our bodily part. The natural man, as Paul here calls our bodies, is not renewed, neither made capable of receiving the things of the Spirit of God, more than before. This is a grand point, to be well and thoroughly understood, by the renewed man. And there is another like it, namely, that while the gracious act, wrought by God the Holy Ghost, in regeneration, is confined wholly to the spiritual part of every child of God, and leaves the body, for the present life, in the same state as before, of an unrenewed nature; this one act of God the Spirit is a perfect and compleat act, and makes the spirit of the happy receiver of this unspeakable mercy, as holy as it will ever be, in time, or eternity. When this blessed work of regeneration is wrought, it imparts all that is essential to life and holiness, in Christ. The act is but once done, and it is compleatly done. There can be no defect in it, for it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. All that are regenerated, are alike regenerated: similar to the analogy in nature. Infants, when born in nature, and born perfect in all their parts, are born no more. And the child in grace hath no after addition to its Being. The spiritual life, into which it is brought, can receive no after being, or addition. Growth in grace, there will be, as there is a growth in nature; but the life itself, the spiritual being, and the well-being, deriving, as it doth its whole, from such a source as God the Holy Ghost, is but once done, and done for ever.

Reader! will you allow me to call your attention, somewhat more particularly, to this subject. The very interesting nature of it, will I hope, plead for the indulgence. Perhaps you may not have been accustomed to consider it, in this light. Sure I am, it is truly scriptural. And, if you will grant me the moment's patience, and attention; I shall hope, under the Lond's teaching, to prove it so. And perhaps you will be the more inclined to grant me this favor, when I add, that I am the more earnest to state it as it appears to me in this scriptural light, because I am inclined to think, that it is to our ignorance in this matter, concerning the work of regeneration, on what part it is wrought, and from whence alone we look for the blessed effects of it, that so many errors abound in the Church; and of consequence, so many of God's children go in leannesss, and

mourning of soul, all their days.

Let me begin with first stating, what the Holy Scripture sets forth, of the blessed work of God the Spirit, in regeneration. And this I venture to believe, is uniformly said to be wholly wrought upon the spirit. When our Lord described the gracious act of the new birth, in his conversation with Nicodemus the Jew, the Lord Jesus clearly defined, that it was wholly spiritual, when he said: that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. John iii. 6. And, agreeably to the same distinction of properties, the new birth is said by the Holy Ghost, to be witnessed to the spirit, that we are the children of God. Rom. viii. 16. 2 Cor. i. 22. Gal. iv. 6. And we are repeatedly told, that the carnal mind, and the natural man, and the body of flesh, and the like, are not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be. See Romans viii. 5, &c.

I am well aware, it hath been supposed by some, yea, perhaps by far the greater part of Commentators, that, when the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle, is thus speaking of the inability of the natural man to receive the things of God, and that the carnal mind is enmity against God; the Lord is supposed to allude to his Church and people,

during the time of their unregeneracy. But here is the mistake. The natural man, the body of sin and death, is, and must be unavoidably, the same in nature, after a work of grace hath passed upon the soul, as before. It is wholly nature, wholly the same mass, of flesh and blood. If the body was made holy, as the soul is, by regeneration, it would be no longer liable to corruption. Whereas, the hourly tendencies of the body, by reason of sin, is to its original dust. Hence, in distinction to this, when the Apostle Peter is relating to the Church, the blessedness of their being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, he adds, which liveth and abideth for ever. 2 Pet. i. 23. Had the Apostle considered the body of believers included in this new birth of the soul; the body, no more than the soul, would any longer be the subject of corruption. And Paul, in confirmation of the same, more than twenty years after his regeneration, speaking of himself, and his body of sin and death, which he carried about with him, and in which he said dwelt no good thing; declared, that he was carnal, and sold under sin. Rom. vii. 14. I venture to conclude, in what I am sure every child of God in their experience, as well as Paul, cannot but join issue; that in the blessed act of regeneration, it is the spiritual part that is renewed, and not the carnal. While God the Holy Ghost quickens the soul, which was before dead in trespasses and sins; the body, still remains, in the unrenewed state of fallen nature. Grace works not upon the old man, while the new man after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Not an atom of the body is sanctified; and not an atom of the soul, left unholy. Blessed be Gon! the hour is hastening, when this mass of sin and corruption, which now interrupts the soul, will interrupt her no more. To the grave it is daily going. And there, (saith the soul in her best hours,) let it go. From thence, it will arise, by the power of the LORD JESUS, to whom, notwithstanding all its unworthiness, it is united:) a glorified body, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. Ephes. v. 27. Philip. iii. 21.

But, with respect to the spiritual part of a child of God, when, by the act of regeneration, God the Holy Ghost quickens it into life; here, the gracious act is perfect, compleat, performed but once, and that once for ever. Very blessedly the Holy Ghost hath taught the Church, by his servants the Apostles, the foundation on which this doctrine rests; namely, in that, by this quickening of the soul into spiritual life, by his sovereign power, the soul is made a partaker of the divine nature, and can die no more. And you, (saith Paul,) being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him. Coloss. ii. 13. Mark the expression: quickened together with him. And Peter in like terms. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life, and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory, and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption, that is in the world through lust, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. These are most unanswerable, and decided proofs, in point. The soul, by the gracious act of regeneration, is declared to be quickened together with Him, namely, CHRIST; consequently, hath spiritual life in Christ, and can die no more: for Jesus hath said, because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19. Coloss. iii. 3, 4. And this divine power, hath given all things that pertain to life, and godliness. Consequently spiritual life, and eternal life, with all their preliminaries; grace here, and glory for ever. And, being made partakers of the divine nature, the soul can be no longer liable to any future death, being by this one act quickened, which before was dead, in trespasses and sins; and the nature which communicates this life, being divine. Hence, this blessed act of regeneration, brings with it, eternal life, holiness, and glory. It contains, the whole work of God the Holy Ghost, upon the soul. And all the after acts, in which God the Spirit draws forth the soul into sweet fellowship, and communion with the FATHER, and with his Son Jesus Christ, are but the blessed effects, of this first cause, when bringing the soul, from death, to life; and from the power of sin and Satan, unto the living God.

And, Reader! do but add this one thought to the subject, and see, what a beautiful harmony, and consistency, there is, in this one act, of God the Holy Ghost, by regeneration, to the one act, of God the FATHER, in election, and the one act, of God the Son, in union and redemption. Are we not taught, to look up, with equal reverence, obedience, love, adoration, and praise, to the Holy THREE IN ONE, which bear record in heaven, as the united source, and joint cause, of all our being, well-being, and blessedness? Doth not this homage become suitable and proper in us, not only on account of their perfect equality, in all their nature and essence, as JEHOVAH; but also as manifesting their covenant characters and offices towards us, as the Church in Christ? Say then, is it not blessed, yea, very blessed, to contemplate God our FATHER, manifesting his love, in electing, choosing, and naming the Church, in every individual instance of the Church; accepting, blessing, and making the whole everlastingly happy, in Christ: and this act but once done, for it is eternally done, when done by an unchangeable God, and must remain for ever? Ephes. i. 4. And in like manner, is it not equally blessed, yea, very blessed, to contemplate God the Son, manifesting his love also, in betrothing his Church to him for ever; and as this union could be but one act, and when wrought, never to be undone: so in redeeming his Church from the fall, in this time-state of her existence, by that one offering of himself once offered, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified? Hosea ii. 19, 20. Isaiah liv. 5. And, if these sovereign acts in God the Father, and God the Son, were but once wrought; wherefore should it be thought less powerful, less important, or less gracious, that God the Holy Ghost, in regeneration, should do the same? Why should he not, by one act, communicate all that pertaineth to life, and godliness, in making as holy, and as everlastingly happy, as can be, in time or in eternity, the spirits of those, whom God the Father hath once given, and God the Son hath once betrothed to himself, and redeemed once for all by his blood?

I have been the more particular in stating, according to my views of the subject, the true Scriptural sense of it, because, for the want of a right apprehension therein, I am persuaded, (as I said before,) many there are, of Goo's dear children, who go in leanness of soul,

and mourning, all their days. And, while they are on the look out, for greater holiness in themselves, it is impossible to be otherwise. They are prompted to this expectation, partly by the remains of unhumbled pride in themselves; and partly from the mistaken views of others, who teach (what they themselves, if they knew better the plague of their own hearts, would confess they never found) a progressive holiness, in the divine life. Whereas the great act of faith, and the going forth of the soul, when regenerated by the Holy Ghost, is upon the Person, and blood, and righteousness of Christ. The child of God finds his joy in Christ, not in himself, or his sweetest He doth not live upon his attainments, but upon enjoyments. Christ's compleat justifying salvation: not upon what he feels, but upon what Christ is: not from a work done in him, but upon the work of Christ done for him. He doth not, like the spider, spin a web out of his own bowels to hang upon; but hangs all the glory upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He enters into a full apprehension, of that sweet, and precious Scripture, that Christ is made of God unto him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all his glorying may be in the LORD. It will be a subject of much thanksgiving to the Lord, if these views be sanctified to any of the Lord's little ones, so as to endear Christ, and comfort his people; that all those blessed effects may follow, which the Apostle hath so fully opened in this Chapter, and which arise from divine teaching, when we can say, as he did: but we have the mind of Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! behold the great Apostle in his fervent zeal to the cross of Christ! Think, in what view that cross appeared to his mind! He knew its value. He hath felt, and experienced, the blessedness of it, to his own soul; and as such, he could not remain silent, in holding it forth, to others. And his own weakness, and feebleness, in preaching Christ, and him crucified, he considered as nothing, while he kept in remembrance, that divine strength was rendered the more conspicuous in human nothingness. Nay, the Apostle rejoiced in the consciousness, that the more feeble his ministry was in itself, the more evident would appear, Christ's glory: and their faith be found, not to stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

Blessed be God the Holy Ghost, for the sweet instruction communicated to the Church, in this precious Chapter. Yes! thou Almighty Teacher! we do find cause to bless thee, for the very clear, and decisive line thou hast drawn, between natural knowledge and divine; between the wisdom which is from beneath, and that which is from above. None, indeed, of the princes of this world, knew the Lord of glory: neither will they ever, by mere human intellect, discover the hidden wisdom of God. But, while these things are hidden from the wise and prudent; oh! the graciousness of our God, to reveal them to babes! Lord! may thy people know their sonship, and adoption-character, by thy divine instruction; and may we have all grace, while thou art condescending to be our Teacher, to know the things with spiritual.

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is prosecuting the Subject of his Ministry in this Chapter. Under several sweet Similitudes, he describes the Manner he had used among them, for Instruction.

AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

I beg the Reader, at his entrance on this Chapter to observe, the faithfulness of Paul, as a minister of Christ. He had marked out in the preceding Chapter, the character of such as were taught of the Spirit: and had drawn the line of distinction, between the natural man, which receiveth not the things of God, and the spiritually taught believer. Here, therefore, he makes application, of what he had said on that subject, with an eye to them. Though they were regenerated, or he could not have considered them as brought into Church communion; yet they were but so weak in understanding, that he could not call them any thing more than mere babes in CHRIST. And babes in CHRIST, can only receive the first things of nutriment, and such as tender capacities find easy of digestion; as babes in nature, can relish scarce any thing more than to be fed at the breast. Reader! do not overlook the very sweet instruction, which is given here, both to ministers and people. A minister, like Paul, taught of God the Holy Ghost, and sent forth by God the Holy Ghost, may here learn, how necessary a part in the exercise of the holy function it must be, to study the state, and circumstances, of the LORD's houshold. The different ages, and conditions, and characters of the Lord's people, are carefully to be considered. Paul, describing to Timothy, the outlines of a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, saith; that he should study to shew himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. ii. 15. And such a workman must learn from his Master, how to turn his hand to every branch of his employment, in that part of it more especially which concerns feeding and instructing the LORD's people. The babes in CHRIST, must have the sincere milk of the work, that they may grow thereby. The more advanced in grace, and knowledge, may be brought acquainted, as their spiritual capacities are enlarged, in the stronger food of the soul. All are to have suited portions; and none of them to be overlooked, or forgotten. Hence the LORD JESUS himself describes the faithful servant, in his houshold, who thus administers in his name, to his family; and calls him blessed, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Luke xii. 42, 43. And the people, under such a charge, may learn, from what is here said, how necessary it is for them to eceive the ministry of the Lord's servants, with the utmost affecon, and good will. Babes in Christ, and young men, and fathers, s John calls them, all come in for their separate, and distinct porons. And well are faithful ministers entitled to the love of their eople, while they need their prayers, that in so arduous a work. one might be neglected; but, both minister and people together, be lessed of the Lord. It were well if the former had everlastingly in iew the model of Christ's first sermon in the synagogue. When Esus opened his commission in that place, and declared the prophecy f Isaiah, to be that very day in his divine Person fulfilled; he immeliately added, that his office was, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to eal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and reovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that were oruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke v. 18, 19. with Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. And it were well if the latter, I nean the people ministered unto, were to remember this feature in he character of Jesus, and to form their judgment of the servants. vho stand up to minister in the Lord's name, by this plan of their Master. If a minister, in following the steps of Christ in preaching, iath the Gospel to preach to the poor, and the blind, and the brokenlearted, the captive soul and the bruised, to speak to in the same ermon; various means must he adopt, so as to suit the various wants of such diversified characters. And how can a minister labor faith-'ully, amidst so many claims; or a people have their full and distinct portions, except the Lord directs both? The consciousness of this nade Paul often cry out to the Church: Brethren, pray for us. Thess. v. 25. 2 Thess. iii. 1. Heb. xiii. 18.

3 For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and ano-

ther I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

61 have planted, Apollos watered; but God

gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth, and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye

are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than

that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built

thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

I would refer the Reader, for the proper apprehension of the distinct meaning, between a state of nature, and that of grace, absolutely considered; to the observations which were offered in the preceding Chapter. And, in addition to what is there said, I would here remark, that the carnal state the Apostle alludes to in those verses, means, that the Corinthians, instead of having a single eye to the LORD's glory, in the ministry of his word, suffered themselves, from the remains of in-dwelling corruption in their natural feelings, to form parties, in their choice of ministers, and to class themselves into separate congregations, in prefering one servant of the LORD before another. That this is the charge Paul brings against them is evident, from what he saith. Some were for Paul, and some for Cephas or Peter, and some for Apollos. While we cannot but lament, that from the infirmity of our poor fallen nature, such evils should arise; it will be highly proper, the Reader should carefully observe, that the Apostle, in calling them carnal, doth not say that they were not regenerated, or that they had fallen from grace. Had the persons, to whom the Apostle sent this Epistle, not been regenerated, they could not have been called the Church; for the Church of God cannot be said to be formed, but of the called in CHRIST JESUS. Jude 1. And indeed, as Paul, though reproving them for their contentions, calls them babes in Christ; nothing can be plainer, than that they were truly regenerated believers.

But, Reader! we need not go back as far as to the days of the Church of Corinth, to learn the melancholy consequences which arise in Churches, from ill-judged, and too often misplaced partiality, respecting ministers. If both the servants of the Lord, and the congre-

gation of the faithful, were always guided with a single eye to the glory of Christ; partiality to particular ministers would lose its influence. It may serve, however, to teach us, what poor creatures we are, when we overlook the Master, to have our minds fixed upon the servant. It may serve also to shew us, how much corruption still remains in our sinful bodies. And it may act, under the Lord's grace, to beget an holy jealousy, over our hearts, when we see how easily, even in the best things, sins of infirmity steal upon our affections.

I cannot but admire the very happy method, which the Apostle adopts to cure those errors, in calling off the attention of the Church from all the different servants they had been classing themselves under, and directing their minds solely to the Lord. Who then (saith he) is Paul, and who Apollos? Well might he ask the question. Who were they, or who is any man, but receiving all from the LORD. All the good that is done upon earth, the LORD doeth it himself. It would tend to damp all human pride, if this thought was kept alive by grace, and always uppermost in the heart. For indeed, strictly and properly speaking, it is impossible to add to the Lorp's glory, by all the services of his creatures. And this one thought, duly weighed in the heart, would at once throw to the ground, all the supposed services of men, or angels: namely, that Jehovah's glory is in himself, and from himself, and to himself. If no world, or creature, had ever been, God in his threefold character of Person, FATHER, Son, and Holy Ghost, are all glory to each other. How strikingly Elihu reasons on this point, taught by the Holy Ghost. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man, as thou art: and thy righteousness may profit the son of man! Job xxxv. 7, 8. How unanswerably conclusive this is? And how ought the consideration of it, to humble to the dust, every idea of the services of creatures. It is the grossest mistake upon earth to suppose, that the praises of God, or the services of man, are enjoined, for adding to Goo's glory. Even among men, the wise and noble part of our fellow creatures, pass by, and dislike any praise or approbation which is offered them. And how condescending must it be in the Lord, to receive the services of his creatures? Indeed, so far ought the consciousness of being employed by the Lord, as instruments in his Almighty hand, to any service, excite pride, that it tends, under grace, to beget the greatest humility.

I have said thus much on those passages of the Apostle, by way of introducing another observation. When the Apostle saith, that we are laborers together with God; he could not possibly mean, that God and his creatures are co-operating in such a way, or manner, as though the Lord's cause could not go on, and be accomplished, without the labors of his servants. Every principle of reason, as well as revelation, is full to reprobate the daring thought. Indeed the beautiful similitudes, which Paul hath made use of, to explain himself on the subject, fully sets at nought, the idea. The Church of God is his husbandry, his tillage, his building. And of both husbandry, and building, he is the Lord Proprietor of all; of consequence, every particle of the earth, and every stone in the house his Church are

his, by creation, redemption, grace, and glory. He who hath built all things is Goo. The different departments in this house, and all the servants of it, are his. The field of his husbandry, the seed, the manure, the ground, into which the seed is cast, the sun's warmth, the clouds' fatness, the dew, the rain, the product; in short, the whole are solely his. The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. And what a beautiful conclusion the sacred Writer makes from this delightful statement, when he followeth it up with this question: Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? Not Paul, not Apollos, not Cephus, in any services of theirs, or any work of their hands. But He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn descrifully! And who can this be, but the LORD JESUS CHRIST? This is Goo's righteous servant, whom Jehovan hath chosen, and in whom his soul delighteth. This is He who both labored in Goo's husbandry, and in Goo's building, as a Son over his own house, whose house are we. See Psm. xxiv. throughout. Isaiah xiil. 1. with Matt. xii. 18. But of all other laborers, as the Lord Jesus told his disciples, it may be said, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do. Luke xvii. 10.

It would be well if such humbling views were in the contemplation of every one that ministers in holy things. The Apostle gives the most satisfying and unanswerable reasons for it, in all that is said in this Chapter. For though, with an eye to the Apostolic office, he considers himself as a wise master builder: not that he saith he is one, but as one, and which he expressly ascribes to the grace of Gob which was given unto him; yet he as expressly declares, that Christ is the only foundation. And this Jenovan, not Paul, laid in Zion. Isaiah xxviii. 16. And where CHRIST is laid, all the pure truths of the Gospel, which are laid upon this foundation, and which the Apostle compares to gold, silver, precious stones, these are not man's building, but the LORD's. As the Prophet expresseth it: The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it. Zech. iv. 9. It is to be feared, that the mis-perversion of the Apostle's meaning, in supposing that the gold; and silver, and precious stones he spake of, referred to man's improvement, instead of Gon's grace, hath been productive of much spiritual pride. Every thing that is precious, can only be the Liono's. And the smallest attention, when the Lord the Spirit is the Teacher, would be sufficient to discover the fallacy of such thoughts as makes man his own builder; even when Carist is seen, and acknowledged as the only foundation. The Holy Guest by Puul, refers the whole building into his own sovereign power. The Church is said to be built (not builders,) upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; that is, the same foundation as they are built upon, which is CHRIST. Ephes. ii. 20 to the end. And the same Almighty Sprart by Peter saith, that the Church, as lively stones, are built up; (not build;) a spirittual house. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

And, in further proof of this important dectrine, it is observable, that when the Apostle adds, Now if any man build upon this founda-

tion, wood, hay, stubble; he doth not mean, yea, he cannot be supposed to mean errors, either in life or doctrine, for Christ is still said to be the foundation, where this wood, and hay, and stubble are added. But the wood, and hay, and stubble, mean whatever is a man's own. And a vast deal of this rubbish is found, even in pure Churches, where Christ is made the only foundation. For if ministers, or people, for a moment look off Christ, as the whole of salvation, and at any time take comfort, and part confidence, in what they feel, or what they do; if, instead of deriving an unceasing firmness from what CHRIST is to his Church, and the Church is to CHRIST, either of them date their safety and happiness in a work supposed to be wrought in them, and the experience supposed to be found by them, seeking strength from a supposed grace in the soul, instead of sure grace in CHRIST for the soul; all these comforts are the wood, and hay, and stubble, and which, in the day when every man's works shall be made manifest, shall be burnt up. Reader! it is a blessed thing, rightly to estimate the Lord Jesus Christ. And, while making Him what God hath made him, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, for salvation to every one that believeth: let Him that hath laid the foundation, carry on the whole superstructure, in the regenerated soul. And then, what God by the Prophet hath said, will he the sure consequence. He shall bring forth the head stone thereof with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it. Zech. iv. 7. But, it is a dangerous thing to the soul's comfort, to rest in any thing but JESUS; for very sure it is, that all the child of God hath, whether grace, or strength, or comfort, from the Spirit's work in the heart, he hath all from Christ. And when the fiery trial comes, to try a man's work, though as the Apostle saith, because his foundation is in CHRIST, he himself shall be saved; yet, to have all his own things which gave him comfort, in the wood, and hay, and stubble of his supposed improvements burnt up, though he himself escapeth, yet so as by fire; will be a mortifying thing to the pride of the heart. Oh! it is blessed to live wholly upon Chaist, to come daily, hourly, to Chaist, and to be sensible of our momentary need of Christ, as when the Day spring from on high first visited the soul. One of old found this in his own experience, and hath left it upon everlasting record, for all that come after to make Chaist, as he did, the whole sum and substance of his happiness and joy; and not taking the least confidence in the best, and highest feelings of his own heart: I will go (said he) in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. Psm. lxxi. 16.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple we are.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all

things are your's;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's;

23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

The Apostle is carrying on the same similitude of a building, in allusion to the Church of Christ, when he demands of the Corinthians, whether they knew not, that as a Church, founded in Christ, and united to Christ, they were the temple of God. And it must be confessed, that it is a beautiful similitude. For, as the human nature of Christ became the temple for his Godhead, and in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: so the divine nature may be said to have made the bodies of his people his temple, for his in-dwelling habitation, when by the gracious work of regenerating, illuminating, converting, comforting, sanctifying, and in short, all the operations of the Holv Ghost, the Lord dwells in them, and walks in them; manifests himself to be their God, and they his people. See Levit xxvi. 11, 12. Ezekiel xxxvii. 26, 27. 2 Corinthians vi. 16. Ephesians ii. 20 to the end. 1 Peter ii. 4, 5.

I do not think it necessary to offer any Comment upon what the Apostle hath observed, on the sure destruction of the unregenerate, which defile the Lord's temple, with their false doctrines, and willworship. But I would beg the Reader to remark with me, how blessedly in the close of this Chapter, the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle, calls off the Church from every thing, whether ministers or people, men or things, to fix the soul wholly on Christ. All are your's he saith, things present, or to come; all are yours, because ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Reader! behold the security, the everlasting security, of the faithful! As Christ is the sent, the sealed, the anointed of Jehovah, God's Christ, God's chosen, God's salvation to the ends of the earth: so Christ and his Church being one, in the divine mind, will, and pleasure; all are the Church's in CHRIST, being one with CHRIST, and deriving all from CHRIST. So that if CHRIST be mine, all is mine. His blood to cleanse, his righteousness to justify, his holiness to sanctify. Christ and his fulness, CHRIST and his all-sufficiency, lies at the bottom of all mercies. And, when it be considered, the greatness of his Person, and the glories of his salvation, the infinite nature of his blood-shedding and perfection, and the infinite merit of his work and righteousness; here is enough for a child of God to live upon, in time, and to all eternity. Jesus gives a fulness of blessedness, and a fulness of duration, to all that He is in himself, and to his Church and people for ever. His

Presence sweetens all, sanctifies all, gives a blessedness to all, and makes all completely blessed. All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

REFLECTIONS.

Dearest Lord Jesus! while I hear thy servant, as in this Chapter, reproving the Church, for their weakness in faith, and their little disposition to any thing more than as babes in Christ; how can I overlook my Lord's tenderness to his flock, who hath fed them in all ages, and is feeding them now, as a Shepherd! Dearest Jesus! thou knowest how to bear with the weaknesses and infirmities of thy people! Thou carriest the lambs in thy bosom, and gently leadeth those that are with young.

Do thou, gracious Lord, watch over the husbandry of thy Church! Do thou order all the apartments of the spiritual building. Lord! grant, that I may never bring the wood, and hay, and stubble of any thing of my own, to lay upon the foundation Jesus Christ; but let the gold, and the silver, and the precious stones, laid upon Christ, be the doctrines of Christ, that in the hour of trial, they may never be burnt up, but be found to be Christ's, which will stand

every trial.

And blessed Lord the Spirit! suffer me never to lose sight of that soul-reviving truth, that the bodies of Christ's members are his Temple. Lord, take up thine abode in my poor nature, and reign in me, and rule in me, as the Almighty Lord of every affection. And let that vast inheritance, to which, by my new birth, I am begotten; be my everlasting consolation, against every exercise, and sorrow of life. While I can say with the Church, I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me; sure I am, that both in life and death, things present and things to come, every matter and every event, must minister to the Lord's glory, and my salvation. If Christ be mine, all is mine. And blessed shall I be in my basket and in my store, in my lying down and in my rising up, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity. Precious thought! All are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ's is God's. Amen.

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

A further Account respecting Ministers. The humbling View Paul gives of himself, and his few faithful Companions.

LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not my ownself.

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the

Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

The Apostle opens this Chapter, with a very modest account of himself, and his fellow laborers in the ministry, desiring the Church to consider them in their proper character, as literally no more than ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God; though Paul himself was an Apostle, and eminently called to be an Apostle, and might have just taken to himself the honor of that exalted station. But he declined the whole. He rather kept in view the awful responsibility of the trust, than prided himself upon the dignity of the office. And he desired, that every one would consider him, and his companions in the ministry, with whom he put himself upon a level, in no higher light. How exceedingly to be wished were it, that in every succeeding age of the Church, men who profess the ministry, had taken the Apostle for an example. For what is a minister but a servant? according to our Lord's own statement of the character. Matt. xx. 26, 27. And what is a steward, but one whose chief office it is, to make provision for the food of the family, and to give the houshold their portion in due season. Luke xii. 42, 43. And the importance of considering things in this light, is very evident, when it be recollected, that the LORD of the houshold, when he finally comes to reckon, will take account of his servants, not for the dignity of their office, but for their usefulness in his employment; not for rank, but labor; not according to their station among men, but for their labors in the house of God. And, what a tremendous account will those have to give, who have thrust themselves into his service, uncalled, unauthorized, by Him; and when there, have neglected his service, and lorded it over Goo's heritage, and taken the oversight for filthy lucre? The LORD JESUS hath already read the sentence of all such, in that solemn Scripture. The LORD of that servant will come in the day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. Luke xii. 46.

6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men

above that which is written, that no one of you

se puffed up for one against another.

7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong? ye are honourable, but we are despised.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and

have no certain dwelling-place;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the off-scouring of

all things unto this day.

The Apostle is here speaking by a figure of speech, in allusion to what he had said of the similitude the Gospel ministry bears to planting, or watering, in the preceding Chapter. And the Apostle follows up the same doctrine in those verses, in referring all gifts, where ther spiritual, or temporal, to the Lord. And as Paul's design in this representation, was to heal the divisions made in the Church by the people classing themselves under different ministers; never could be have taken a more effectual method, than the one he hath here adopted; in bringing all upon a level, to shew, that every thing a man hath, either in gifts, or graces, is of the Lord.

I begitted Reader to pause, over the humble, but faithful portrait, Paul hath drawn of himself, and his companions in the ministry. As the Lord and Master himself was, so were his servants: What! a gazing stock, and repreach to the world's wonder? As it was prophesized of Christ and his people, so eminently with reference to his finistering servants was it said: Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord

of hosts which dwelleth in Zion. Isaiah viii. 18. Perhaps there is not a more striking testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, than this verdict the world gives to Christ and his followers. It is not indeed as much considered as it merits, by the faithful; but evidently from this striking prophecy, and the accomplishment of it, in all ages, down to the present hour, the Holy Ghost hath given it for a blessed token. to his faithful people; and it is their privilege to regard it accordingly. In the present day, which is a day of a Christ-despising generation, it comes home with peculiar blessedness to the few of the Lord's little flock, whom the Lord commands to fear not, for it is the FATHER's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. Luke xii. 32. I will beg the indulgence of the Reader to dwell a little upon it. Paul here speaks of himself, and his companions in the ministry, as set forth last of all, a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. Perhaps the Theatre, on which Paul considered himself and them exposed, alluded to the singularity of their ministry, which, to the world, was sure to subject them to insult, and derision, and cruelty. And the angels he had in view, might either mean, ministering angels of good, whom the Lord commissioned to their protection, and who looked on, and observed their faithfulness, with pleasing testimony: Heb. i. 14: Or, more probably, evil angels, and the apostate spirits of darkness, whose malice, thwarted them in all their labors. But whosoever they were which looked on, he and his followers became the subjects of a gazing stock, and derision.

Reader! pause over the review, and behold the conformity in this instance, as in many others, in the Lond's honored ones, being predestinated to his image. Rom. viii. 29, 30. Though Christ was declared by a voice from heaven, and in the hearing of the people, to be the beloved Son of his FATHER; yet was he despised and rejected of men, and accounted for a blasphemer, and as one that had a devil. And as they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, so they counted them of his houshold. The Old Testament Saints, as well as the New Testament Believers, were all branded, in their day, and generation, with obloquy and reproach. David, under the oppression, cried out: I am as a wonder unto many; but thou, O Lord, art my strong refuge. Psm. lxxi. 7. And the Church at large felt the same, and said: Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Psm. cxxiii. 3, 4. And the Prophet speaking to Joshua, and the Church, who as High Priest was a type of Christ, and his people, thus expressed himself: Hear now, O Joshua the High Priest, thou, and thy fellows which sit before thee; for they are men wondered at. Zech. iii. 8. And, if they were simply wondered at for their singularity of character, in preferring the reproach of Christ, to all the treasures of the world, as Moses did: Heb. xi. 26. it would be of little consequence. But, being hooted at, is the smallest evil, sustained for an attachment to the LORD JESUS CHRIST: cruelty to their persons were added to con-

And what rendered the matter the most distressing was, that this treatment, came not so much from the heathen world, from whence it might have been expected, as from those who acknowledged the LORD'S

people. Hence, by the Prophet, the Lord comforted his chosen ones, under the assaults and scoffs of their opposers. Hear the word of the Lord (said God), ye that tremble at his word: Your brethren that hate you, that cast you out for my name's sake said: let the Lord be glorified. But he shall appear to your joy: and they shall be ashamed. Isaiah kvi. 5. And in the after ages of the Church, the Lord Jesus pointed out this persecution, as particularly arising from brethren, and kins-folks, for his name's sake. Yea, saith Christ, they shall put you out of the Synagogues: and the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service. Luke xxi. 16, 17. John xvi. 2.

Pause, Reader! and when you have taken a leisurely review of the subject, in marking the treatment shewn to the Old Testament saints, and New Testament believers, for their singularity of sentiment, in holding the blessed and special truths of godliness in their purity, from the more ordinary and general profession of them: I would beg you to look at the subject, as it relates to the present hour. Whoever looks deeply, and beyond the mere surface of things, cannot but observe, that a full, free, and finished Gospel, is as much despised now, by mere nominal professors, as it ever was, in the days of the Apostle Paul. The preaching which holds forth Christ, as all, and in all, is a sect as much now as ever every where spoken against. He that would escape the censure of licentiousness, it is not enough, that he manifests the purity of his principles by an holiness of life, and conversation; but he must compliment human nature, at the expence of divine truth. The great, and leading doctrines of our holy faith, must be kept in the back ground of preaching; and a man must insist more upon the moral law, as a rule of life, than the grace of God, which bringeth salvation: more upon a supposed work wrought within us, than the work of Christ wrought for us. Paul could not thus preach, and therefore he fell under condemnation. His whole doctrine led to the contemplation, and the enjoyment of the electing love of God the Father; the grace of union with Christ, and interest in all that belonged to Christ, as the free, unmerited gift of God by Christ: and the absolute necessity of being regenerated from the death of sin, in the Adam-nature in which the whole Church of God is born, by the work of God the Spirit. These were the sole topics of Paul's preaching. And the one sole object of his desire was, that he might win Christ, and be found in Him. Reader! see to it, as it respects yourself, that Paul's desire is your's; for depend upon it, that where the truth, as it is in Jesus, is preached, it will be found, that the offence of the cross is not ceased. An accommodating spirit to the times, in preaching any thing, and every thing, but Christ, is among the awful and portentous signs of the present day. A Church chosen of Gop, redeemed and justified wholly by sovereign grace, sanctified in Christ, and regenerated by the Spirit; these are the source and fountain of all spiritual life. But when men make these but as procuring causes, and blend with Christ and his finished and all-perfect work, the creatures' faith, and repentance, and obedience, as the means of favor; the spring of all spiritual life is gone: and to all such preachers it might be said, as by them of old, when wild gourds were mingled with their food: O thou man of Gov, there is death in the pot! 2 Kings iv. 40.

14 I write not these things to shame you; but

as my beloved sons I warn you.

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructers in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of

me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would

not come to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but

in power.

21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

So much hath been said from those words of the Apostle, concerning spiritual fathers, and of the begetting souls to Christ by conversion, that I cannot wholly pass over the subject. I have indeed elsewhere, in my Poor Man's Concordance, given my humble opinion, that the term is improper; and that I conceive, the Apostle himself had no such meaning as is generally supposed, in calling himself the spiritual father of those Corinthians. And certainly it savors much of vanity, hath a great tendency to nourish spiritual pride, and is altogether foreign to Paul's account of himself to Timothy, as the chief of sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15. But, in addition to the observations I there offered, I would beg to say, that as regeneration is the sole work of God the Holy Ghost, it is not possible to reconcile it with common sense, how any act of a minister, can be considered as a co-worker, or a subordinate worker, in such an act, as re-creation. It is true, indeed, that faith is said to come by hearing; and hearing by the word of Goo: Rom. x. 17. But hearing, implies life to hear, and when a soul, which was, before regeneration, dead in trespasses and sins, is brought into life; faith cometh ry hearing, as a means of grace. But there is a mighty difference between hearing, and creating. And, as man hath no hand in the old treation; so neither in the new. The work itself is solely the Lord's. It is the peculiar and special office of God the Holy Ghost. And is one of Heaven's wonders. And surely, none less than He, which brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Chest, can be competent to bring from death, those who by nature, are dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians ii. 1.

I shall leave the consideration of the subject to the Reader's own udgment, under the Lord. But I confess I cannot but conclude, that it must be highly unsuitable, irreverent, and blameable, to assume the name of spiritual father, from any supposed services, in the ministry of Christ. It is the special office of God the Spirit, to beget souls from the death of sin. It is his work: and it is his sole glory. And when we hear the Lord speak of his jealousy, as we do in many parts of Scripture, it ought to be well considered, how the Lord expresseth himself. I am the Lord; that is my Name: and

my glory will I not give to another: neither my praise to graven images. Isaiah xlii. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do observe with what lowliness of heart, Paul desired the Church to regard him, and his companions in the ministry: mere servants and stewards, not as lords over God's heritage. Paul's great object was, to be found faithful. He considered, that all he was, and all he had, his gifts, graces, knowledge, time, talents, were wholly for the benefit of Christ's Church. And, as he told the Lord's followers upon another occasion, when writing to them, so in all the departments of his ministry, he felt a willingness to have imparted unto them, not the Gospel of God only, but also his very soul, because they were dear to him. Oh! the blessedness of such a frame of mind, when found among the servants of the Lord's sanctuary.

But, Reader! do not overlook the sure consequence of faithfulness in the ministry. Paul experienced it then: and the same, more or less, is the same now. Simply to preach Christ, in all his glory, fulness, and all-sufficiency, never did, nor ever will fail, to call forth the anger of all self-righteous Pharisees, and excite the indignation of the mere nominal professor, even more than the prophane. It was so in the days of the Apostle, it is so now, and will continue through the whole time-state of the Church. But, oh! how sweet to eye Christ amidst all exercises, and to refer all events into his sovereign hand, as Paul did; he that judgeth me, (said he,) is the Lord!

Almighty Master! give to all thy faithful servants grace, that when reviled, they may bless; when persecuted, may suffer it; when defamed, they may entreat. May they be content to suffer shame, so Jesus be but honored; and delight to go forth unto their Lord,

without the camp, bearing his reproach!

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle here enters upon the Subject of Reproof. He very sweetly introduceth the Example of Christ, and speaks of Him as the Passover. The Chapter concludes with Exhortations.

IT is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

It is well worthy the Reader's observation, as he enters upon the perusal of this chapter, how much disposed the corrupt part of our fallen nature is, to oppose and interrupt the renewed part, in all her progress in grace. Satan is well aware, that he hath no opportunity so effectual, to harrass and distress the soul of a child of God, but by his enticements of the body. He, therefore, allures the flesh with its corruptions and lusts, to bring on a coldness in spiritual exercises. And, if he can but accomplish his devilish purpose, by interrupting the soul's access to the throne, his object is soon effected, in drawing off the mind that fleshly pursuits may be the more easily followed. Oh! what a deadness have some precious souls at times found on this account?

It should seem, from what is here said, that some one of no small rank in the Church, on account of gifts and abilities, had fallen into a foul offence of an unnatural and forbidden connection, even to the marrying his father's wife. And the Church were so elated with the services of this man, that they absolutely overlooked in the preacher, the shameful conduct of his life.

The Apostle was now at *Philippi*, from whence, as we learn at the conclusion of this Epistle, he wrote it to the Church at *Corinth*. His absence, however, did not lessen his Apostolic authority, nor his zeal for the Lord's service. And he, therefore, in a sharp and

decided manner, passeth judgment upon the person so offending. The sentence is remarkable, and deserves our attention. The offender was to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Various have been the opinion of different Commentators on this remarkable sentence. But I confess, that to my view, it appears to mean nothing more, than that this incestuous person should be for a time deprived the privilege of Church communion. And this, indeed, properly speaking, was a delivery to Satan, and to a child of God most painfully afflicting. And I am the more inclined to this opinion, because it was the act of the Church. Paul passed the sentence, by directing, in the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, what should be done; but the Church, when gathered together, was to perform it. And, as the object intended from it was, that while the flesh was mortified, (which, to a man of great abilities, must have been humbling indeed,) the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord JESUS; this plainly proved, that though this man had fallen into this foul offence, yet was he still considered by the Apostle as a child of Gop.

As the subject is truly interesting, I would take occasion therefrom, to offer an observation or two upon it, which, if the Loap be

pleased to bless, may be rendered profitable.

It is very evident, from the Apostle's statement of this man's case, that he considered the spirit and the flesh in this instance, as in the Apostle's general method of explaining this subject, as in opposition to one another. And this I beg may be noticed as an additional proof, that when a child of God is renewed by regeneration, it is the spirit only which is quickened, the body remains the same. The old man, as it is called, the body of sin is wholly unrenewed. Grace makes no alteration here. No part of it is sanctified. So that, while at the new birth or regeneration, the spirit is quickened and made a partaker of the divine nature, and can die no more; and being united to Christ, and part of Christ, and interested in all that belongs to Christ, is as holy in Christ's holiness, as it ever will be to all eternity; the body is the same mass of corruption as it derived from Adam in the fall; the sin generated in the Adam-nature, hath its subsistence in the flesh, and will remain until corruption puts on incorruption, and mortal puts on immortality.

Now it is the blessed state of a renewed soul, to be brought into such a sweet communion and fellowship with the FATHER, and with his Son Jesus Christ, by the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost; that when the Lord the Spirit hath quickened, and made a child of God a new creature in Christ Jesus, his spiritual part is daily, hourly, aiming through grace, to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Hence, the everlasting warfare in every renewed mind between the flesh and the spirit, between corruption and grace. And it would be well, if every child of God, when brought out of a state of nature, was made sensible of this. He is renewed but in part. He still carries about with him a body of sin and death, which interrupts but too often, his soul's desires and pursuits. 'And, although, through the divine strength imparted to him, he is enabled, and not unfrequently, to keep down, and restrain, and mortify the old man:

yet, daily he knows and feels to his sorrow, that sin and sinful corruptions still retain their dwelling place in the flesh, and which compel him to confess with Paul, that when he would do good, evil is present with him. And, although, he delights in the law of God after the inward man; yet he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members. Rom. vii. 21 to the end.

Such being evidently the case, and which induceth continual soul exercises, and deep groans, at times, in the hearts of the Lord's people: it hath been questioned, and in great humbleness of enquiry; wherefore is it, that since sin is so offensive to the Lord, and so loathsome to every renewed child of God, that the Lord should permit such remains of indwelling corruption to continue? Might not the Lord, when renewing the spirit, have made holy the flesh also? Are not our bodies the Lord's, as well as our souls? Hath not Jesus married both? And will not my body, (saith the child of God,) as well as my soul, be Christ's for ever in the upper world, and in glory with Him for ever? How then is it, that I groan daily, being burthened with sinful flesh, when my Lord knoweth how much I long for deliverance, and how easily my Lord, with a word speaking, could make my body as holy as my soul?

These, and the like questions, have arisen in the minds of Gop's

people, when regeneration-work hath taken place in their souls from the earliest days of the Church, and been brought forward in every generation from age to age. But, after all that hath been said, and after all the earnest cries of the soul, God's dear children feel the same, and groan at times as deep as ever. Reader! pause over the subject. Depend upon it, the Lord hath a gracious design in all his dispensations, and doth, and will, overrule every event of the present time-state of his Church to his own glory, and his people's welfare. The Holy Ghost hath said, by his servant the Apostle, 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. And well we know, that sorrows and afflictions, trials and temptations, wants and weaknesses, in his Almighty hand, minister to this end. And even sin itself, the evil of all evils, though in its very nature and tendency hath everlasting ruin in its deadly fruit; yet like medicine extracted from poison, becomes subservient to the divine glory, when the LORD Thus the malice of hell, in the ruin of converts evil into good. Adam, laid a foundation for the sweetest of all mercies in Christ. Thus the cross of Jesus, when sin brought on his death, became the everlasting salvation and life of his people. And thus all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called of God. Mark the expression. To them that love God; not that love sin, but hate sin. To them that hate their own bodies, on account of sin, and loath themselves in their own sight. Oh! how a child of Gop, when fully made acquainted with the plague of his own heart, will hate sin, and hate self, and fly to Christ to seek deliverance from it. Reader! these thorns in the flesh keep souls humble. The consciousness what a mass of evil mingles up with all we say, and all we

do, destroys all dependance upon both. And far better is it to be thus humbled in self, that Christ may be all in all, than even if our

hearts were more pure, if so be, that this supposed purity made us proud. And how do we sometimes long to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, when any renewed instance of human infirmity makes a child of God go heavily, and in sharp soul distress?

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For

even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I am the more inclined to think, that the delivering of the person, before spoken of by the Apostle, to Satan, referred to the separating him from Church communion and ordinances, by what is here said of keeping the feast on the Passover, inasmuch as the Apostle bids them, at the same time he calls them to observe the feast, to purge out the old leaven. But whether so or not, it is very blessed, the authority which God the Holy Ghost hath here given to call Christ our Passover, because it clearly and decidedly proves, that that sacred service in the Jewish Church, was wholly typical of Christ. And again in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the blessed Spirit confirms the same, when telling the Church, that Moses kept it by faith. What faith? Surely an eye to Christ. See Exod. xii. 42. Heb. xi. 28. Now the christian feast is a feast upon Christ's sacrifice. That sacrifice, as Christ our Passover, was once offered. Heb. x. 10, 14. But the feast is to be kept continually, For as often as we cut of this bread, and drink of this cup, we do shew forth the Lord's death till he come. 1 Cor. xi. 26. And it is a beautiful direction the Apostle gives of keeping this feast, that there is to be no leaven with it. For, as the Jews of old, before the celebration of the feast of the Passover, searched by the light of a lamp every secret corner and part of their houses, to see if there was any leaven hid away, and which if they found, they at once removed; so the true believer in CHRIST, is to have no leaven to mingle with CHRIST. His heart, he prays the light of God's Shirit to search, and take away every thing of his that might be mingled with Christ and his righteousness, that he may receive a whole Christ into a broken heart. Christ, and CHRIST alone, is the LORD's Passover; and CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, is his also. Reader! it is very blessed when a child of God views Christ as God the Father views him, and makes him as JE-HOVAH makes him, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of salvation.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any particular observation on what is here said in those verses. He very plainly teacheth us, that what he wrote was to the Church, not to the ungodly world. He saith that he hath nothing to do in judging them that are without. These he leaves to the Lord. But his affectionate advice was to the Church. And to the Church he again recommends their putting away from among them that wicked person. And if, as I am inclined to think, that this putting away, was for a season from ordinances, for the humbling the soul, and admonishing the Church, it serves to shew, how watchful the Apostle was over Ordinances and Church government, and becomes a suitable pattern for the Church of God, in all ages, to adopt upon all like occasions of sin in the members.

REFLECTIONS.

SEE, my soul! what corruptions the human heart is exposed to, and how the peace and prosperity of Church-communion, is liable to be interrupted by the improper indulgence of fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Oh! for grace to keep the heart with all diligence! LORD, do thou keep thy Church, thy people, with thy watchful care, for without thee we are nothing!

Blessed be God the Holy Ghost for this short but sweet portion in this Chapter, which calls upon us to behold Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us; and to know our Lord in this most precious, and blessed office-character. Yes! thou dearest Jesus! methinks I would eye thee with unceasing delight, as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Thou wert, indeed, and art still, and ever will be, a lamb of the first year without blemish, and without spot. Thou wert taken out, as the Jewish lamb was, from among the flock, the One, the holy individual One chosen by God from among the

people; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Lord! give me grace to keep the feast on this, thy one, thine all-sufficient sacrifice, to thy praise and my unceasing comfort, during the whole of my time-state here below, until thou shalt bring me home to the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. Let there be no leaven found in my heart or house. Oh! for the Lord so to prepare me for this and every other holy ordinance, that I may make Christ my whole and sole Passover. Let me so paschatize and keep the feast upon my Lord's sacrifice, that both in doctrine, and in life, and conversation, Christ may be all, and in all. Jesus will preside at his own table, who both makes the feast, and is the feast, my New Testament altar, sacrifice, and sacrificer. And I shall sit down at his table with great delight here below; and ere long, at his table above, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the heirs with the whole Church of the same promise!

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle opens this Chapter, with giving Directions to the Church, how to manage their Disputes without Law. He closeth the Chapter with a short, but very blessed Account, that the Bodies of Christ's People are Members of Christ's Body.

DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how

much more things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have judgements of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and

that before the unbelievers.

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why

do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

If what the Apostle hath said in these verses, was duly considered, and more especially, the authority by which the Apostle delivered it, was taken into the account, it would put an end to a thousand vexatious contests in life. There is some little difficulty to apprehend what Paul meant by the saints judging the world, and judging angels. And, yet, from the manner of speaking, which the Apostle useth, in saying, know ye not, it should seem to be a thing so perfectly well understood, as admitted no question or necessity of enquiry. Certain it is, that the Lord Jesus spake of this judgment, when telling his disciples, that they which had continued with him in his temptations, he had appointed to a kingdom; and that they should eat and drink at his table in his kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Luke xxii. 28-30. See also Rev. ii. 26, 27. iii. 21. And, as the saints of God have passed from death to life at regeneration, and being justified freely in Christ, there is now no condemnation to them, the judgment which is to take place on the ungodly, they will behold on the great day. Rom. viii. 1. But how far those scriptures are intended to imply, that Christ's members are to be assessors with him, I leave with the Reader to consider.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

II And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

What a striking passage is here? I pray the Reader to be very attentive to it. The Corinthians as a city and people were full of uncleanness, even to a proverb; so much so, that to say, a Corinthian woman; was a similar term to a woman of the town. Hence, as the Corinthians abounded in every species of luxury and uncleanness, and the Lord in his providence and grace, gathered a Church from among them; the Apostle reminds them of what they once were, that he might the more strikingly make them sensible of what they now are. Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are

sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and

by the SPIRIT of our God.

I hope the Reader will allow me to enlarge a little somewhat more particularly, on this most precious portion of the word of God. For, if I do not greatly err, here is enumerated the several office-acts of all the Persons of the Godhead, and which comes in most blessedly in this place, when stating the mighty change wrought upon the hearts of the Lord's people, in proof that every poor sinner, when saved and called with an holy calling, is indebted for this unspeakable mercy, to the united love and grace of FATHER, Son, and HOLY GHOST. And this is, indeed, one of the fundamental articles of our most holy faith. 1 John v. 7. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Matt. xxviii. 19. It is true, that the mercies here enumerated, are not placed according to the usual order of God the Father's choosing, God the Son's redeeming, and God the Holy Ghost's regenerating. But no objection can arise from thence. For sometimes one is spoken of first, and sometimes another. See 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Ephes. ii. 18. Coloss. ii. 2. 1 Pet. i. 2. But each glorious Person of the Godhead, in their officecharacter relation to the Church, is certainly referred to in this verse; and this is abundantly satisfying in proof of their grace, and love, and favor.

The Apostle begins with the work of God the Spirit. But ye are washed. And what a sweet confirmation is this of the great work of regeneration? The same great Apostle, in his epistle to Titus, hath introduced the subject much in the same manner as in this epistle to the Corinthians; only when writing to Titus, he included himself, as being by nature in the same original uncleanness with all. For we ourselves also (said he) were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divine lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy GHOST, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our SAVIOR. Titus iii. 3-6. Now, though this office-work of God the HOLY GHOST is the last spoken of, according to order, in the antient settlements of eternity, when that Covenant which is ordered in all things, and sure, is originally mentioned, (Psm. lxxxix. 3.) yet is it the first which gives a discovery to the precious child of God of the covenant of grace. For until we are washed by the washing of regeneration, the kindness and love of God toward man, hath never appeared to that individual soul, who then, for the first time, finds himself called with an holy calling, and is made willing in the day of God's power. 2 Tim. i. 9. Psm. cx. 3. Hence, therefore, though the electing love of God the FATHER chose that precious child of God before all worlds, (Ephes. i. 4.) and marked his name in the book of life, (Rev. xxi. 27. Luke x. 20. Philip. iv. 3.) yet until God the Holy Ghost put his Almighty hand to the work, and quickened the souls, dead by nature, in trespasses and sins; (Ephes. ii. 1.) the soul was unconscious of his high birth right, and knew nothing of the FATHER'S love in choosing, or the Son's love in redeeming, to all the purposes of grace and mercy. Neither is there a single blessing that we can lay

claim to, or indeed have we the smallest conception of, until this sovereign act of grace hath passed upon the soul. Reader! pause, and ask your own heart, whether those blessed words of Paul to the

Corinthians can be applied to you? But ye are washed!

The Apostle next saith, But ye are sanctified. Jude addresseth the Church in like manner, when he saith, To them that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. Jude 1. I do not presume to say, that Paul had the same views concerning the being sanctified, when he told the Corinthians, ye are sanctified. Some have thought, that he alluded to the sanctification of the spirit of this people. And it is possible it may be so. But I am free to think otherwise. The sanctification or setting apart in God the Father's choice of the Church from everlasting, I humbly conceive to be here meant, agreeably to the analogy of scripture. And in this sense, it comes in very sweet, after the Apostle had told them of their being washed by regeneration. For, hereby, they were now enabled to trace their mercies to their source, in beholding themselves sanctified, or set apart by the Father, being regenerated and

brought forth into spiritual life by the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle proceeds in his account, and saith: but ye are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD. And here, if I err not, is intended to set forth, the justification of the Church by Christ; of whom it is expressly said, that he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Rom. iv. 25. And thus, on the presumption that I am correct, we have in this beautiful verse, an account of the several office-characters of the whole Persons of the Godhead: in God the Spirit's gracious act of washing by regeneration, of God the Father's love in sanctifying or setting apart by election; and of God the Son's justifying his redeemed, by his blood and righteousness. It may be said indeed, and it ought to be said, as a most blessed and soul-refreshing truth, that these several acts here spoken of, are in different parts of Scripture ascribed to each glorious Person indifferently. But this is but a further confirmation of the whole; and an additional testimony to the divine unity. John v. 17, 18. And very blessed it is, to trace the acts of each glorious Person, and the united acts of all. Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, if it be the Lord's will, to have the same sweet assurance given us, as Paul here gave to the Corinthian Church; that we are washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our God!

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

There is some difficulty in apprehending the Apostle's immediate design, in the former part of these verses. Probably it might refer to somewhat personal, respecting the Corinthians. But there is no difficulty to understand the Apostle's beautiful allusion to Christ, and his mystical body, when he saith, the body of a believer is for the LORD, and the LORD for the body. Christ's mystical body, which is the whole body of the Church, was given him by the FATHER before all worlds. Jesus delights to speak of this body upon every occasion; highly prizing it on his FATHER's account, as well as his own, and to whom he promised the Holy Ghost. John xvii. 6-10. Psm. xxi. 2. Song vii. 10. John xiv. 17, 18, And it is by virtue of this union, and oneness, between Christ and his people, that the bodies of the redeemed, will be raised up at the last day. They will not arise as the unredeemed will, brought forth by the naked power of God, but from an union with Christ. So Paul speaks. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Rom. viii. 11. Even in the grave, and dust of death, there is an union of the bodies of CHRIST's redeemed, to the LORD their Head, by virtue of which, at the great day they will arise; and as the Lord Jesus said: because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19.

- 15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid.
- 16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Numberless very blessed things, are contained within the compass of these verses. I beg the Reader's attention to them in order.

First. The Apostle reminds the Church of a precious truth, which is so plainly taught in the Gospel, and supposed to be so perfectly known and understood by every regenerated child of God, that he takes it for granted, they all knew it, and were daily living in the enjoyment of it; namely, their union, and oneness, with Christ. Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ. The sacred holy body of Christ which the Son of God took into union with him is Personal But CHRIST's mystical body is the whole Church. Now it is highly important, that this should be thoroughly understood, and apprehended, by every member of Christ's mystical body. The whole person of a child of God, he whom the FATHER hath given to his dear Son, and whom God the Son hath betrothed to himself, and redeemed by his blood and righteousness from this time-state of sin and corruption; is truly, and virtually united to CHRIST, in body, soul, and spirit. For though the body is not renewed at regeneration, and it is the spirit only that is quickened, which before this gracious act of God the Spirit was dead, by reason of the Adam-fall, in trespasses and sins; yet the whole man is united to Christ, and as a member of Christ's body of his flesh, and of his bones, is part of Christ. And in proof of it, whenever a child of God dies, his spirit joins the society of the spirits of just men made perfect; and though the body returns to the dust, yet, in consequence of an union with Christ, as his glorious Head; he will arise from the dust of the earth at the last day. This proves, that the whole person of a child of God is united to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly. The Apostle takes it equally granted, the Church knew, that, by virtue of this union with Christ, one and the same Spirit lived, and acted, in both. He that is joined unto the Lord is One Spirit. This glorious and momentous truth became too important, in Paul's view, to be lost sight of by the Church. For what could be equally interesting? The same Almighty God the Spirit which anointed, filled, and made blessed, the human nature of Christ; anointed, filled, and made blessed, all his members. In Christ indeed, as in a fountain. In them as in a vessel. But still One, and the same. The Lord giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Christ. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. John iii. 34. Coloss. ii. 9. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Ephes. iv. 7.

Thirdly. When God the Holy Ghost quickens the soul of a child of God by regeneration, he becomes a life-giving, soul-renewing source, in the spiritual part of the person; and makes the body his temple, according to his original and eternal promise. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—28. Levit. xxvi. 11, 12. So that by virtue of this, the Holy Ghost becomes a quickening Spirit, to give a vital union between Christ and his members, and to keep alive the principles of grace he hath planted, and maintain that life in the soul, as a branch in the vine. And, while influencing the spirit of the believer, in opening continual communications from Christ, as the Head to his members; the redeemed are enabled to mortify the deeds of the body, by His indwelling presence. Rom. viii. 13.

And, lastly, to mention no more: what endears the whole to every child of God is, that this personal union, by which the believer is

united to Christ, as God-Man, in body, soul, and spirit; is an everlasting, indissoluble union, which nothing can separate or destroy. Because I live, saith Jesus, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19. Hence, the Apostle was taught by the Holy Ghost to comfort the Church, both with the secrecy, and the safety, of all the people of God. Your life, said he, is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then ye shall also appear with him in glory. Coloss. iii. 3, 4.

From all these considerations, and more than these, which are included in the Apostle's observations; he argues, both the shame, and sin, of joining the members of Christ's body, with the members of an harlot. And he shews, as plain as words can make it, that as the whole Church, and every individual of the Church, is chosen by God, bought with the price of Christ's blood, and renewed by the Holy Ghost; they are no longer their own property, but Christ's. by every tie which can make them so, both by creation, and redemption; and therefore are called upon, to glorify Him, whose right they are, in body, and in spirit, which are God's. I beg the Reader to observe, that it is Christ, who is here spoken of as Goo. whose right the Church is, by having bought it with a price. And this by the way, becomes a very plain, full, and decisive testimony, to the Godhead of Christ. And very blessed it is, when a child of God, gives the glory to Christ as such, both in body, and in spirit, which are his.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I learn, from this interesting Chapter, how utterly unsuitable, and unbecoming it is, in a child of God, called out of the Adam-fall of nature, and redeemed from the law of works, to be entangled in courts of earthly judicature, when we are professedly looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Oh! what a reproach it is, as the Apostle saith, to see brother going to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers!

Let us pause again, and again, over that precious Scripture, of sinners washed, sanctified, and justified, when brought out of nature's darkness, and the shadow of death. And, oh! what delightful views are we called to contemplate, in being told, and with such an assurance of undoubted testimony, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Solomon was struck with astonishment, in contemplating the infinite condescension of Jehovah to regard the house, which he had made. Behold, (said he,) the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee! But here we are called upon to behold God the Holy Ghost making the bodies of his people his temple. Lord! give me grace to honor those members of Christ's mystical body, which are made the indwelling residence of the Holy Guost; and never by any act of sin, and infirmity, desecrate what the Lord calls his temple. Precious LORD JESUS! let me never lose sight of this blessed truth: that I am thine, and bought with a price. Oh! that every thought, and word, and action, could give glory to thy Holy Name!

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is chiefly treating in this Chapter, on the Subject of Marriage. He dwells largely on the several Circumstances connected with it, and makes very many blessed Observations, by way of Improvement.

NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me; It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

- 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.
- 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

I have often considered a great part of this Chapter as having a spiritual illustration. And sure I am, if we were to read it in many parts of it with an eye to Christ and his Church, as the Apostle beautifully spiritualized the same subject elsewhere, (see Ephes. v. 32.) to this amount; we should find numberless passages in it, sweetly explained in this way. As for example: In the opening of it, while Paul speaks of the advantage a man would have in a single state; may we not say, what pains, and agonies of soul, the Son of God would have saved himself, had he never touched our nature, neither regarded our lost and ruined state? Precious Jesus! what unspeakable mercies doth thy Church, thy Spouse, derive from her union with thee? But who shall calculate, yea, what heart shall conceive, the sorrows which arose out of thy Suretyship, when redeeming our ruined nature, from the guilt and consequences of the fall?

I am not to be told, that the Apostle, in the greater part of this Chapter, is answering certain questions the Corinthians proposed to him, on the subject of marriage. This is evident from the first verse, in which he takes notice of the Church having written to him upon this occasion. Nevertheless, as their questions had respect to the times in which they lived, and the particular customs to which they were subject, and are altogether in many cases mentioned in this Chapter, foreign to the manners of the present day; I venture to believe, that both the Writer and Reader of this Poor Man's Commentary, will find it more profitable, to have our minds exercised unto godliness, under the Holy Ghost's teaching, while perusing this Chapter, if we consider the Church's union with Christ; and see whether some very sweet and precious instructions, concerning that union, may not be gathered from what is here said.

Hence, when I read, that to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband; I not only see the

Lord's solemn ordination, and appointment, from the very first dawn of revelation, when at the creation of our first Parents, Adam and Eve, the precept went forth, that a man should leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they should be one flesh; (Gen. ii. 24.) but I see the blessedness of union between Christ and his Church, which that marriage of Adam and Eve was designed to represent. It was CHRIST, concerning whom the LORD GOD said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. Gen. ii. 18. And it was the Church, which the LORD God did form, to be an help meet for him, and an help mate to him, which as his spouse, his bride, might be a partaker with him, and from him, of all that is communicable of grace here, and glory to all eternity to Jehovan's praise, and the Church's happiness. And therefore, with an eye to this, how blessedly we read, what God the Holy Ghost by the Apostle here saith, in the opening of this Chapter: let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband. Christ hath but one wife, his Church; and his Church hath but one husband, the LORD JESUS. My dove, my undefiled, (saith the Bridegroom in the Canticles), is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. Song vi 9. And elsewhere the Lord blessedly saith: Thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot: and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. Hosea iii. 3. Reader! do not overlook the love of Jesus, in those sweet scriptures; that amidst all our spiritual fornications, and departures from the LORD, JESUS never departs from us. The Lord God of Israel saith, that he hateth, putting away. See a beautiful scripture to this effect, Malachi ii. 14, to the end. See also Hosea ii. throughout.

And sure I am, that no child of God, who is truly and savingly regenerated, can read in this Chapter what is said of the husband rendering unto the wife due benevolence, but must be led (if so be the Holy Ghost opens to his view the thought,) to contemplate, the unceasing grace, and mercy, and loving kindness of the Lord Jesus. With what earnestness of affection doth Jesus woo every individual of the persons the FATHER hath given him to himself? How many, and how unceasing are his love calls, to allure us to his arms? Though in our fallen state, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement; yet when Jesus comes to demand his own, he saith: your covenant with death shall be dis-annulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand. Isaiah xxviii. 15, 18. By the sweet and gracious influences of the Holy Ghost at regeneration, all the holds of Satan are broken down, and the world and sin lose their charms; and notwithstanding all our loathsomeness and unworthiness as we are in ourselves, our poverty, weakness, ignorance, and the innumerable provocations wherewith we have provoked him to anger, Jesus unites us to himself, makes us his spouse, cleanseth us in his blood, cloatheth us in his robe of righteousness, makes us comely from the comeliness which he putteth upon us, brings us to his Ordinances here, and will bring us home to his marriage supper in heaven, when all the purposes of his holy will are fulfilled; and grace is consummated in endless glory. Reader! Is this the due benevolence Jesus renders to his wife the Church? Oh! that you

and I could bear as cheerful a testimony concerning ourselves, when it is said, in the latter part of the verse: and likewise also the wife render due benevolence unto the husband! But oh! thou dear Lord! how often, as a treacherous wife departeth from her husband, hath my poor heart been wandering from thee? Lord! let me hear thy sweet voice by the Prophet: Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding. May the Lord enable me to answer: Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Jerem. iii. 14. 22.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewisé also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6 But I speak this by permission, and not of

commandment.

7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows,

It is good for them if they abide even as I.

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry:

for it is better to marry than to burn.

10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.

11 But and if she depart let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not

the husband put away his wife.

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with

her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

Having by the foregoing observations, aimed to shew, how capable this and similar Chapters and portions in God's word are, of being spiritualized; I would now also endeavor to consider, some of the several expressions which the Apostle hath made use of in this Chapter, which at first view are not so plain to be understood.

The general phrases, of wives having no power over their own bodies, and husbands in like manner over themselves, and the charge of not defrauding one another, but with consent for the duties of religion: these are expressions as delicately framed, as the nature of the subject would admit; and they intimate the mutual obligation, that each party is to attend to one another, in all the departments in which the married state can be supposed to be circumstanced: that none of the enemies of our salvation, neither Satan, nor the world, nor the lusts of our own corrupt and fallen nature, may at any time tempt to evil. And I take occasion, from what the Apostle hath here said, to observe, that very sure I am, even among the Lord's people too little attention in the minuter circumstances of life, in temper, disposition, the want of accommodation, and what Paul elsewhere calls bearing one another's burdens, and so to fulfil the law of CHRIST; hath been, and frequently is productive of many sad consequences, in social, and religious life. Gal. vi. 2. It would be well, if all professing godliness, were attentive to those things, that no occasion might be given to the adversary to blaspheme. To behold such as profess to know the Lorn, and to have passed from death to life, followers of God in Christ, as dear children; and by that profession, to be supposed as walking in love, as Christ also hath loved us; and to become examples of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity: and yet of tempers so unkind, that except when actually engaged in seasons of worship, those with whom they dwell find continual occasion to complain: there is somewhat highly unsuitable, and unbecoming in all this! Where is the Spirit of Christ, and the meekness of Jesus, it may be said? And I have heard it more than once said by some, and have found cause to blush when hearing it, as unable to answer the charge: " If there were no

other life than the present, I would rather spend my social hours with some amiable tempers, who make no profession of grace, than dwell with many that do." Solomon long since observed, that it is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman. Prov. xxi. 19. And whether man or woman, if professing godliness, and yet indulging a fretful, irritable temper, it brings great reproach upon the blessed Gospel of Christ, and is productive of much discomfort to his people.

When the Apostle in this Chapter draws a line of distinction, between what he speaks by commandment, and what from himself, we are not to suppose that he means his authority was not the same. The commandment to which he refers, is the precepts, which are found in the Word of God on the subject. Gen. ii. 24. Exod. xxi. 10. So again, when he saith, that he would all men were even as himself: He doth not mean in relation to the married, or the unmarried state. For it is not known whether Paul had, or had not a wife. And if unmarried, he could not be supposed to wish, that there were no marriages. But Paul modestly wished, that all men were blessed

with grace, to the state in which they were, as himself.

So once more. When Paul saith, that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, we are not to suppose the Apostle meant, that the one, which is a partaker of grace, sanctifies, or makes holy the other, which is not a partaker of grace. None but God the Holy Ghost can regenerate, and make holy; and therefore this is impossible. But the sense is, that by virtue of one of the parties in marriage being in a state of regeneration; it renders the state of matrimony, which is between those two persons, a sanctified, or holy state, notwithstanding the unsanctified unholy state of the other party. And hence the children, which otherwise would be unclean, springing from both parents, if both had been unregenerate, are now by virtue of one of them, holy; that is, are born in holy wedlock. And, it should be considered moreover, that in this Chapter where those terms are made use of, the Apostle is writing to a Church gathered from heathenism and idolatry. Therefore, if one of the parties in wedlock be still in heathenism, this doth not make the children heathens, because the other is a believer. Hence the children are sanctified, that is, are born in holy wedlock. And this is all that is, or can be meant by it, as relating to the circumstances of human life. An husband's regeneration cannot produce the regeneration of the wife; neither the wife's the husband. Neither are children, by any birth of nature, even if both parents are regenerate, made thereby children of grace. But, all that is here said, relates to the state of holy wedlock, as concerning transactions in social life; and a sweet scripture it is, to comfort the people of God, when, in either case, a man in grace happens to be united to a woman not in grace: and so on the other hand, a gracious woman to an ungracious man. But while this scripture affords consolation under such circumstances, it is truly blessed, when both parties are true yoke-fellows, have first given themselves to the LORD, and then to each other; and are one in Christ. 2 Cor. vi. 14. But, while so much may be said, and indeed ought to be said from this scripture, in reference to the marriage state in human life, I beg the Reader not to overlook, the very sweet and precious instruction arising from this subject, in a spiritual sense, as it relates to the Church's marriage with Christ. Here, indeed, and in truth, our glorious, holy Husband, sanctifies his whole body the Church; for by the one offering of himself once offered he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 14. And by his uniting his Church to himself, she is made holy in his holiness. The root being holy, so are the branches. Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. Oh! precious Sanctifyer of thy people! Yes! thou holy Lord, we hear thee say: For their sakes I sanctify myself. Hosea ii. 18, 19. Jerem. xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. Isaiah iv. 5. Heb. ii. 11. John xvii. 19.

What the Apostle hath added in the question put both to the wife, and husband, about saving each other, hardly needs an observation. By saving, simply means no more than the being instrumental in bringing unbelievers under the means of grace. No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of the soul is precious. And this is solely the office of CHRIST. The LORD hath done it, and being once done it ceaseth for ever. Psm. xlix. 7, 8. Heb. x. 14. And when souls are brought under the word, and that word is prayed over; this is the utmost that can be done. And very hopeful it is, when God's children are enabled so to do; and find their minds led out in the service, by God the Holy Ghost. The Lord that quickened one poor sinner. can quicken another. And he that mercifully called me, (a child of God may say,) can, if he so please, call you. But here the matter must rest. What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thine husband? And how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

- 18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.
- 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.
- 20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.
- 21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.
- 22. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord; yet I give my judgement, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned: and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as

though they had none.

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not;

31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife:

34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world how she may please her husband.

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not

that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which it comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgement: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

As the Apostle on this subject of circumcision, as well as all the other points on ordinances, wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost; it is to the peace and happiness of the Church, to have a clear instruction concerning those things. And what is here said, is highly satisfactory, being stated by the Lord himself in his government of his Church and people. Here we are expressly taught, that if a Jew be called by the SPIRIT, his former circumcision hath nothing of objection in it. He is not to conceal, or even wish to conceal, his having been circumcised. Let him not become uncircumcised. He cannot indeed be so. The thing itself in fact is impossible. But the Apostle probably alludes to the case of some, who in times of trouble, when it was considered by heathens a crime to be a Jew, and such upon examination as were found so, were cruelly treated, or put to death; attempted means to make it appear, that they had not been circumcised. To all such the Apostle speaks when he saith, let him not become uncircumcised. In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Gal. vi. 15. And on the other hand, if a Gentile from among the heathen world, be called by sovereign grace, to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; let him not be circumcised by way, as he may think, of being entitled to the Covenant made with Abraham; for this he is without it. Gal. iii. 28, 29. Circumcision was indeed an holy ordinance of GoD; and appointed to be observed by the whole house of Israel, under the severest penalties. Gen. xvii. 10—14. But as it was intended only as a sign and seal of a better Covenant, established upon better promises; it never was intended to minister any further, than unto the coming of CHRIST. It served as a shadow to Him. For it intimated the fall, and corruption of nature; and that without shedding of blood there was no remission. But when He came, who by the one offering of himself once offered perfected for ever them that were sanctified; this ordinance was done The substance being come, the shadow for ever ceased. Nay, indeed, it not only ceased to be necessary, but became improper. For, as circumcision had wholly an eye to Christ, whoever submitted to the rite after the coming of Christ, did virtually by the act call in question, either that CHRIST was come, or that his coming was the fulfilment of the whole law. Hence, the Apostle in another Scripture saith, that if a man be circumcised, CHRIST shall profit him nothing: that is, if he be circumcised from not being satisfied with Christ's obedience and death, as accomplishing redemption; and becoming the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. See Galatians v. 2, 3. Romans x. 4.

The Apostle makes use of the same kind of reasoning, respecting the several departments of social life: the servant with the master, and the wife with her husband, and in short all the several callings of the world. All situations in civil society, provided the station be lawful, and honest, may be followed; for they have nothing to do with the grand concerns of salvation. He that is called in the LORD with an holy calling by sovereign grace, and is thereby proved to be of the family of Christ, bought with the precious price of Christ's blood, and thereby redeemed from the Adam-nature fall, hath an infinitely higher concern, than the mere consideration of any worldly The time here, is short. It is hardly worth a thought, what station of life a man is placed in, high or low, rich or poor; unless it were to seek that which might best promote the everlasting interests of the upper, and brighter world. Even the tender alliances in the charities of life: our continuance in them is so transitory, that we ought to sit as loose and detached from them as possible: and conscious that here we have no continuing city, we therefore ought to be always on the look out in seeking one to come. Heb. xiii. 14. I do not think it necessary to enlarge on several particulars set forth by the Apostle, towards the close of the Chapter; being in themselves sufficiently plain and obvious.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! You and I shall read this Chapter of the Apostle's to no small improvement, if, from what is here said in relation to the civil societies in common life, we make a spiritual reflection on that near, and dear union, which subsists between Christ and his Church. There can be no connection so near, none so dear, none so important, interesting, and durable; for it is for ever. All other unions die with the body. But Christ and his Church are one, to all eternity.

It may be very blessed to have an eye to this, in our forming connections in the marriage state; and to invite the LORD JESUS and his disciples to the wedding. And, with respect to the humble, or exalted state, in which the members of Christ's body are placed, experience loudly confirms the truth every day; poverty, or riches, go but a little way, to frustrate, or promote, the real comforts of life. Where Jesus is, and where He forms the union, blessedness must follow, in the sanctified use of all dispensations.

Reader! do not overlook, or forget, the decision of the Lord by the Apostle in this Chapter, concerning ordinances. Circumcision or uncircumcision, with every other ordinance whatever, are in themselves nothing. Many of Christ's redeemed ones now in glory, like the man Jesus took with him to Paradise from the cross; never enjoyed a single ordinance upon earth. And many, it is to be feared, who have had all the privileges of ordinances, know nothing of the God of ordinances to their souls' joy. Reader! may it be your happiness, and mine, to form our conclusions upon the Apostle's standard, as regulated by the Spirit of God. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle in this Chapter, is treating on the Subject of Meats offered unto Idols. He very blessedly states the Privileges of the Lord's People, in their Christian Liberty; but shews, with what Caution a Child of God ought to walk, so as not to wound a weak Brother.

NOW as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to

know.

- 3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.
- 4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.
 - 5 For though there be that are called gods, Vol. II. 3 G

whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods

many and lords many,)

6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

It should seem, from the opening of this Chapter, that the Apostle had been written to by the Corinthians on the subject, how far it became sinful to eat of the flesh which was offered unto idols. It should be remembered, that the Corinthians, by nature, and by practice, were idolaters: and as many of the Lord's people, now formed into a Church at Corinth, had been before their conversion addicted to idolatry, and many with whom they were connected, were still under this delusion; their minds, no doubt, were solemnly exercised upon the subject, and they therefore had written to the Apostle, to

have his opinion upon it.

I beg the Reader to notice, and it is well worthy his attention, what occasion the Apostle took, from the question, and enquiry of the Corinthians, to settle this grand and fundamental point, of the glory of God in a threefold character of Person. He first shews that there is, there can be, no such thing in reality as an idol. Men may, and men do, frame to themselves a fiction of their brain, and call it an idol, or a god. But it only shews the darkened and depraved state of the human heart, in its present fallen state, which can take up with an idea, so ignorant, and stupid. The Apostle then proceeds to speak with all possible reverence, of the Lord God, in his revealed character, and offices, as existing in a threefold character of Persons. Beautifully he describes them, according to the revelation of Scripture: and particularly with an eye to their several distinct offices in the Covenant of grace. I need not dwell upon the subject, neither swell the pages of the Poor Man's Commentary in going over in this place, what more or less, is the sum and substance of the whole Bible. I rather refer to some of the more striking passages, which are in proof. See Matt. iii. 17. and Commentary. Matt. xxviii. 29. 1 John v. 7.

7 Howbeit there is not in every man that know-ledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol: and their conscience being weak is defiled.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if

we eat not, are we the worse.

9 But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak

brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

There is somewhat very humbling to the soul, in what is said. in the first verse of this paragraph: there is not in every man that knowledge. The Reader will recollect to whom the Apostle is writing, and of whom he speaks, namely, the Church; that is, truly regenerated Christians. They were called with an holy calling: 2 Tim. i. 9. had been made partakers of the divine nature, by a work of grace upon their souls: 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. and yet so small and inconsiderable was their knowledge in divine things, that they had not as vet attained to the clear conviction of what the Apostle had said before, to know that an idol is nothing in the world. From living amidst the society of heathens, who worshipped idols, and offered sacrifice to them, and from long prejudice in having themselves been educated in that way, they could not divest their minds from still retaining a somewhat of veneration for them; and instead of eating of the part of the same meat which the ignorant heathens offered to their idols, as common food, uninjured by their superstition and folly, and eating of it to shew, that they contemned the idol, and considered the meat perfectly pure from any pollution arising from their weakness who had offered it to the idol; they eat of it with a kind of religious fear, and awe, and thereby wounded their consciences. Rom. xiv. 14.

As this first verse in the paragraph is humbling to the contemplation, in beholding the weakness of some timid souls, in the divine life: so the next verse describes the strength of others, who like the Apostle could, and did, see the folly and sin of idols, and idolaters; and as such, looked upon the meat which was offered by those heathens as common food as pure after their folly had been acted upon, as it was before; and considered it with such perfect indifference, that whether they partook of the meat or not, it neither made them better, or worse.

But the Apostle very wisely and graciously took occasion, from the strength of understanding in the one, and the weakness in the other, to raise a subject of instruction, which not only became suited to the circumstances of those *Corinthians* upon this matter, but to the

Church of God upon all other points, where a strength of knowledge in divine things, in some believers might be made beneficial, rather than injurious, to others, with respect to greater freedom, than timid minds might suppose proper upon numberless occasions. And the Apostle sets the subject in a striking point of view, by several arguments. It is as if he had said, let none of those who are strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus think, that from the contempt they justly entertain for idols and idolatrous sacrifices, they may with impunity sit at meat among idolaters and even in their idol temple. This would be wrong, whatever private contempt they entertained in their heart against it. For a weak brother a follower of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who saw it, and did not know what passed in the heart of his stronger brother, might form wrong conclusions therefrom, and have his conscience wounded. Never, adds the Apostle, would I eat meat upon such conditions, lest I should make my brother to offend. For wounding one of Christ's little ones, is wounding. Christ himself, as the Lord hath said. Zech. ii. 8. I beg the Reader to notice the expression of the Apostle in that verse, where he said: And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died? Not perish everlastingly, or even perish in time. For it is not possible, that any for whom CHRIST died can come into condemnation. So Christ himself long before had said. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish: neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. John x. 27, 28. Neither can the sin of others affect the persons of Christ's people. It may distress them, wound their minds, hurt their consciences; but not injure their interest in Jesus. But the sense is, shall a child of God be made unhappy, and his comforts destroyed, through the inattention of his brethren? And will you, said the Apostle, who are strong in grace, hurt'a brother who is weak? Shall your very knowledge, being more than his, be so misapplied, as to become the very means of doing this? This were a breach of charity indeed, and a breach which cannot even plead ignorance in excuse; for it is induced from a perversion of better knowledge!

I shall have labored in my Comments on this Chapter, to very little purpose, if the Reader, under divine teaching, is not led to look beyond the pale of the Corinthian Church as it then was, to what the Christian Church in every age hath been, and now is; as liable to errors creeping in, from the weakness and perversity of our poor fallen nature, in that corrupt part of it which grace doth not renew in the present life. Though there may be no open idols, nor meats offered in sacrifice to idols, in the day in which we live and the land where we dwell; yet the stumbling blocks of iniquity which men put up before their face, the errors in doctrines, the customs and pleasurable pursuits of the world, and the profanation of things sacred, in the neglect of the Lord's day, and numberless nameless offences, which distinguish the present Christ-despising, Goddishonoring generation; call for great watchfulness among truly awakened, regenerated believers. If it was so distressing to a weak mind, in the Corinthian Church, when he saw a brother whom he considered better taught than himself, in the temple of an idol; must

it not now be offensive, to behold those who profess a love for our Lord Jesus Christ, mingling in society with those who deny his GODHEAD? Can that man be sincere in attachment to his LORD, who cordially takes by the hand those who are endeavoring by all the stratagems they can devise, to lessen Christ's glory, and make the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing? Reader! the day is awful. Attempts are making in religion, to bring the iron and the clay together, and to fritter away the grand, and momentous truths of our most holy faith, in accommodation to what is called rational Christianity. It is considered marks of a narrow spirit, to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. In such a day, may the Lord make all his redeemed ones faithful. May every truly regenerated child of God, be led by grace, to enter his protest against a timeserving spirit; but like the beloved Apostle John, bear testimony to the word of God's grace, that the Son of God is come, and in proof of it hath given him an understanding to know him that is true, and that he is in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols, Amen. 1 John. v. 20, 21.

REFLECTIONS.

Who that beholdeth Christ offering his precious soul an offering for sin, and by faith considers the vast and infinite importance of that offering, as it concerns his own soul, would ever after sit down in the idol's temple. And yet my brother, wherein doth the sin differ, when indifferency and coldness to Christ's Person and interest in the Church distinguisheth the conduct of any of his professing followers? Surely the offence of the cross is not ceased. And a man must be singular indeed, in the present day of the Church, if like Paul, he glories in that cross, and offences do not come. Blessedly the Apostle hath marked it in this chapter. But if any man love God, the same is known of him. It is blessed to be known, blessed to be noticed, blessed to be reproached for his Name's sake. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name's sake, said, let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Reader! let us seek grace to be faithful to God and to souls. And while the Lord is making manifest his faithfulness in covenant-love, in the person, royalties, perfections, and finished salvation of his dear Son; see that we offend not one of his little ones which trust in him, nor for a moment wound those for whom Christ died.

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle pleads the Dignity of his Office, and therefrom sheweth his Liberty. Ministers have a just Claim, and from the Lord's Appointment, to be maintained in their Labors by the People. The Chapter is closed with comparing the Christian Life to a Race.

A M I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship

are ye in the Lord.

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this.

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?

5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power

to forbear working?

It doth not appear upon what ground it was, that Paul considered himself called upon to use this language. He had the humblest opinion of himself, and in another part of this Epistle, saith, that he was not meet to be called an Apostle, but was the least of all saints. Chap. xv. 9. It is probable, that some had called in question his authority as an Apostle, and others had endeavored to lessen him in the eyes of the people, by making a comparison between him and Peter to Paul's prejudice. See 2 Cor. x. 10. Alas! what is man in his highest attainment? To behold a Church of Gop made up of such members, who after a saving work of God hath been wrought upon the heart, yet from the remains of indwelling corruption, to be tempted to call in question the Apostolic authority of Paul; yea, even the very man whom the Lord had given proofs of his being sent to them by the LORD, in making his ministry useful to them! Reader! pause over the account. And let not faithful ministers be discouraged, nor even grieved, if at any time their services are little valued, when they behold so eminent an Apostle of Christ disesteemed, and by the very Church where he had the highest claim to their love and affection! Blessed servant of Christ! it was thy high honor in this instance, as in many others, to be conformed to the image of thy Lord!

But it will be well to run over the ground, in a cursory manner, of Paul's pretensions to the Apostleship. One grand feature of character, as an indispensable part in the qualification of an Apostle, settled in the College of the Apostles, was, that he should be a witness to the resurrection of Jesus. Acts i. 22. Now, that Paul, who, as he saith himself, was like one born out of due time, might have this qualification; it is worthy our closest observation, that the Lord Jesus granted Paul this mercy, in appearing personally to him at his conversion. Acts ix. 3—6. Add to this, Paul had another interview with Christ, when in a trance at Jerusalem. Acts xxii. 17—21. And a third when confined in the castle. Acts xxiii. 10, 11. And,

fourthly, when he was caught up to the third heaven. It is not, indeed, expressly said, that he then saw the Lord Jesus; but it is very highly probable, (2 Cor. xii. 1—4.) these fully qualified him

as a witness to the Resurrection for the Apostleship.

And it was a further confirmation of the character of an Apostle, his being called to the office by Christ himself. For at his conversion, Jesus declared concerning him to Ananias, that he was a chosen vessel unto him, to bear his name before the Gentiles, andkings, and the children of Israel. Acts ix. 15. And Paul's account of himself, when writing to the Romans, was, that he was called to be an

Apostle. Rom. i. 1.

And to add no more. The ordination of Paul by the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 2. and the success of his ministry to the Gentiles at large, and the Corinthians to whom he was now writing in particular; all these things carried with them a decided testimony of his Apostleship. Reader! it would be well, if men, in modern times, could produce such credentials of their high calling. Alas! what multitudes, it is to be apprehended, by what we see and meet with in life, will be proved in the end of the day, to have run unsent. Paul hath described them in his second Epistle to Corinth. The portrait is too striking to be mistaken, and too awful not to excite distress. 2 Cor. xi. 13.

- 7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth the flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?
- 8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?
- 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn? Doth God take care for oxen?
- 10 Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple?

and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

The Apostle possessed a great mind. He wrought at one time, and worked as a tent-maker, that he might not be chargeable to any man for the mere common necessaries of life. Acts xviii. 3. He felt, as every generous mind cannot but feel, that it is painful to be beholden to be maintained by others, when the LORD hath enabled a man to get his own bread. But it might so happen, that Paul's trade of tent-making might not always be in request. And, if so, it was hard, when preaching was over, and hunger sharp, that no one would ask him to eat. The Apostle, therefore, reasons upon the subject, If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Reader! what a wonderful subject will be opened at the last day, when it will be found, that some, truly sent, and truly ordained servants of Christ have labored in the word and doctrine, and been blest of God, and made blessed to the Lord's people, and yet wanted the daily supply of the bread that perished; while others, unordained of Goo, and sent only of men, have wallowed in all the indulgence of ease and affluence, and fed themselves, but not the flock. Ezek. xxxiv. 8.

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the

gospel is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

The imagination cannot furnish to itself a more beautiful picture of disinterestedness, than is here set forth of the Apostle Paul. He was not arguing for himself, for he would rather have died, than that it should have been said, he preached for filthy lucre sake. But he was contending for others. He felt distress, that any of Goo's faithful ministers, should lack the bread that perisheth, while dispensing the bread that endureth to everlasting life. But, as to himself, he sought not profit, but usefulness to souls. Oh! what a contrast to those who

receive, but not give; who mind earthly things, and not heavenly. Paul knew that he served a bountiful Master, and that his Lord would not suffer him to want, while giving out to his people. But he that looks at the profit, and regards not the fold, will have a woeful account to rende in, when the Chief Shepherd appears!

- 19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.
- 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;
- 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.
- 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

It must not be supposed, from these expressions of the Apostle, that he was a time-serving man, for he had before declared, that it was the Gospel which he preached, and that a woe would be unto him, if he preached not the Gospel. But the sense is, that he explained the Gospel to the Jew upon Jewish principles, and to them that were without law as without law, the Gospel superseding the law by the finished salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; meaning, that in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availed any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Paul preached wholly Christ, knowing, that if righteousness came by the law, then CHRIST was dead in vain. Gal. ii. 21. So that this kind, accommodating spirit, never relinquished a single point of importance in the Gospel, but only enabled the Apostle to address himself to his several hearers, as might best come up to their apprehension of divine things, and to gain and gather out the Lord's people in every place, and among every class, wheresoever ne found them. Sweet pattern for ministers, while studying to shew taemselves approved of Gon!

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery Vot. II.

is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so

fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The figure which the Apostle hath here made use of, to draw a comparison by of the Christian warfare, is as beautiful as it is just, and as much suited to the present hour, as it was in the days of the Apostle. The ground and space of this life, in which the Christian race is ran, corresponds to what is marked out, both in the boundary and the time limited to the Grecian games, and have their determination alike to him that wins. But the pastimes of this world differ widely from the serious concerns of another. And, as in the things themselves, so in the issue. There was but one successful candidate in the earthly race. But in the heavenly, all that run in Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, are alike successful. Moreover, he that ran in the earthly warfare, and came off victorious, soon yielded himself to the conqueror death. But he that wins CHRIST, and is found in him, subdues for ever all that opposed him, and wears his crown for ever. Hence, all the victors in Christ exult in the same hymn of praise: blessed be the God and FATHER of our LORD JESUS Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

I beg the Reader to notice what the Apostle saith of himself, of keeping under his body, and bringing it into subjection. By which he could not be supposed to mean the mere animal flesh, by fastings, and the punishment of stripes, and scourgings, and penance, and the like, which tend more to create spiritual pride and peevishness, than induce any reformation of the heart. Paul knew too well human nature to recommend such things. Besides, it is the corruption of the heart he desired to bring under, and which no doubt he sought for to accomplish, in mortifying the deeds of the body by the Holy GHOST, as he recommended to others. Rom. viii. 13. And the motive Paul had in view, is a confirmation of his meaning, lest (said he) that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway; that is, lest from some corruption of his fallen nature, indulged, and rising up in rebellion to his renewed and better part, he should fall into some foul trangression, as David did; and, as this would tempt the enemy to blaspheme, as it did in the case of the Psalmist, the Lord should lay him aside from his public ministry, like a vessel in a family, which though once in continued use, was now no longer called for. Such a thought was dreadfully painful to the active and zealous mind of the Apostle, and, therefore, he desired eternal grace from the Spirit, to keep under the body of sin and death, which he well knew he carried about with him, and under which he groaned, being burthened. This appears to be the evident sense and meaning of the Apostle's words. Some, however, have ventured to give this passage a different construction, as if the Apostle feared, that, if falling into sin from the corruptions of the body, he might be cast out of God's presence for ever. A thing totally foreign to all the Apostle's uniform doctrine, and daily profession of his everlasting safety in Christ. Jesus had declared him to have been a chosen vessel; and Paul had assured every Church of his interest in Christ, and union with Christ. Being confident of this very thing, (said he to the Church at Philippi,) that he which hath begun a good work will perform it unto the day of Christ. Philip. i. 6. I know, (said he to Timothy,) whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing. 2 Tim. i. 12. and iv. 7, 8. Under such well grounded and well formed assurances, it is impossible that the Apostle could have entertained the smallest apprehensions of being finally lost. And, as hath been shewn, the words could mean no other, than that he dreaded that from human infirmities, he might be laid aside from usefulness, to the very end of his life, in his Lord's service. And I hope the Reader will also herefrom learn, that such holy jealousies as Paul here expressed, and the Lord's people many of them know, are not at all inconsistent with the perfect safety at the same time, in which they are considered, according to the election of grace. It is the sweetest of all thoughts, that as their original call to salvation resulted not from their own merit, so neither their final safety depends upon their improvement of grace. The Lord's everlasting love, and the consequent call which in time followed, was neither bestowed for human deservings, nor preserved for human improvements. Every thing in the Covenant flows from the Lord's purpose, will, and pleasure. What will exalt the divine glory in promoting the happiness of his people. And, as it is a Covenant ordered in all things and sure; so Jehovan undertakes the accomplishment of it, both for himself and them. 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.

GREAT Apostle of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! The Church of GOD will hail thee, in all generations, as the faithful servant of the LORD. Truly thou didst see the LORD JESUS, and didst become a witness to his resurrection. Truly the seal of thine Apostleship, the Churches in Christ, are in the LORD. And all the Churches of the saints, in all ages and generations, find cause to bless the LORD for thy ministry. Yea! we of the present hour are reaping daily mercies, through the grace of God the Holy Ghost, for thy labors in the Church of Corinth.

Blessed Jesus! while running the race which is set before us, we would be everlastingly looking unto thee, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And, while the world is engaged in the empty and unsatisfying chace of life, may it be the portion of thy redeemed family, to be always following after thee, forgetting things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, and thus to press towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And do thou, Lord, so bless thy people with the sweet influences of thine Holy Spirit, that we may mortify the deeds of the body and live. And Jesus himself will keep his redeemed from falling, and present them faultless, in his own spotless righteousness, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS

The Apostle is here explaining some of the Events of the Church in the Wilderness, as Types of the New Testament Dispensation. He sweetly discourseth on the Subject of the LORD's Supper.

MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea:

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

- 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.
- 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
- 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written. The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

It is a very sure and blessed truth, that the Gospel was preached to the old Church, as well as unto the new. To our fathers in type and shadow; to us in sum and substance. Gal. iii. 8. And very blessed it is, when under the Holy Ghost's teaching, we can read the one through the other. For, it not only thereby proves, that one uniform design runs through both Testaments of Scripture, from beginning to end, that Christ is both the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth, and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; but that God the Holy Ghost hath presided as the Almighty Lord and Minister of his Church through all ages. He that called light out of darkness in the old creation, is the same that commandeth the light from darkness in the new creation of the soul, in every individual instance of his people, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Rom. x. 4. Rev. xiii. 8. Gen. i. 3. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

The Apostle opens this chapter to the Church, whom he calls brethren, to shew their right and interest in what he was about to deliver to them, as distinguished from the world, and calls upon them to be informed of what concerned them highly to know; namely, that the Gospel was very early preached to the Church, even from their first formation as a Church, on coming up out of Egypt. And, Reader! it is our mercy from this sweet scripture of the Holy Ghost to learn some very blessed things, which without it, we should not so plainly have understood. Who could have thought, but for this divine teaching, that the pillar of the cloud, which acted in a double capacity, both for light by day, and a screen by night, had an allusion to Christ, and the blessed leadings of his Holy Spirit? Every one, indeed, whose eyes are spiritually enlightened, might have beheld it as a token and symbol of God's presence being with his people. But that these several manifestations by day and night, were expressive of the Lord's characters and offices, who is both the light and life of his people, a covert from the storm and tempest arising from sin, and hell, and every temptation! These things without divine explanation, our dull capacities would hardly have apprehended. Who would have conceived, that the passage through the Red Sea was a figure of baptism, or the meat of manna was spiritual food, and the rock which followed them CHRIST; had not God the Holy Ghost graciously condescended to have given the Church his

own illustration of the whole, to his glory and our joy? Very sweet and blessed, indeed, are those scriptures on those subjects, and we never can be sufficiently thankful to the Holy Ghost for them, since they not only serve to throw a light over the whole of the eventful Scriptures of the Old Testament, but most decidedly shew to us, that from the first dawn of revelation to the consummation of all things, one and the same dispensation of grace hath been uniformly carried on, in manifesting His blessed and Almighty Person Jesus Christ, who is the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

But what I beg the Reader particularly to remark with me, is, what the Apostle had in commission from the Holy Ghost to teach the Church, that all that came out of Egypt by Moses, were not alike interested, in those precious things. With many of them, this Scripture saith, God was not well pleased; and they were overthrown in the wilderness. And the reason is elsewhere explained. All are not Israel which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Rom. ix. 6, 7. The visible Church then, as the visible Church now, which consisteth only of outward privileges, may be, and indeed are, common things, and enjoyed in common with those who have no real lot nor part in the matter. Thus we are told, that beside six hundred thousand on foot beside children, that went up out of Egypt, a mixed multitude went up also with them. Exod xii. 37, 38.

It should be well understood, therefore, to avoid all possible misapprehension, that when God is speaking of his people, it is a distinction of character infinitely higher, than can be discovered by mere outward things. All the whole earth is the Lord's; and as the Creator, every thing in it is his. But there is a title of property, and peculiarity, by which the Lord hath marked the people taken into Covenant in Christ: concerning whom the Lord specially saith: This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. Isaiah xliii. 21. I humbly conceive, it will form the best spiritual improvement of this sweet Scripture, under God the Spirit's teaching, if we look a little closer into those features of character, by which they are discoverable, from the mere outward visible Church, which all men possess in common, and which from having no real Covenant interest in Christ, are daily productive of the same consequences as are spoken of here, are overthrown in the wilderness.

And first, let the Reader observe, how the Lord's Israel are marked. The Lord saith, that he hath set them apart for himself. They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Ephes. i. 4. And during the time-state of the Church, they are called with an holy calling; not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 9. So that He who chose them before the world began as his Israel, appointed for them also the grace for an effectual calling of them in time; by giving them that grace in Christ, which therefore must be sure to all the seed. Rom. iv. 16. And hence Peter was taught by the Holy Ghost, to remind the Church, how they should judge of their interest and safety in Christ, by giving all diligence to make their calling and election

sure. For if they could prove their calling, the certainty of their election must be proved also; for the one is included in the other. 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. See Deut. xxxii. 8—12. Gon's true Israel, therefore, are marked with these distinguishing features of character. They are set apart, called, awakened, regenerated, and manifested to be the children of Gon, by adoption, and grace: while the mere nominal Israel, though in the visible Church, and apparently enjoying the same privileges, remain in unbelief, darkness, and the shadow of death. The Lond's own account of them is: they do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest. Psalm xxx. 7. Hebrews iii. 10, 11.

Secondly. The Lord's Israel of the present hour, are as truly brought up out of spiritual Egypt, as the Lord's Israel were of old from the bendage of natural Egypt. They have felt, and do feel, the plague of their own heart; and the wormwood, and the gall, of a bondage state. The corruption of a fallen sinful state, both in original and actual transgression, drink up their spirits. And therefore, when the Lord speaks to them now, as he did to Moses of old: I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt; and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them; Acts vii. 34. in every individual instance of a soul brought out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brought through the red sea of Christ's blood; the typical representation Egypt's history furnished, is truly realized, and the design of God the Holy Ghost in that shadowy dispensation, through grace is seen.

Thirdly. The Lord's Israel are as truly known now, as his Israel was then, in the being brought into a wilderness state, and being distinguished from all other people, amidst their wilderness dispensations, in the pillar of the cloud going before them by day, and the pillar of fire surrounding them by night. Distinguishing grace marks the whole path, all the way through. Every thing around them, about them, in them, and by them; sets forth the manifestation of the Lord's care over them. The sun doth not smite them by day, neither the moon by night. So that every child of Goo may say now, as truly as Moses did then, when summing up their history: Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!

Deut. xxxiii. 29.

And what I beg the Reader in this view of the subject, is to mark the distinguishing properties of the grace bestowed upon Israel in the old Church in the Wilderness; and the Israel now, under the Gospel dispensation. While the whole nation of Israel as a nation, partock in the common mercies of the visible Church then, had the pillur of the cloud, the manna, and the water, with all the other means and ordinances, it was only the true Israel of God which enjoyed the spiritual blessings. In like manner, in the present hour, the outward privileges nationally considered, are in common to all that are called Israel; but the spiritual seed of Jacob only, are blessed with the spiritual enjoyment of them. The whole camp of Israel was victualled from Heaven with the Manna, day by day; and all partock of the water which flowed from the Rock that followed them. But none saw Christ in the Manna, nor in the Rock, but God's true Israel: So,

in the present hour, the multitude receive the Gospel in all the outward ordinances of it, but behold not Jesus in his ordinances. They live in the use of them, not by faith on Christ, but on themselves and their duties, and their own improvements, as they call them; and in the midst of all, have no apprehension of Jesus. And, as the carcases of the unbelievers, as here described, fell in the wilderness; some by idolatry, some by fornication, some by murmuring: so now, who shall calculate what multitudes die, unawakened, unregenerated, unrenewed, in the very midst of ordinances, after the same example of unbelief. Heb. iv. 11.

I detain the Reader one moment longer, just to observe, on that striking verse, of those who are said to have tempted Christ in the Wilderness, that it becomes a most decided testimony in proof that Christ is He whom Stephen spake of, which was in the Church in the Wilderness. Acts vii. 38. And also, it as decidedly proves Christ to be God. For Moses, in relating this event, expressly called him so. Wherefore do ye (saith he) tempt the Lord? Exod. xvii. 2. Pre-

cious testimony by the way.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from

idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.

This is a very sweet Scripture, and hath been found truly refreshing and consolatory to God's children, in all their exercises. Jesus too well loves his people, to suffer any temptations to be brought upon them, but what he himself knows shall minister to his glory, and their welfare. And what endears the thought yet more, he is with them in all, and supports them under all, and will bring them through all. Deut. xxxiii. 27. Heb. ii. 17, 18.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing,

or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols, is any thing?

20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the

Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

There is somewhat particularly striking and solemn in this account of the Lord's Supper. Paul calls the service the cup of blessing, and the communion of the blood of Christ; and the bread broken, the communion of the body of Christ; evidently meaning, that all truly regenerated believers, which partake in that feast, being a feast upon the sacrifice, are virtually considered by that act of faith as partaking by fellowship in all the blessings, and benefits of Christ's death. The bread and the cup being one, and all and every individual partaking in the same, manifest thereby, their oneness, and union with Christ as Christ; and their interest, in all that belongs to Christ, as Christ. And the inference the Apostle draws from it, is also as striking. If by this solemn service, believers desire to testify their oneness with Christ; it is impossible after that, that any could be found in the idol's temple. Paul speaks of it with a kind of abhorrence. Can any man drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils? Can any man be partaker of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Reader! we have no idol sacrifices, no form of religion in this country, where such horrid services are performed. But we have tantamount to graven images, in the follies, and pleasures, which the ungodly and carnal part of mankind, are earnest to mingle up with the mere rituals of worship. And, when we find many, who regularly fill their places at the Lord's table, and as regularly fill their places in the synagogue of Satan, I mean public amusements and diversions; wherein do such differ from the characters the Apostle reprobates in those verses? How very plain and evident is it, therefore, that nothing can lay the foundation for communion with the Lord, but a pre-union with his Person, and an interest in his blood and righteousness. We must be first married to his Person, or there can be no right to any dowry in what belongs to First grafted into Christ, as the spiritual vine; or we can bring forth no fruit, as branches in him. The members of the body must be really and truly united to the head, or all vital influence is wanting. I hope the Reader knows by this heart-felt enjoyment, for it is most blessed. And when communion with Christ ariseth from an union with Christ, and the soul of a believer hath not only an habitual state of grace within, but an actual exercise in going forth in

desires after Christ, and incomings of blessing from Christ; when prayers go up, and answers come down, and the Lord makes all his goodness pass before us; then a child of God enters into a real soul-enjoyment of the Apostle's word: and can truly say, that the cup of blessing, and the bread broken, open sweet communion by faith, both of the body and blood of Christ.

- 23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.
- 24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.
- 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness

thereof.

- 27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.
- 28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.
- 29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?
- 30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ve do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any particular observations on those verses. Every thing in them is plain, and obvious. But I would just remark, what a blessed frame of mind, that regenerated child of God must be in, who can always keep in view, and through grace act upon it, what the Apostle hath said, in

a general comprehensive manner, of all actions. Whatsoever we do, whether we eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God. This, if followed, would make our most ordinary meals carry with them a savoriness that would be sacramental. And very certain it is, that many a blessed believer, from the unction of the Holy Ghost, enjoys more of Jesus at his own table, than all unregenerated persons do of Jesus at the Lord's table. And it must be so. For how shall a soul unawakened, hear and know the joyful sound? How shall a soul dead in trespasses and sins, perform a living act of faith upon a living Savior: or spiritually eat of the body and blood of Christ? But he that bottoms every thing upon CHRIST, makes CHRIST what JEHOVAH hath made him, the first and the last, the Author and Finisher of salvation: this truly regenerated believer hath God's glory in view, in all the acts of providence and grace; in ordinances, and all the means of social and godly life. This is what the Apostle elsewhere calls, the knowledge of the love of Christ, which passeth all understanding, and being filled with all the fulness of God. Ephes. iii. 19.

REFLECTIONS.

Wно would have thought, on reading Israel's history in coming up out of Egypt, that all the great outlines of Christ's Church is here shadowed forth? Yes! my soul, thy deliverance from the worse than Egyptian bondage of sin and death, of Satan's captivity and prison-house, was here represented. As all our fathers in the Church were baptized unto Moses, as the Lord's minister, in the cloud, and in the sea; ate and drank of the spiritual sustenance, by faith in CHRIST; and eyed CHRIST as the sum and substance of all: so thou, by the same faith in the same God and Savior, art now passing through the same wilderness dispensations; and fetching strength for every new exercise by living on Jesus, and of his fulness receiving grace for grace. Oh! God the Holy Ghost, bring me under thy continual baptisms! Let my spiritual life in Christ, be maintained, as the faithful Israelites were, by the same spiritual meat; and let my soul's thirst be continually satisfied in drinking of the same spiritual drink; for He that went before in the pillar of the cloud, and that followed them in the pillar of the fire, is the same LORD JESUS to me, as them; even the Rock whose work is perfect, just as true is He! Precious Lord Jesus! do I not know? hast thou not taught me? that all grace for thy whole family here, and all glory for thy redeemed above, is treasured up, and hath been treasured up, in thine Almighty Person, as the Covenant-head and Husband of thy Church from all eternity?

Sweet cup of blessing in my Lord's supper! may it be my holy joy and delight often to take thee. For surely, it is an Ordinance of Jesus's own appointing. And He who appointed it at the first, promised to be present at every celebration, and will continue to the last, to make it sanctified to every true partaker. Surely it is among the love-tokens of Jesus. He will be always there where his people are assembled. We shall feed on Him by faith. And we shall know by heartfelt experience, while the King sitteth at his table, and the

graces of our souls, which he himself hath given, and calleth forth into exercise, is like the spikenard, that the cup of blessing which we bless is indeed rich communion with the blood of Christ; and the bread we break is indeed precious communion of the body of Christ! Oh! for the sweet quickenings of God the Spirit leading to the feast, that my soul may be often taking the cup of salvation, and calling upon the name of the Lord. And do thou, dearest Lord, so lead, so guide, so daily, hourly, momently, bring my soul under thy blessed teachings, and influences; that in providences as well as seasons of grace, at my own table or at the Lord's, wherever I am, however employed, in the Church or in the market place, in dealings with men, or sweet communion with the Lord; whatsoever I do, in word, or deed, do all to the glory of God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is giving Instructions in the opening of this Chapter. He enters somewhat more largely in treating of the Lord's Supper; and very sweetly discourseth upon it.

BE ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

4 Every man praying, or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered; let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have

power on her head because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord.

- 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.
- 13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

We never can sufficiently admire the grace given to the Apostle, as a minister of the Lord Jesus, for that it enabled him to win the affections of the people in attending to his exhortation and reproofs. He that winneth souls is wise. And much of that wisdom which is from above, a minister should pray for, that he may endear himself to his people before that he can hope that they will attend to what he hath to say. How very affectionately the Apostle opens this Chapter on this ground, desiring the Corinthian Church, to follow him, but as he followed Christ.

It should seem, from what Paul hath here dwelt upon, in relation to the covering of the head of the men, or women, in seasons of worship; that the custom of the Church in those days, was somewhat particular. A decency of apparel, is all that is necessary to be observed. The Apostle Peter, hath given in one short verse or two, a sufficient direction for all holy women, to observe, in their dress, who profess godliness. Whose adorning (saith he) let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of Gon of great price. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

But, methinks, I would take occasion, from the infirmities of the Church at Corinth, and from the infirmities of the Church of God in all ages, to gather improvement, in hearing what Jesus saith to his Church on the subject in contemplating the beauties of his Church, made comely by the comeliness he had put upon her. Behold!

(saith Christ,) thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair! thou hast doves eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead. Song iv. 1. Now as the hair grows on the head, and depends upon it: so the Church is grafted on CHRIST, and derives every thing of life and nourishment from him. And, as the hair is ornamental, so Christ's Church is the glory of the world; the preservation of which wholly ariseth from the concern Christ hath for his Church, in the world. And, as the hair is not only ornamental, but useful, and forms a covering to preserve from baldness: so Christ's Church is covered with the robe of her Lord's righteousness, and the garment of his salvation. Well may the Lord's people be compared to a flock of goats on Mount Gilead; for the Church, like that goodly mountain, is on high, and stands fruitful, as well as exalted, in the Lord's righteousness. Numerous they are, like the hairs of the head; but very lovely and graceful. Jesus so highly esteems them, that he saith, they shall be his when he cometh to number his jewels, and to spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Malachi iii. 17.

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made mani-

fest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one

place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me,

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let

him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly

among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should

not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come to-

gether to eat, tarry one for another.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

We can never be sufficiently thankful to our gracious God, for this portion of his holy word, on the subject of the Lord's Supper. The improper administration of the sacred Supper, among the Corinthians, gave occasion to the Apostle, to state the order of it at large, as he hath here done: and God the Spirit, I say, be praised, for this invaluable record concerning it. The first thing of importance concerning the holy Supper, which we here learn, is, that the thing itself is of Christ's express institution. This I conceive to be a matter of high moment. For, although the Lord Jesus appointed the service to his disciples, (who were the representatives of the Church,) as a standing memorial, to be observed by his followers, and without any further record, had nothing more been said concerning it, than the Lord's appointment upon that memorable occasion; this would have been enough, it ought indeed, to have been

enough to endear it, and recommend it for ever, to the faithful: yet had not the Lord again taught his servant Paul what is here related, and God the Holy Ghost caused it to be handed down in the Church by those written records, we should not have known how highly Jesus prized it, and how many and various the blessings the Lord intended to communicate, in the faithful observance of it to his people. I pray the Reader not to lose sight of this, in his view

of the Lord's Supper.

Secondly. It is worthy the Reader's observation, that though it is not said when it was that the LORD JESUS so directed the Apostle Paul, concerning the holy Supper; yet very certain it is, that what he delivered to the Church on the subject, he had immediately from Jesus himself. So it is written. For (saith Paul) I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. And then he describes the order of the solemn service. Nay, there is somewhat very highly important to observe in what the Apostle saith, not only as it relates to the service itself, but as to the manner of celebrating it. For though the Lord Jesus, when at the supper with his disciples, instituted it, and superseded the Jewish Passover, and commanded its perpetual observance; yet the Lord gave no form, neither prescribed any order, or method, how they should celebrate it. Hence this relation of Paul becomes doubly blessed, because the Lord who gave it to his servant, gave him at the same time, those directions how it should be observed by the faithful. Some have been curious to enquire, when it was, that the Lord Jesus so taught Paul concerning it. But the Holy Ghost is silent on the subject. It is not likely to have been at his conversion, for the Lord then sent him to Ananias to be baptized. But it might have been when he was in a trance: Acts xviii. 9. or Acts xxii. 17. or when in the prison: Acts xxiii. 11. or at sea: Acts xxvii. 23. or when caught up to the third Heaven: 2 Cor. xii. 1-4. But it is not so material to enquire when it was, as to be convinced of the certainty of it, that it really is; and this Paul certifies with strong expressions, when he saith: For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. From this account of the Apostle, I venture to conclude, that that form of administration, which approacheth nearest to this standard, is most Scriptural.

Thirdly. From the very sweet and affectionate statement in the Lord's name, by his servant Paul, (and as it should seem, purposely given that he might inform the Church of it,) that as oft as his people in a sacramental service eat the bread, and drink the cup, they do shew forth the Lord's death till he come; nothing can be more plain, than that it is the Lord's pleasure, that his people should often meet in his name, for this holy purpose. And that the Church of God, from the first descent of the Holy Ghost, considered it so, is also evident, for we are told, that they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house: by which we understand, celebrating the holy Supper of the Lord. Acts it 46. How little apprehensions must those persons have, either of the solemn service itself, or of the design of its institution, who receive it but seldom, lest they should lose their reverence for it; and thereby manifest their total ignorance both of the Lord of the Supper, and as a

communion in the benefits of it by faith? Reader! what saith your knowledge of the Lord, and the enjoyment of the Lord, at his Supper? The Church of old cried out: While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sended forth the smell thereof. Song i. 12. It is very blessed, when at the Lord's table, or in the Lord's house, or in our own, the graces of the HOLY SPIRIT which the LORD hath planted in the soul, are going forth in lively actings of faith, upon the Person, work, blood-shedding, and righteousness, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Oh! who shall calculate, the incomings of CHRIST'S love, and the out-goings of praise, in such hallowed seasons? Who shall tell what passeth, between CHRIST and his spouse; the LORD and his people, when Jesus comes in to see the guests at his table; and they are found waiting their Lord's approach, in the wedding garment of his righteousness? Who shall describe the feelings of those redeemed souls, who, while Jesus sheweth his hands, and his side, breaks to them the bread, and gives to them the cup of salvation; opens their hearts, warms their affections, cheers their spirits, and makes them sensible of a gracious welcome; when by faith they hear the LORD say: Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved! Song v. 1. Could any child of God, whose soul is truly regenerated, and hath felt the sweetness of the ordinance at the Supper, ever keep from the table, or use it sparingly? Blessed Lord! I praise thy holy Name, for so precious a love-token of thy favor. May it be my portion, to be often crying out with the Church: Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions. Song i. 7.

I must not take leave of this interesting subject, without first noticing, what the Apostle hath said, respecting the irreverent manner

in which the Corinthians observed the Lord's Supper.

It appears, from the statement given by the Apostle, that the Corinthians had somewhat of a feast, before they celebrated the Lord's Supper. For he speaks of it, and saith: When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the LORD's Supper. For in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken. Now this could not be the Supper of the Lord. Some have thought, and perhaps the idea is well founded, that those who did this, were persons who had been converted to Christianity, but like the Church of Galatea, were much attached to Jewish customs, and therefore kept up also the observance of the Passover. And from not having been savingly converted to the faith by regeneration, had made too free with the good things of the feast, and were in an awful state of drunkenness, when they attended the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which followed. Others have supposed, that this feast of the Corinthians, was a love feast, instituted to bring together into the bands of mutual love, and affection, the several members of Christ's body; that so by partaking in one common feast, they might be reminded of their equality: notwithstanding their different ranks, of poor and rich, that they all alike stood in need of one common salvation; and as such, ate and drank together, in one common meal, and from thence went hand in hand to present themselves before the table of the LORD.

In either case, it presents us with a melancholy picture of the fallen and corrupt state of our poor nature. Probably this feast was provided for according to the circumstances of the people. The rich sent in plenty. The poor who had nothing, of consequence provided nothing. And therefore, while the former, assuming on their right, ate and drank to the full; the latter, in modesty kept back: and the effect was as the Apostle states, while one was hungry, another was drunken.

And, what tended to heighten yet more the enormity of the offence, was, that it was done in the house of God. This is evident, from the Apostle's reproof. What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in: or despise ye the church of God? Reader! think what an awful perversion of all sacred things, when, even under the cover of

religion, such abuses prevailed!

It will be highly proper to consider, what the Apostle hath said in relation to the unworthy participation of the Lord's Supper; and more especially, as many of God's children, from a mis-conception of the subject, have taken the words of the Apostle in a very different light from what, as is evidently the case, the Apostle meant them. For the better apprehension of the whole of what Paul hath said upon this most interesting subject, I would beg to state the Apostle's words under each particular. Paul saith, that whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. And again: For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation, (or, as the margin of the Bible renders it, judgment,) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. These are very strong expressions. And the question is, to what extent, according to the general sense of Scripture, do they refer?

An unworthy participation in the Supper of the Lord cannot, in the nature of the thing, imply such a guilt in the body and blood of the Lord, as those who imbrued their hands, in the death of CHRIST: for that is impossible. Neither is it to be supposed, that by the unworthy receiving in the Corinthian Church, the Apostle considered any there, who either had once acknowledged the faith of Christ, and now denied him; for then it is to be supposed, that in this case, they would not have shewn themselves to the table of the LORD. Neither can we imagine, that any of those Corinthians were of that class of persons, whom the same Apostle speaks of in his Epistle to the Hebrews, who despised the blood of the Covenant, and thought lightly of it; for neither in this sense can we suppose such characters to be found at the Lord's Supper. Heb. x. 29. We must look for some other marks of distinction, which may be supposed to have reference to the receiving the Lord's Supper unworthily, so as to be considered guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

And I think it very possible, that the Apostle had in view among the Corinthians, such as made light of the holy Supper, reduced it to a mere form, had no eye to Christ, no discernment of the Lord's body in the Sacramental Service; went to it with an indifferency, as to a common meal; and from the state of drunkenness and fulness by which many of those Corinthians were distinguished, at the Lord's table, plainly testified, that they knew no reverence for the Lord in

this holy service.

And I am the more inclined to conclude, that it was to such characters the Apostle referred, from what he declared to be the consequence of such unholy behavior. The Apostle saith, that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself. Not eternal damnation, for it is to the Church Paul is writing, and the Church is a body of truly regenerated persons who cannot come into condemnation, having passed from death unto life. Rom. viii. 1. But, judgment, that is, as he saith in a following verse, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. And they are expressly said to be judged and chastened of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world; that is, as the carnal, unawakened, unregenerate in the world. This distinction, with the causes of chastisement, most plainly and decidedly shew, that eternal damnation was never meant by the Apostle, neither, indeed, could be; for, as a Church, though fallen into a backsliding state of receiving the supper of the LORD unworthily, they were chastened, to. prove that they were still God's children, and not liable to be condemned with the ungodly world. Those among them that slept, means no more, than that the sicknesses which followed, had in their nature produced death; but, neither doth this mean eternal death. no more than the other eternal damnation. Both the sickness and the sleep here spoken of by the Apostle, with which the Corinthians were visited, are expressly said to have been in chastisement, not destruction. And the very reason wherefore thus judged and chastened of the Lord, is said to have been, because they should not be condemned with the world.

But, while I am led to conclude that this is the real sense and meaning of the Apostle's words, and as such, they are very gracious, and full of instruction to the Lord's people on this interesting subject; I am willing to admit for argument sake, that supposing the words of the Apostle extend to a much greater degree of guilt, and even to eternal damnation, yet all this hath nothing to do with the Church of God in the present hour; neither, in this sense, can the Church of God receive, as the Corinthians did, the Supper of the Lord unworthily.

We have no passover, no love feast, no eating and drinking in the Church of God, preparatory to the Lord's Supper. There is not the possibility of doing, as Paul charged the Corinthians with, that, while one was hungry, another was drunken. The bread and wine at the table, are no more than what is barely sufficient to answer the purposes of celebration. And these provided not by general contributions from the persons receiving, but from the Church. Hence, in the sense in which Paul condemned the Corinthians for their improper behavior at this ordinance, it is impossible for believers of the present hour to receive the Lord's Supper.

But is there not, it may be questioned, a possibility of eating of the bread, and drinking of the cup of the Lord unworthily? The answer need not be long paused over before it be given. Beyond a doubt there may. Every one is, more or less, an unworthy receiver, who hath not an eye to Christ in the sacred service. The ordinance of the Supper is a spiritual feast. And he who is not spiritual, cannot, in truth, partake of it. None who are in the original state of unre-

generacy, can be said to be worthy receivers. They may, indeed, with the body partake of the bread, and of the wine; but the soul of the unregenerate being still dead in trespasses and sins, can perform no act of spiritual life, and, consequently, cannot receive the LORD's

Supper worthily. They discern not the Lord's body.

Moreover, the Supper of the Lord is designed for the family of the LORD. It is, indeed, a family meat. Christ invites none but his family to partake of it. And every one of these are expected by constant invitation, and by birthright in the new birth, to take their seats at the table. Jesus will have none missing at supper time. All others are without invitation, and have no right there. And they are easily known. They have been regenerated, brought thereby into spiritual life, they cry Abba, Father. The Spirit witnesseth to their spirits that they are children of God. They have a spiritual hungering and thirsting after Christ. They know Jesus to be the living bread which came down from heaven, and of him they desire to eat, and to live for ever. In short, every act of faith, and the exercise of grace in the new life, manifests what constitutes a worthy receiver. But to attend the ordinance of the Supper, without a spiritual appetite for the Supper, is as unsuited and unworthy as for the body, when diseased and unable to relish food, to set down to the ordinary table, or for the dead to be called upon to some act of animal life. To receive the Lord's supper, to qualify for man's bread, to go there for the sake of form, or because arrived at a certain age, or because others do; all these, unquestionably, fall under the characters of receiving unworthily, though unattended with the sin of being guilty of the body and blood of the LORD.

And, it should be a matter of consolation to weak and timid souls, that after the Apostle had been saying such harsh things to call up the attention of the Corinthians to a jealousy over their own hearts on this interesting subject, he still calls them brethren, Wherefore, my brethren. By which is plainly proved, that though offending and meriting reproof, still they were regenerate believers. And, he tells them, that if they would judge themselves, they should not be judged of the Lord. All which manifests, that amidst all their weakness and infirmities, they were the Lord's own people, and all he had said to them was for their comfort, and not their condemnation. Reader! it will be our mercy, if we derive from this beautiful relation of the Lord's Supper, the many sweet instructions, the Lord by his servant, hath here sent to the Church. And, oh! for grace often to be found in our place at the Lord's table, and there to set forth the Lord's death till he come.

REFLECTIONS.

Lord give thy people grace to follow thy faithful servants as they have followed thee! Truly, thou dearest Lord! thou art the head of every man, for by creation all is thine. But, oh! how sweet to my soul, that, while Jesus is the head of dominion to the whole creation of God, he is the head of union to his body the Church, the fulness that filleth all in all.

Almighty Jesus! blessed for ever be thy name for thy grace in committing to the Apostle, for the benefit of thy Church, the precious form of Institution of thine holy Supper. Oh! for grace to eye thee at every renewed opportunity of attending thy table, as receiving sinners, and eating with them! Oh! for faith in lively actings upon thy Person, and blood-shedding, and righteousness, so as to hear thee saying to my poor soul, amidst the numbers of thine round thy table, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This Cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me. Oh! Lord! who shall thy people ever remember, if we are capable of forgetting thee! Lord! make the sweet service to all thy redeemed, a commemorating, communicating, refreshing, soul-strengthening ordinance, to feast thy saints here below, till we come to sit down with thee at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven.

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS.

This very blessed Chapter, from beginning to end, is directed to one and the same Subject; namely, to describe the Oneness and Union of Christ and his Church. The Apostle from thence shews, that all the spiritual Gifts and Graces which Christ's Members enjoy, flow from their glorious Head, through the blessed Ministry of God the Holy Ghost.

NOW concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away

unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

Under the similitude of the human body, the Apostle, in this chapter, sets forth the beautiful order there is in the Church, as the body of Christ. For, as in the human frame every part ministers to the very situation appointed, in promoting the welfare and harmony of the whole; so the members of Christ's mystical body have each their distinct and separate stations, and under the influence of their great Head, mutually act together in accomplishing the sacred purposes of his will. With this, as the leading object he had in view, the Apostle opens the chapter on the subject of spiritual gifts, which he desires the brethren, (as he calls the Church brethren of Christ and of each other,) that they should not be ignorant of, but have a suitable apprehension concerning. And, in order that the whole body of the Church might at one moment learn, that all and

every spiritual gift must have been received from the Lord, and neither created, nor increased by themselves, he reminds them of the state of heathenism and idolatry from whence the Lord had called them. Reader! I pray you not to overlook this, as it relates to your own instance. Nothing can tend more effectually to hide pride from the eyes, than to be frequently led by the Holy Ghost back to see our awful state of blindness, ignorance, and corruption, when in the days of our unregeneracy. Hence, the Lord bids the Church, while following after righteousness and seeking the Lord, to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged. Isaiah li. 1. See 1 Cor. iv. 6, 7.

I consider the third verse in this chapter as a very striking passage, and eminently designed, after what the Apostle had said before, to enable not only those Corinthians to whom he wrote, but the Church of God in all ages, to ascertain the state of their faith in Christ by this standard. If the Reader will look at the word with a suitable attention, he will discover, under divine teaching, that they afford a double testimony for the child of God to know himself by, in his apprehension of the Person and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed. It was a very common thing with the Jews, nationally considered, to speak of Christ as the Tolah, or man hanged on a tree; and, as their law declared, that he which was hanged was accursed of Goo; Deut. xxi. 23. so they added to it, concerning Christ, accursed of God. They knew not, (for their eyes were blinded that they could not,) how to enter into the apprehension of what the Holy Ghost taught all his own people that CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. Gal. iii. 13. But, as the blinded Jews, and the prejudiced Gentiles, while in a state of unconverted nature, both joined in this reproach of Christ; yet the Church being now enlightened by divine teaching, gives this testimony, no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed. They are blessedly. taught by that Almighty Teacher, to behold Christ as being made both sin and a curse for his people, and by which he hath redeemed all his people from the whole, and by which they are made the righte-ousness of God in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. Yet, though made both sin and a curse, he himself was both holy and blessed. The sins of his people were put upon him, not in him; as his righteousness is put upon us, not in us. Reader! do observe the distinction. As our sins could only be laid on Christ, and not enter Christ, though becoming a curse for his Church, as his Church's surety; yet all the while, he himself was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, Heb. vii. 26. And, in like manner, Christ's righteousness is unto all, and upon all that believe: Rom. iii. 22. not in, but upon; not arising out of themselves, but unto them from Christ. This is one precious testimony of the believer's speaking by the Spirit of God. And the other is like it.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. By which the Apostle did not mean, that the mere saying of it was impossible, but from divine influences. For, many a man from historical knowledge, may both say it and believe it. Devils believe and tremble. Luke iv. 34. James ii. 19. But, the Apostle's meaning

is, that no man can know Jesus to be the visible Jehovah, but from the Spirit's work in the heart. The real heartfelt, and heart-enjoyment of Christ, is only attainable by the quickening and enlightening grace of God the Holy Ghost in the soul. When a man hath received a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, he can then, and not before, truly say, that Jesus is the Lord; yea, his Lord, the Lord his righteousness. Ephes. i. 17. Jerem. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30. Reader! hath the LORD blessed your soul with this. double testimony of Jesus, and to the truth as it is in Jesus? Be very cheery of such precious gifts. They are rare mercies in the present God-dishonoring, Christ-despising, Holy Ghost-disowning generation. The knowledge of Christ, the belief in Christ, the dependance upon Christ, and the walking a life with Christ, are sweet proofs of an interest in the Covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The Lord Jesus speaks to all such in those sweet words, Luke x. 23, 24. and of all such to the FATHER in those sweet words, Matt. xi. 25, 26.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

The Apostle here enters upon the great subject of spiritual gifts to the Church of God. And, he begins at the fountain-head, in calling them gifts. All which sets at nought the idea of all merit. For what is of gift, or of grace, cannot be of debt. And what makes the subject so truly blessed is, that he refers the whole unto one and the same Almighty Being, the Holy Ghost. However diversified, numerous, or extensive, God the Spirit is the Author and Giver of all. And what, if possible, is yet more endearing, He who anoints the whole of Christ's members, is the same who anointed also the head. It is the same Almighty Spirit who works in all, and upon all, the whole family, who wrought in Christ, and upon Christ, when He was anointed with the oil of gladness for, or above his fellows. Psm. xlv. 7. Heb. i. 9. In Christ, indeed, as a fountain. In his members, as in vessels. For the Spirit was not given by measure unto Him. John iii. 34. But to every one of us, (saith the Apostle, speaking to the Church,) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Ephes. iv. 7. Reader! cherish the thought, for it is truly blessed!

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to ano-

ther the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he

will.

Very blessedly we are told, that those manifestations of the Holy GHOST are given to every child of God, for their spiritual improvement in the knowledge of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Coloss. ii. 2, 3. This should be well considered. Our union with CHRIST, which the Spirit shews, under his quickening influences, leads the regenerated soul to improve that knowledge into occasions of comfort and holy joy, through the whole of our walk of faith. Christ as our Head and Husband, is continually manifested to us by the Spirit, on purpose to shew, that whatever our wants are, or our exercises are, however circumstanced, or however tried, the Holy Ghost manifests CHRIST to us for our profit. This manifestation preacheth CHRIST, shews Christ, proclaims Christ in all his suitableness and all-sufficiency. And this one office alone, of God the Holy Ghost, most loudly testifies his person and agency, and that in the Covenant, his ministry was, and is, to be carried on through the whole time-state of the Church, until grace is finished in glory.

If the Reader will count over the several gifts, here said to be the work and grace of the HOLY SPIRIT, he will find no less than nine distinctly enumerated. Neither are those the whole which are in the creation and gift of the Lord the Holy Ghost. Numberless others are spoken of in the word of God. He is a spirit of judgment, and a spirit of burning, Isaiah iv. 4. a spirit of grace and of supplication, Zech. xii. 10. an ambassador, John xvi. 7. advocate, John xvi. 8-10. teacher, Rom. viii. 26, 27. the glorifier of the Lord JESUS, John xvi. 14. In short, his graces and gifts in the economy of the Covenant, are so many, and various, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to particularize all. But these are marked down in this chapter, to shew how gracious the Lord is, and how much depends upon his efficient ministry in the Church of Christ, for spiritual knowledge, improvement, and consolation. Not a single act of faith can a child of God exercise upon the Person or work of CHRIST, but by his immediate power. Not a promise can the child of God apprehend, much less plead, but from the Lord the Spirit's opening it to his view, and prompting him to present it for acceptance, and for payment, before the throne. And, notwithstanding GOD the Spirit hath regenerated that soul, and brought all his newborn faculties forth to life and light in Christ; yet the actions of the renewed nature can only be kept alive, and in sweet enjoyment upon the Person, work, blood-shedding, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the quickening graces of God the Holy Ghost. Hence, the Apostle prays for the Church to this amount. The Lord (saith he) direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient

waiting for Christ. 2 Thess. iii. 5.

Reader! I beseech you pause over this view of God the Holy GHOST, and his divine ministry, which the Apostle hath here given in these few words. All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. Hence, then it must undeniably follow, that all spiritual life and action come from Him. Creating work, renewing work, quickening at first the soul, which was before dead in trespasses and sins, and keeping alive the soul when quickened, by his daily, hourly, minutely communications, must be His. Ephes. ii. 5. Psm. xxii. 29. Say then, Reader, can any facts upon earth be more plain and palpable, than that God the Holy Ghost is a Person whose Almighty Agency creates all spiritual blessings, divides all spiritual blessings, and gives to every one severally as he will? Can any thing manifest the will and act of a Person more plainly and fully, than by what is here said? Oh! the blindness, folly, and daring presumption of the present Christdespising, Holy Ghost-disowning generation!

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body.

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body,

which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

The Apostle here enters upon that beautiful illustration, which he had all along in view, to shew the oneness of Christ and his Church, and which he explains by the similitude of the human body. For, as the human frame, made up of an infinite number of parts, is, after all, but one compleat whole; so is Christ's mystical body. Christ's Church is but one. Though some of his members are in heaven, and some on earth, and some yet unborn; yet the whole forms but one and the same compleat body. So Jesus himself declares. Song vi. 9. And it is a sweet thought. Wherever any of his members are, whether in Heaven or earth, born or unborn, they must be equally dear to Jesus; being equally the gift of his Father, equally betrothed before all worlds by the Son, Hosea ii. 19, 20. and equally redeemed during the time-state of the Church upon earth, and equally the objects of the regenerating grace of God the Holy Ghost.

And this precious truth is read to us very blessedly, by what the Apostle hath here said, in relation to the equality of baptism, by which all are baptized by one Spirit into one body. Not water baptism, but by one Spirit. Numbers may be baptized in water, (and it is to be feared there are,) who were never baptized by the Spirit: witness Simon Magus. Acts viii. 9—24. And numbers may be baptized by the Holy Ghost, who never were baptized in water; witness the Thief on the Cross. In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Gal.

vi. 15. Oh! for that sweet promise of Jesus which he gave to his disciples, to be my daily mercy, of being baptized with the Holy Ghost. Acts i. 5.

How very beautiful the Apostle hath set forth the different parts of the human frame, by way of representing the different members of Christ's mystical body? It is really blessed to see, what an analogy there is, between the body corporal, and the body spiritual; and which by the way, becomes a proof, that both is produced by

the same Almightv Architect and Builder.

First: the body is not, as the Apostle saith, one member, but many. It is made up of many and various parts, all beautiful in their various offices and characters, all equally useful in their several purposes and designs; and all ministering alike in their respective situations, and circumstances, to the general welfare of the whole. Now such is the mystical body of Christ. The body of Christ, his Church, is not one member, but many. There are some great, some small; some of larger abilities, some smaller; some weak, some strong; some more wise, others less so. But the humblest, as well as the greatest, is alike necessary, to form the body compleat: neither would the body be compleat, if the smallest, and apparently the most inconsiderable member, was wanting.

And secondly: The highest cannot reproach the lowest, as if useless. The foot cannot say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body. Neither can either tell another that he hath no need of him. So, in like manner, the humblest of Christ's members are as important in their apparently lesser offices, as the highest and the best. The Lord, the Maker, hath tempered all, to make all minister in the department to which the Lord hath appointed them, and all to act in the station the Lord hath marked, to their mutual happiness, and

to his glory.

And thirdly: What endears the whole and makes the whole truly blessed is, that as the Lord is the Maker of all, hath by his infinite wisdom appointed all, and by his power governs all; so all are equally dear to Him whose all they are, and from whom all receive what they all are, and act only when graciously conducted, to promote the ends for which they are created and made; his glory, and their happiness. And this is the very purpose of Christ's Church. This people (saith the LORD) I have formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise. Isaiah xliii. 21. Reader! do not pass away from this beautiful illustration by the Apostle, which he makes, from the wise and gracious order the Lord hath formed, in compounding the human frame as a body; without gathering from it, what the Holy GHOST by the Apostle evidently intended from the similitude, in explaining the yet far higher order in his ordination of the spiritual frame of the mystical members of Christ. All united to the One glorious Head, and every member deriving life, action, and influence, from Him, while sweetly ordered and governed by his unerring wisdom and love, they are supposed to be mutually ministering to His praise and their comfort. In the joy of one member, all partake. In the affliction of one, all sympathize. For as in the human frame, if the hand or arm be crushed, the whole body feels: so in the spiritual frame, the sufferings of any of Christ's members calls forth the fellow-feeling of the whole Church. Reader! is it so with you? Do you take part in the exercises of Christ's little ones? Do you rejoice in Zion's welfare, or mourn with them that mourn? Isaiah lxii. 1. Psm. cxxxix. throughout.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and mem-

bers in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all

teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Here the Apostle forms his conclusion from all that he had been advancing, in reference to the Church of Christ. He considers the whole mystical body of our LORD, under the same beautiful order as he had before done, in contemplating the human frame; and shews, as plain as words can make the subject, that as Christ and his people are one, so the different members, placed according to his infinite wisdom, though diversified as it necessarily became them to be, in higher, and lower departments, though some were Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers, and others called on to the humbler offices of being ministered unto; yet were all equally useful in their station, equally important in the state where the LORD had placed them, and equally interested in the Lord's affection and regard. Reader! there cannot be an higher proof upon earth, than is here given, of the equal attention the LORD JESUS bears to his mystical body, in all the several members of it. And it ought to be very sweet, both to the most exalted, and to the most humble of the Lord's people. The greatest hath nothing to boast, in respect to his movement in the higher departments of the Church; neither the humblest to be cast down, when at any time feeling conscious of a low, or more exercised station. For as in a large and complicated machine, the smallest part in the working of it, hath its special office, and without whose operations the whole could not be carried on: so in the mysterious government of the Church of God, the least of Christ's little ones, are by him placed to the general welfare of the whole body, and afford occasion for the unceasing displays of his love; and calling forth the graces of His Spirit, both in them, and in all his members. And when the whole comes to be unfolded to view, it will be seen, that all have been mere receivers only; the highest nothing to boast, and the lowest nothing to mourn for, not having received more. Christ's glory, as the Head of his body the Church, being the one grand and only design of the whole. The depth of the riches in the divine administration, though never to be fully explored, will in some measure be more opened to view. And the astonished Church of Christ, discovering her close connection with her Lord, and his everlasting union with her, and love towards her, will explain a thousand things, which now exercise faith and patience. And who shall calculate, the joy and glory, reflected by Christ on his Church, which will then fill the ravished soul, when at once beholding Him as the Head and fulness of all? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Rom. xi. 33 to the end.

I must not close the Chapter, before that I have first called upon the Reader to remark with me, the meaning of the Apostle's expression, when he saith: ye are the body of Christ. Not the natural body of Christ, which he took into union with his GODHEAD. It is not Christ personal of whom Paul speaks, but Christ mystical. In that pure, and holy portion of our nature, which the Son of God assumed, and which, by the junction with the divine nature, formed one Person, thence called CHRIST; we contemplate the glorious Mediator, and Gop-Man, as He is in himself: in whom dwelt all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily. Coloss. ii. 9. But when Paul, or any of the sacred Writers, speak of Christ's body the Church, is meant, not Christ personal, but Christ mystical; that is, Christ in his members. It is that body, which God the FATHER, in his Covenant-office, gave him; and which God the Holy Ghost anointed. with Him, and in Him: and knit together with Him, in every individual member, which was given him; and in the time state of the Church, regenerates, and quickens, in Him. This is CHRIST'S mystical body: his temple, his body, the Church. And it is blessed, yea, very blessed, when we behold, how the Apostle's account here given is fully proved, when he saith: Now ye are the body of CHRIST, and members in particular.

Every child of God, given by the Father, Ephes. i. 4. betrothed by the Son, Hosea ii. and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. is, to all intents and purposes, a part of Christ's mystical body; for the whole of that child of God, being of the seed of CHRIST, is united to CHRIST, both body and spirit; and interested in all that belongs to CHRIST, as CHRIST, both before all worlds, during the whole time-state of the Church, and in, and through the whole eternity, which is to follow. Hence those multitudes of promises, with which the word of God abounds. Gen. xii. 3. with Gal. iii. 16. Isaiah xlvi. 3, 4, 5. Isaiah lix. 21. Psm. lxxxix. 2, 3, 4, 29. And it is by virtue of this union, that the spirits of just men made perfect, are before the throne of God and the Lamb; when their bodies return to their original dust: Heb. xii. 23, 24. and their bodies sleep in Jesus, being one with Jesus, and will be quickened at the resurrection-morn, not by the naked power of Gop, but from the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them. I Thess. iv. 13, 14, 16. Rev. xiv. 13. John xi. 25. Rom. viii. 10, 11. Reader! I beseech you, ponder over the subject. It is indeed most sweet and precious. An union with Christ, brings up with it every thing that is blessed in Christ. For as it is a spiritual union, he that is joined to the Lord being one Spirit: 1 Cor. vi. 17. so is it opening a continual source of neverceasing joy and happiness. Living upon Christ, receiving all communications from Christ, and the whole springs of spiritual grace and refreshments being in Christ, the heart of the redeemed is made glad, whatever outward circumstances there may be; for Jesus hath said, because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19. Behold then, how many blessed and precious things are contained in the Apostle's words, when he saith: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members

in particular.

I stay not to observe what Paul adds, concerning the diversity of offices, in the Church. The Apostle's conclusion, calls us off from men, and the several gifts bestowed upon them for the Church, to look unto the LORD. Covet earnestly the best gifts, namely, what CHRIST hath promised, those durable riches, and righteousness, which he gives. Prov. viii. 17-21. And yet (saith Paul) shew I unto you a more excellent way; namely, CHRIST himself, who is the way, yea, the only way, the truth, and the life. John xiv. 6. Reader! what are all gifts, and graces, compared to Christ? Gifts, yea, Christ's gifts are not Christ. When Jesus comes to visit a soul, he doth indeed bring his gifts with him; as some great Prince, when he travels, is attended by his servants. But who would lose sight of the Prince. to look at his servants? Who would bestow their time at Court, in beholding the King's equipage, instead of beholding the King himself in his beauty? Isaiah xxxiii. 17. Precious Jesus! be thou the more excellent way, to my soul. And while I learn to value, and highly prize all thy love-tokens, as love-tokens of my Lord; may I know how to prize thee above all, my Lord, my life, my way, my portion for ever!

REFLECTIONS.

BLESSED God the Spirit! suffer my poor soul never to be ignorant of spiritual gifts! I know, indeed, O Lord, through thy divine quickenings, and gracious teachings, that like those Corinthians, I was once an ignorant, blind, and senseless Gentile; carried away unto the idols, and stumbling blocks of sin, and iniquity, which a fallen nature, under the dominion of Satan, had set up in my heart. Blessed be the Lord the Spirit, which brought me out of darkness, and hath enabled me to say, that Jesus is Jehovah, and my Lord! And I do desire to bless God the Holy Guost, for all his spiritual gifts to me, to every child of God, yea, to the whole Church. Blessed be the Lord, for the numberless, nameless gifts, with which he blesseth the people! All are his. From the first moment, in which the Lord quickens the poor sinner, through all the vast diversities of gifts he bestows upon every saint, whether Prophet, Apostle, or Teacher; until he brings home the whole Church, rich, for glory in Christ; well do I know, and with holy joy confess, that it is the same God, which worketh all in all. Yes! thou Almighty Minister of the Church! sure I am, that all these worketh that One and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

And blessed be thy Name, sweet and precious Jesus! thou, and thy Church are one. Many are the members of thy mystical body; yet, whether in Heaven or earth, still but one. Our Lord Jesus, our glorious Head, hath but one body. Our faithful Husband, but one

Wife. Oh! then, do thou own, and bless, and sanctify, and keep, and love, and delight in thy Spouse, the Church! Make her, Long! what thou wouldest have her to be. And at length bring her home, as one espoused by thyself, and presented by thyself, and to thyself, a glorious Church: the body of Chuist, and members in particular, to be holy, and without blemish, before thee for ever.

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS.

This is a short, but interesting Chapter, on Love. The Apostle speaks in the highest Commendation of it, and declares, that it will abide for ever.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

For the right apprehension of the Apostle's meaning, in this short, but beautiful Chapter, our first attention must be directed, under God the Spirit's teaching, to form a full conception of the word Charity, as here used by the Apostle. Confining it, as in modern times for the most part it is, to the mere act of alms-giving, which is but a branch of it, and that a small branch too; instead of taking the thing itself, in the whole sum and substance of it, the greatest errors have followed. And yet, the Apostle appears to have taken every caution necessary, to prevent such an evil, in the opening of the Chapter. For he no sooner enters upon the subject, in speaking of the great excellency of charity, in describing its superiority to the gift of prophecy, to all knowledge, and even to faith itself; but, as if to guard his Readers against such a perversion, as the supposing the charity he is extolling a mere alms giving, he declares, that he might bestow all his goods to feed the poor, yea, give his body to be burned out of compassion to his fellow-creatures; and yet be void of that principle of charity he is here speaking of. A plain proof, that the charity he had in view, and which to commend forms the whole subject of this Chapter, is of an higher nature, than mere alms-giving. It will be the first, and chief object, therefore, of our concern, at our very entrance on this Chapter, to discover, under God the Spirit's teaching, what is here meant by Charity.

Now for the clear apprehension of the subject, let it be observed by the Reader, that the word, which the Translators of our Bible have here rendered charity, is in other places, rendered by them love; and strictly, and properly speaking, ought always to be so rendered. For Agape, which is the word here translated Charity, cannot have its full sense and meaning explained, by any thing but love. Love, which is a branch from the love of God, as is there evidently intended to shew, (and as by and by will appear, when we prosecute the Chapter,) manifests in the Possessor, the electing love of God the FATHER, oneness and union with CHRIST; and that the regenerating power of God the Holy Ghost, hath passed upon that man's soul, who hath this love, which Paul declares to be greater than all the gifts of prophecy, knowledge, or faith. And without all question it is. For gifts of the highest nature, are but gifts; and they are but effects flowing from some cause. But the grace of love, arising out of an union with Christ, proves a oneness with Christ; and is, as our LORD told the Woman of Samaria, that water which Jesus said should be in his people, a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John iv. 14. And if the Agape, or love, Paul here refers to, be accepted, as it cannot but be accepted, upon the general, and most common principles of the Gospel; the sense of the passage is at once plain and evident: and all that follows in the Chapter, becomes beautiful, and interesting. Though I could speak, with all the ability, and head-knowledge of the highest order of created Beings, angels or men; (and what intellect of the greatest degree as creatures must the fallen angels possess? Luke iv. 41.) and though like Balaam, or like Caiaphas, I could foretell human events, Numb. chap. xxiii. xxiv. and John xi. 49-52: and though I had a clear head-apprehension of all the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; and even a speculative faith, to be convinced, that in the case of God's people, mountains I might remove did I possess what they possess: though in the conviction from head-knowledge, that the Gospel is true; and I aimed, like Simon Magus, to purchase gifts by money, in giving all my goods to feed the poor, yea, endured martyrdom of the body, to purchase the salvation of my soul; yet all these, being wholly outward things, underived from the love of God, void of all grace-union with Christ, and not an atom of the whole springing from the quickening influences of God the Spirit; all would profit me nothing!

But now reverse the case. Suppose a truly regenerated child of God possessed of this love, (and which by regeneration he doth most truly possess,) this union with Christ, brings up after it, a participation in all Christ's communicable gifts, and graces; then, all the sweet and precious consequences follow, which that union begets in the soul. He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit. I Cor. vi. 17. One, and the same spirit, actuates both. Christ, as the Head of his body the Church, communicates life, and all the blessed properties, which flow from that life in Him, to his people. Yea, Christ lives in his redeemed, maintains, and keeps up that life, by fresh communications momently from Himself. The love, ever flowing, and overflowing, in His heart, (for He is love itself, I John iv. 16.) flows into theirs. And thus the love which this Chapter treats of, being a stream of that River which makes glad the city of God, (Psm.

xlvi. 4.) rising from such a fountain, produceth all those blessed effects which the Apostle here describes; and being the source and cause of those effects, cannot but transcend the gift of prophecy, all knowledge, and the understanding of all mysteries, yea, faith itself, as the act of the mind; this being the cause, from whence all these, as

consequences, spring.

Reader! let you and I pause, and for a moment consider, the vast importance of possessing this life-giving principle, without which, all head-knowledge, and all alms-giving, are nothing worth. What awful mistakes, have thousands made, and are now daily making, on the subject of charity? What commutations have been offered, to bribe God, with his own gifts? What Alms-houses, Hospitals, Churches, and a long catalogue of splendid Charities have been set up, to purchase Heaven? Yea, what martyrdoms voluntarily entered into, in the gift of the body, for the sin of the soul? And all the while, the whole as foreign to the love of God the Apostle hath here so blesssedly spoken of, as darkness to light! Reader! depend upon it, the love which comes not from God, never riseth to God. Nothing can ascend higher than its source. What begins in man, must end in man. What one of the Apostles was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to teach the Church, concerning the Lord's wisdom, in opposition to man's wisdom; may with equal truth be applied of divine love, contrasted to man's love. This wisdom which descendeth not from above, is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. James iii. 15, 17.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

- 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth:
- 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

The Apostle having in the preceding verses spoken so highly of charity, in general terms; now begins to describe the special instances of this Christian grace, somewhat more particularly. If the Reader will number the several very sweet, and striking qualities, Paul hath noted down, of charity; he will discover, that there are no less than sixteen peculiarities, in commendation of it, which he hath enumerated. And, indeed, such a lovely principle, and flowing from such a source, may well be supposed, as diffusing itself in various streams, every where around.

I beg the Reader to observe also, how much the Apostle hath heightened the representation, by personifying charity under those several features of character. It seems all along, as if Paul is speak-

ing of a person, and not simply of this grace given to a person. And is it a violence to this scripture, or will it be thought imaginary, if I were to say, might not Paul have his Lord in view all along, as he drew the Portrait? Of whom but Jesus, can it be strictly said; seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things! Surely, none but Jesus, comes up to this character! Yes! thou Almighty burden-bearer; of thee, and thee alone, can it be truly said: Thou hast borne our sins, and carried our sorrows. Even now, thou art bearing the cares of all thy Church, and the persons of all thy people. And while, through all the present time-state of thy redeemed, thou art bearing all in the arms of thy love; shortly, when this time-state is over, thou wilt bear them every one home to thine eternal glory.

8 Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophecy in

part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then

that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then

shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

I beg the Reader to pause over the opening of this paragraph, and to ponder well what is said, of the never-failing quality of charity, in proof of what I remarked, at the entrance on this Chapter. Nothing can be more decisive in point, that the Apostle under the Holk Ghost, is all along speaking of this charity, this love, not as simply the effect of grace in the soul, but a branch of that grace itself; that grace-union with Christ, which being from Christ, and in Christ, yea, maintained, and kept alive by communications which Christ imparts to his members, is in Christ as the cause. And hence the Apostle saith, it never faileth. Now this can be said of no other Christian grace, in the sense in which love is here spoken of. Hope will be done away, when the thing hoped for is enjoyed. Faith will be lost in sight, when the object, not seen, but believed in, is revealed in open vision. Prophecies shall fail, when all the grand events predicted are fulfilled; and there is nothing relating to the kingdom, to need their further ministry. Tongues will also cease,

when language, now necessary to communicate thoughts, will be no longer wanted. And all the knowledge of the earth, suited to the childhood of our present existence, will be superseded, in the ripeness of perfection, in Heaven. But, amidst all these failures, this charity, this love, being from CHRIST and in CHRIST, and as such, being immortal, incorruptible, and everlasting, cannot fail, but abideth for ever header! think, how truly blessed the principle itself must be, and what a palpable testimony it brings with it, to the child of God in the possession of it, of the everlasting love of God, in and through the Person, work, and glory, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, by

the effectual grace of God the Holy Ghost!

I beg the Reader not to overlook the very beautiful figure, which the Apostle hath been pleased to adopt, by way of illustration, of the present twilight of our existence, compared to what it will be, when the full display of knowledge shall be no longer seen through a medium. Children at the best, but in education, the objects are all too bright to be let in upon our tender organs of vision, in their own full lustre. The eye of the new born soul doth discern somewhat of the King in his beauty. In the LORD JESUS we behold beams of divine glory, sufficient to raise our most earnest desires, for a greater knowledge of Him, greater delight in Him, and greater longings for a conformity to Him. But all, and every thing, connected with the Person, fulness, grace, and glory of Christ, open to objects so bright and dazzling, that our highest attainments, are no more than as those, who see through a glass darkly. Gov's Christ and Gov's chosen the infinite greatness and wonders of Christ's Person, God and Man in One, and the infinite dignity, efficacy, and fulness, of his blood and righteousness, his love for us, and his grace manifested to us, what he is in himself, and what he is to his body the Church; these glorious and momentous objects, are too overwhelming to the mind, to be looked at in full prospect of vision; that it is best suited to our present state of minority, we see but in part, until that which is perfect is come, when all our imperfect views will be done away. But it ought to affect our minds, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, that, though now we behold Christ through mediums only, yet ere long, we shall see him face to face; and know, even as we are known. Very blessedly the Prophet speaks to this point, when comforting the Church: In that day, the moon shall 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. So infinitely surpassing all splendor, will be CHRIST's glory, and the reflection of it upon his people, that the glory of the sun in its meridian lustre, shall be but as the blushing of the morning; and the moon's light shall be but as paleness: CHRIST shining upon his Church, making small, and diminishing, all created

I admire the blessed conclusion, with which the Apostle ends the Chapter, in drawing the different qualities of faith, hope, and charity, by the way of the more exalting the latter. Faith abideth with the believer, being a grace of the Spirit in the believer, and from his operation in the soul; it therefore abideth to the very last. Yea, regenerated souls, not only live believing, but die believing. The

Covenant-love of God in Christ, with regenerated souls, are the same in life, and death. These all (saith the Holy Ghost by his servant the Apostle) died in faith. Heb. xi. 13. So hope, in like manner, rests in the full assurance, of all the unseen things engaged for, in the covenant. Hope realizeth them, substantiateth them, and considers them sure. Hence it is called, a blessed hope. Titus ii. 13. But, both faith and hope cease, when the soul enters Hewen; for their offices are for ever done away. For what a man seeth, he can no longer hope for. Rom. viii. 24. But charity, the love which is a branch of the love of God in Christ, flowing from his heart, into our's, remains for ever; and therefore, in this sense, is greater than both. Precious Jesus! oh! for a portion of that love, that charity, which is the Lord's gift, and not man's creating; and which, as it comes from God, so doth it lead to God, and will find room for exercise, for ever!

REFLECTIONS.

Who can read this sweet Chapter, in the relation of Charity, and in the many lovely qualities, with which the Apostle hath so beautifully set it forth, without having the mind at once directed to JESUS, who is all that is here said, and abundantly more, even Charity in the full, compleat, and finished representation of it. Yes! thou dear Lord! every thing of love, lovely, and loving, shines in thee, in one rich constellation. What love, what charity, was that of thine, which prompted thine infinite mind, before all worlds, to set thine affections upon our nature; and at the call of God thy FATHER, to betroth thy Church to thyself for ever! And, what charity, what love, passing all knowledge, when after creation-work had taken place in the earth, and thy Church had treacherously departed from thee, to assume our nature, and die the just for the unjust to bring us to Goo! And, what an everlasting, unwearied, boundless affection, of love and charity, in cleansing, sanctifying, washing in thy blood, cloathing in thy righteousness, making comely in thy comeliness, and bringing thy Church through all the time-state here below, until thou shalf bring her home to the eternal world above, to present her to thyself, a glorious Church, to her joy, and thy praise, for ever! Oh! for grace, to contemplate the God-Man, in whom alone, all love and charity centers; and from whom alone, all the manifestations of both, must be derived.

Blessed Load! let it be my happiness to learn, from the contemplation of thyself, and from what is said in this sweet Chapter; that the most splendid talents, and most showy services, no pompous language or head-knowledge of all mysteries, neither the largest display of alms-giving, no, nor the martyrdom of the body, can recommend to God: nothing short of the love of God in the heart, can profit the soul. Oh! for that washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Load!

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is discoursing in this Chapter, on Spiritual Gifts, and Prophecy. He points out the great Advantage of ministering in the Congregation in a Language suited to the Hearers. And the Apostle-adds, some Instruction, for the better Order of Worship.

FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual

gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to

edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound,

who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of

voices in the world, and none of them is without

signification.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an un-

known tongue pray that he may interpret,

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

The Reader should observe, that here and elsewhere in the Scriptures, prophesying is a term used for preaching. See Matt. vii. 22. And, the prophesying, or preaching the Gospel, when commissioned, and sent by the Holy Ghost, is, as the Apostle saith, rather to be desired, than any other gifts. If the Reader would wish to mark the vast difference, in those sent from God the Holy Ghost, to those who run unsent; let him compare, Acts xiii. 2—5. Jerem. xiv. 14.

and xxiii. 21. with Acts xvi. 6, 7. 9, 10.

What Paul saith, of speaking in an unknown tongue, by which is meant, one that was not understood by the people, it is probable, he alluded to the use of the original Hebrew; which, though some of the more learned among men might be able to speak, was now, for the most part, a dead language. But, the most interesting part to be considered, in what the Apostle hath here said, in laying down regulations for the due observance thereof in divine worship, is what he hath delivered, concerning the gifts of God the Holy Guost. All institutions in the Church of God, to make them profitable, must be excited at the first, directed, and influenced in every part, and both at beginning and end, be wholly under the sweet, and sanctifying operations of God the Spirit. We must pray with the Spirit, and sing with the Spirit, when either, or both, are done properly, or the whole is nothing worth in the sight of God. All the preparations of the heart, and the answers of the tongue, are from the LORD. Prov. xvi. 1. It is the Holy Ghost, which can alone excite a sense of want in the soul. It is the Holy Ghost, which can make sensible, where those wants from Christ's fulness can be alone supplied. It is the Holy Ghost alone, which can open a communication, between CHRIST and the soul, and give a refreshing, both in the spirit, and understanding, to the Lord's glory, and to his peoples' happiness. And very blessed it is, when the Lord's people are brought under the gracious impressions of God the Spirit, and know, and feel, and enjoy these things, in seasons of holy worship. Blessed is the people which know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance! Psm. lxxxix. 15.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the

other is not edified.

18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more

than ye all:

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in under-

standing be men.

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not them that believe not, but for them which believe.

I have noticed in my Poor Man's Concordance, somewhat in relation to the Amen, we so frequently meet with in Scripture. So that I do not think it necessary, in this place, to enlarge on it to the full. Nevertheless, in addition to what was there offered, I would remark, that over and above the very sweet, and blessed sense it bears, in allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and as one of his express names; it hath other objects of significancy, which merit our attention.

No doubt, in every sense of the word, its highest and best meaning refers to Christ; yea, means Christ himself: the Amen, the faithful and true witness. And at every use of it, all the Church of God should pause with profound reverence, in the recollection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. I would consider it as JEHOVAH'S verily; his unalterable word, purpose, will, pleasure, delight, in Christ.

But, from what the Apostle here saith, of the unlearned saying Amen, at our giving of thanks, it should seem, that the use of it in the Church, was intended to express somewhat of no small importance. An ignorance of what had been said, or a misapprehension, or the want of an hearty and cordial consent to it, with perhaps other things of a like nature, made it exceptionable; and it then, became improper. Paul seems to lay the stress upon the ill use of it, that in that case, the person using it is not edified. The Amen, was an antient custom in the old Church. And, no doubt, the use of it was with an eye to Christ. 1 Chron. xvi. 36. Nehem. viii. 6. We are told by some old writers, that the Jews had several ways of using the word; and according to that use, it had different significations. An hearty, long, and full Amen, was meant to intimate, every thing of blessedness. On the contrary, a cold, short, and hasty expression of the word, carried with it an idea, that the person was not sincere in what he said. Reader! while you and I bless ourselves, in our glorious Amen, Christ Jesus, the God of truth, we shall have all the true blessedness of the word; and at all times be able, to set to our Amen that God is true. Isajah lxv. 16.

I cannot pass wholly over without notice, what Paul saith, of the brethren being not children in understanding. It is a melancholy consideration, how many of God's dear children continue weak, in point of understanding, and remain but as babes in Christ the greater part of their life. I cannot call that man, any other than a child, a mere babe in grace, who never gets beyond the doubts and fears, the ups and downs, of unbelief. A maturity, and ripeness in grace, is known, by an establishment, and firmness, in the faith and hope of Goo's children. The beloved Apostle speaks of young men that were strong, and to whom he had written on that account; and the word of God abode in them, and they had overcome the wicked one. 1 John ii. 14. And herein lies the strength of such in the Lord. They are strong in the faith, that God is more honored, more glorified, by the obedience and death of Christ, as the sinner's Surety, and Representative; than God is dishonored, by the sinner's sins, and transgressions, and all his unworthiness. And hence, when established by grace, firm and unshaken in this most blessed principle: the man is no longer a child in understanding; but well taught, and well established of God. But, Reader! this is God's work, not man's. So the Lord saith: and so the Lord's people know. See 2 Cor. i. 20—22.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made

manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by

course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31 For ye may all prophesy, one by one, that

all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but

of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

36 What? came the word of God out from you?

or came it unto you only?

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But it any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

I will only detain the Reader with a short observation, on what the Apostle hath here said, of a Gospel Church, and the conviction wrought by the Spirit of God, on the heart of a poor sinner, unexpectedly coming in, and beholding the Lord's people so assembled, and feeling the blessed influence of the Lord's grace upon his heart. What a lovely representation he hath made, of such a Church! And what an encouragement for the Lord's people to assemble! And who shall say, to what extent, such events are going on continually in life? Who shall calculate, the numbers savingly converted, under a preached Gospel, by God the Spirit, through the ministry of his blessed Word? The Apostle's description, of the secrets of the poor sinner's heart, being made manifest; and the falling down on his face, in open confession, of the Lord's word being armed with the Lord's power; are beautiful representations of the case. And, Reader! when you and I consider, that to this conviction of soul by the Holy Ghost, all the arrows of the Lord's quiver, in his sacred word are directed, that all the Persons of the Godhead concur in the vast design: God the Father draws to Christ: John vi. 44. God the Son draws to himself: John xii. 32. and God the Spirit, makes the soul willing in the day of his power: Psm. cx. 3: what a wonderful work must it be in itself; and how vastly important in the sight of God?—Reader! hath an effect like what the Apostle here described ever taken place in your heart? Have you felt, in the assembly of Gon's people, the word of the Lord, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword? Heb. iv. 12. 2 Cor. x. 5. It is very blessed, when the word of God is confirmed in the soul; and when, as the Apostle saith, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word is established: when God the Spirit himself, and by his word, works in the heart and conscience to the accomplishment of such striking effects, as are here described.

REFLECTIONS.

Passing by many very useful observations, which in relation to Church government, might be taken from this Chapter; I shall only request the Reader, to make one general improvement from the whole, with respect to what the Apostle here calls prophesying, or preaching. The absurdity he shews to arise from the preaching in an unknown tongue, is hardly more glaring, than that of preaching in a stile and language, unsuited to the capacities of the hearers, which is little less unknown also.

Nothing can be more evident, than that the whole design of the Gospel is to proclaim to fallen, sinful man, tidings of salvation. When the Angels posted down from Heaven, to tell a lost world of the coming of a Savior; their preaching was short, but comprehen-

sive. Behold! (said they) we bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city

of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

But let us suppose, that those angels had brought those tidings in a language, to a lost world, that no one understood; of what importance would have been their message? When a preacher speaks in a stile of studied elegance, high flown periods, and florid words, which the hearer cannot understand; of what avail is the whole sum and substance of his sermon? And in like manner, when the discourse is directed to expatiate upon the great excellency of virtue, and the happiness which will arise from a discharge of all the high duties of life; and when a poor sinner, with a sinful, sorrowful, broken heart, hears of this blessedness, but is conscious that he had done nothing to merit it, but his whole life meriting the reverse, in punishment; of what possible use can such preachers prove to a wounded soul like his? If indeed, preachers had to do with hearers not sinful, and polluted, who felt no concern for sin, because they had none to answer for; then, I confess, Moral Essays, as they are called, and harangues on the Loveliness of Virtue, might do very well to amuse, and gratify the pride of human nature. But, my Brother! my Brother! If every man be a sinner before God, and every man, as the Scriptures solemnly declares, standeth in need of salvation; oh! how needful must it be, to preach Christ plainly, fully, completely. Every preacher, sensible of the plague of his own heart, (and he who is not sensible of the plague of his own heart, is not fit to be a preacher to others,) will rather, as Paul saith, speak five words with his understanding, and to be understood of others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Lord Jesus! stop the mouths of those who run unsent: who preach they know not what! But oh! send out Pastors after thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with knowledge, and understanding.

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

This is a most blessed Chapter, on the Subject of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. From Christ's Resurrection, the Apostle proves our's. And the blessed Effects of the Doctrine are shewn.

MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have

believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the

twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that he was seen of James; then of all

the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

The great, and leading point, to which, by God the Holy Ghost, the Apostle's mind was here directed, was to teach the Church the glorious doctrine of the Resurrection. And never can the Church of God be sufficiently thankful to the Lord the Spirit, for his servant's ministry on this momentous truth, as here set forth in this blessed Chapter. Reader! let us both look up, and bless God for it, as we enter upon the perusal of it; and beg for grace, so to read, and understand, as to have that blessedness of participation, promised to the members of Christ's body, on whom the second death had no

power. Revelation xx. 6.

The Apostle begins the subject, with calling the doctrine of the resurrection, in a comprehensive manner, the Gospel. And, in fact, so it is. For it forms the key-stone of the arch. On the truth of which, the whole building is knit together. And, it is worthy the Reader's observation, that after Christ's return to glory, and the descent of God the Holv Ghost upon the minds of the Apostles; their whole preaching was called, a witness of Christ's resurrection. Acts i. 22. And the most galling part of the Apostles' ministry to the Jews was, that they preached, through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead. Acts iv. 2. 33. Paul's preaching at Athens, was considered as a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. Acts xvii. 18. Reader! you may learn from

hence, the infinite importance of the doctrine itself. It is, as Paul here told the Corinthians, the very source of salvation, from death and the grave; By which, said he, ye are saved: that is, in the resurrection of Christ. Not by our memory of it, or even by our stedfastness in the faith of it; for the resurrection of the LORD JESUS CHRIST is a sure, certain, and unquestionable fact in itself, whether believed in. or not. And blessed be God, the salvation of Christ's Church, is founded in Christ himself; not in the highest act of belief in his people. But the Apostle's meaning, when he saith: By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you; that is, your joy in it, and your comfort from it, shall be unbroken, and become to you an evidence, that ye are saved in Christ, with an everlasting salvation, by this holding fast, and retaining the cordial belief of it, in a practical use of it, upon your heart, and conscience. To the same purport is what the Apostle adds, when he saith: unless ye have believed in vain. There can be no such thing as true believing in vain: For that faith which is of the Spirit of God, the faith of God's elect; Titus i. 1. is a living principle in the soul, inwrought by the Holy Ghost at regeneration: and being from Him. and kept alive by Him, who is the Author and Finisher of faith, liveth and abideth for ever. So that the Lord's redeemed ones, whom Christ himself calls, the children of the resurrection, Luke xx. 36. cannot but believe; neither can they believe in vain. The resurrection itself, is in them, a principle giving life. They have, by virtue of their union with Christ, part in the first resurrection; being by regeneration begotten to this lively hope, by the resurrection of JESUS from the dead. 1 Pet. i. 3. Hence the principle is secured in Christ their Head, who hath said: Because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19. Their comfort, their joy, their happiness, will indeed be more, or less lively, according to the greater, or less degree of their daily actings of faith, upon the Person, and finished work of CHRIST. But, their security is not in their views of CHRIST, but in CHRIST himself. That faith, or belief, which is vain, and floats but in the memory, can be nothing more than what is historical. If there were any of this description, which had crept into the Church at Corinth; the Church itself, from what the Apostle here said, might detect such characters, and mark the difference in themselves.

The Apostle, having paved the way for the great subject he had in view, now proceeds to remind the Church of the outlines of all his preaching, in relation to the Person, offices, character, royalty, perfections, and glory, of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul demands the attention of the Church yet more, because, what he had delivered unto them, he had received himself from the LORD. Reader! I pray you everlastingly to keep in recollection, this grand feature of Paul's ministry. From whom was Paul taught what he delivered to others? Nay, let himself answer the question. I certify to you, brethren, (said Paul, in his Epistle to the Church of Galatia,) that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man. neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. See Gal. i. 10-16. And, as Paul was miraculously converted by the Lord, from Heaven: Acts ix. 1-22. so was he specially ordained to the ministry, by the ordination of God the Holy Ghost. Acts xiii. 1-4. Reader! you would do well,

when, at any time, Satan or the world tempt you, to pause, at any of the precious truths of God, delivered by *Paul*, to have these things in remembrance!

I do not think it necessary to swell these pages, in making observations on this sermon of the Apostle's, the heads of which he hath here given, of what he had before preached to the Corinthian Church. Of the death of Christ, according to the prediction of the scriptures of the Prophets; the Evangelists have very fully related. The Reader would find it profitable, as he peruseth the wonderful history, to compare the one with the other. Gen. iii. 15. Psm. xxii. and lxix. Isaiah liii. Dan. ix. Zech. xii. 10. and xiii. 7. And let him also consult the typical representations, under the law: Exod. xii. Levit. xvi. Numb. xxi. 9. with John iii. 14. So again, of the resurrection of Christ, which Paul also noticeth, that it was according to the Scriptures. Psm. xvi. 10. Isaiah xxvi. 19. Hosea vi. 2.

We cannot sufficiently admire the air of holy triumph, with which the Apostle here speaks, of the many appearances of Christ to his disciples, after he arose from the dead. Five hundred brethren at once, and which, saith Paul at the time he wrote this Epistle, (which was not above five and twenty years from the period of CHRIST'S resurrection,) the greater part remain unto this present. As much as to say, whoever doubts the fact, may get full assurance of its truth from the persons themselves. Paul's personal knowledge of Christ's resurrection arose from no less than four distinct manifestations, which the LORD JESUS made of himself to the Apostle. See Acts ix. xviii. 9, 10. xxii 17-21. xxiii. 11. I might have included also those other two instances recorded, Acts xxvii. 23-25. and 2 Cor. xii. 2-4. for it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove, that Christ, who, in his mediator-office and character, is frequently called the Angel of the Covenant, (Mal. iii. 1.) was not in the one, and did not manifest himself to his servant in the other. Luke xxiii. 43.

I must not detain the Reader in a long notice of Paul's humbleness of soul, in the account he here gives of himself. The chief object of this chapter is to be contemplating what Paul saith of our LORD, and not the servant. But by the way, let not the Reader overlook how much grace humbles, when the greatest of all the Apostles calls himself the least of all saints. Reader! what are we, what is every man in his highest attainments, if considered but for a moment, without Christ. And, oh! what a blessed thing must it be for you, for me, for all the chosen seed, when we can say as Paul here did, by the grace of God I am what I am! Yes! it is all of grace, God's original choice, our regeneration, calling, redeeming, justifying, sanctifying, adopting, and ultimately being glorified; the whole Church trace all their mercies to grace, from one eternity to another, and every step in the way, during the present time-state in which the Church is conducting home to glory, hath this inscription marked as we go, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. Ephes. i. 6.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preach-

ing vain, and your faith is also vain.

- 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.
- 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised;
- 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in

Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

It appears very plain, from what the Apostle hath here said, that there were some among the Corinthians who denied the resurrection of the dead, for Paul saith, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? So that it was not the men of Corinth, among the heathens of that city, neither of the Jews who might be living there, or the Sadducees of that place; but, evidently, some who professed a general belief in Christ, and mingled with the Lord's people, which constituted what was called the Church at Corinth. Reader! pause over it, and remark, how very early heresies sprung up in the Church, to disturb its peace. We read of many in the Apostolic writings, 2 Tim. i. 15. and ii. 17, 18. I John ii. 18, 19. Jude 12, 18.

What a beautiful chain of reasoning the Apostle makes use of, by way of preparing the minds of the Corinthians for the full and cordial reception of this glorious and foundation-article of our most holy faith. He adopts a well-known figure in rhetoric, of admitting what a man knows to be wrong, in order the more fully to prove from it, what a man knows to be right; and then by a climax riseth to the compleat conviction of the truth, from shewing the folly of the opposite principles. The Corinthians were all well assured, by the most incontestible matter of fact, that Christ himself had arisen from the dead. This doctrine was uniformly preached among them, and as cordially believed. But, notwithstanding this, though the resurrection of Christ necessarily involved in it, the fullest assurance of the certain resurrection of his members, as the greater includes the less, and as the Head, the body; yet there were some, who, though they believed in the one, doubted the other.

The Apostle begins, therefore, with taking the objection of those unbelievers upon their own ground, If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. The thing being admitted as impos-

sible in one instance, implies an impossibility in the other. For Christ arose as a public head of his body the Church. And, therefore, the resurrection of the head, must bring up with it the resurrection of all his members. His is the exemplar of all that is to follow. His resurrection became an earnest of theirs. The very object of his resurrection became a proof and pledge of it. For he died in a public capacity for his people. And he arose in the same public capacity for them. The great object of his incarnation, sufferings, obedience, death, and resurrection, formed but one and the same compleat act, in reference to them. So that if one link in the chain be lost, the whole is lost. And, if Christ be not risen, all preaching is vain, and there can be no faith in Christ, but what is alike vain!

Neither is this all. For, worse consequences, if possible, arise. In the supposition, that Christ be not risen, those who were specially chosen to be the witnesses of his resurrection, become false witnesses: yea, false witnesses of God! For they assert what is not then true, that God raised him from the dead, and exalted him as a Prince and a Savior at his right hand, on the majesty on high. And, yet he did not raise him, neither was Christ justified in the Spirit; if so be, he arose not as the Head of his body the Church, and God brought him not from the dead, as the Great Shepherd of his sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant! Reader! before you proceed further, pray turn to those sweet Scriptures. Rom. i. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 14. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Heb. xiii. 20. Rev. i. 5, 17, 18.

And to sum up the whole, in this negative way of arguing, if, saith the Apostle, Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins, and they which have fallen asleep in Christ, that is, died triumphantly in Christ, in full assurance of rising again in Him, and by Him, at the last day, are sunk to rise no more. And, in this case, all our high hopes of immortality and glory, in the pre-

sence of God and the Lamb, are done away for ever.

Reader! pause over the solemn statement, as here drawn up by the Apostle, on the supposition of the possibility, that there was no resurrection of the dead. And, although you know from an infallible Teacher, and by infallible teaching, which can be liable to no error, that all the reasoning here used, and worked up to such an height, begins from false premises, and, consequently, could end but in false conclusions; yet learn from it, what God the Holy Ghost plainly intended from it, for the greater joy and comfort of his whole Church and people; how truly blessed it is to have such a chain, as we have, of impregnable evidences to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, and accompanied with all its blessful consequences to ourselves, that our faith might not be founded in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

The Apostle having refuted all that the mistaken views of men would have formed to themselves, on the presumption that there was no resurrection, now comes to his favourite topic, to shew the blessedness which ariseth, in the unanswerable conviction, that there is. And, he proceeds to make it appear, and more or less, from this place to the close of the chapter, he dwells with rapture in the contemplation, that, in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Church not only behold him as risen, but in that glorious capacity, as the Head and forerunner of every individual of his people. For, saith Paul, he is become the first fruits of them that slept. As the first sheaf in the field, in the reaping season, soonest ripe, soonest gathered, and first brought in, is but the pledge and earnest of all that is to follow; so Christ the first in resurrection, (for it behoved him in all things to have the pre-eminence, Coloss. i. 18.) is but as that pure corn of wheat which fell into the ground, which by dying, bringeth forth much fruit. See John xii. 24. and Commentary.

I beg the Reader to admire with me, the unanswerable and

striking allusion, which Paul makes, by way of illustrating the doctrine of death and the resurrection, in the case of the two Adams. One involving the whole generation in death by sin, the other including by regeneration all his in life. By man came death, by man came life. In Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive. And the reasoning is unanswerable. There is a vast propriety in it. For if I, a poor sinner, am involved in sin, and all the consequences of sin, by reason of my being born from the seed and race of Adam: so by a parity of reason, it is but just, that I should be included in righteousness, even the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in being born of his seed, and being descended from Him. And so I am, if I can prove my relationship to the one, as I do to the other. And here lies the great point of decision. Now I, and every sinner, most fully prove, that we are of the Adam-race of sin, being evidently born of his corrupt stock, sinning, as he sinned, and feeling the consequence of it, as he felt. The question is, can I prove that I am of the seed of Christ, in being new-born in Christ, and made the child of God by adoption and grace? This is the ground of the Apostle's reasoning, and most unswerable it is in proof. For, as I never should have been involved, either in the sin or condemnation of Adam, had I not been proved to have been his by generation; so, by the like proof, unless I have testimony that I am CHRIST's by regeneration, I cannot lay claim to all the blessed consequences which result wholly from this source. Let the Apostle's words be weighed in this standard, and the judgment must be without error. As in Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all ene-

mies under his feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

I detain the Reader at those verses, just to observe to him, that when it is said, the LORD JESUS will deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father, and that the Son also himself shall be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all; the meaning plainly is, according to all the analogy of scripture, that as all the purposes for which the kingdom of grace, during the present time-state of the Church, are answered, and for which, indeed, the very time-state of the Church was appointed; the kingdom of grace will cease; for at the end of it begins the open display of the kingdom of glory. But all this doth not refer to the Person of Christ, as if the LORD JESUS would cease to be mediator; or, as if all communications of glory then will not be as much in Him, and through Him, as are the communications of grace now. Christ's kingdom of grace ceaseth; but Christ never ceaseth to be Christ, that is, God-man in nature. Never to all eternity will he cease to be the Head of his body the Church, the fulness which filleth all in all. Ephes. i. 22, 23. He is, and was, and will be, the everlasting mediator of communication to the Church, here in grace, and hereafter in glory. And all our approaches, drawings nigh, enjoyments, felicities, glory, manifestations from, and communions with, Jehovah, in his threefold character of Person, will flow in upon the Church in all the individuals which constitute the one body of Christ the Church, from Him, and through Him, who is the Head of all things, to his body the Church, according to what the Prophet, commissioned by the Holy Ghost, declared, the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Isaiah lx. 19. Rev. xxii. 5.

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? 31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in

Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications cor-

rupt good manners.

34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Perhaps there is not a passage in the whole Bible attended with greater difficulty to understand, than this before us, of the being baptized for the dead. Various have been the opinions, both of the learned, and the unlearned upon it. By the learned, I mean the taught of God. John vi. 45. And by the unlearned, men who profess great knowledge of the wisdom of this world, but were never taught of God. And numbers there are of this latter class which have written upon the word of God. From such, however, nothing can be learnt in divine things, no more than from the blind who fancy, but have no conception of, colors. But, among the learned, the taught of God, there doth not appear to have been any who have been taught by God the Holy Ghost, concerning this baptism for the dead. And, therefore, what God hath not thought proper to explain, it should seem to be the wisdom of the Church rather to be silent upon, than by presuming on conjectures, to be in danger of attempting to be wise above what is written. I only venture, therefore, to observe upon it, that it serves to strengthen the views which the Gospel gives of the baptisms of the Spirit, so essentially necessary, as the Lord Jesus himself declared them, and so unimportant every other, where the Holy Ghost doth not accompany their use. Luke xxiv. 49. with Acts i. 4, 5, 8.

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not

quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased

him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and

the glory of the terrestial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory:

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory:

it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made

a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the

second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we also shall bear the image of the

heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Who they were which put the question, how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? is not said; but we have reason to be thankful it was put, that the Apostle, under divine teaching, might answer it, as he hath here completely done, and that God the Holy Ghost hath caused both question and answer to be recorded.

No form of words can be more plain, than Paul hath used, to bring the Church acquainted with the pleasing doctrine. And no images or similitudes more striking, in a way of illustration I do not think it necessary to add a word on this point, which the Lord himself hath explained. The striking figure of the corn, which by dying and rotting in the earth is made to live; and the diversity of flesh, to shew that there will be diversity of degrees in the resurrection; and the different glories of the heavenly bodies, which is another similitude as taken from them, in illustration of the same; these all beautifully explain while they prove the doctrine. But, passing by these, which are so plain as to need no Comment, I would beg to offer an observation or two on that part which the Apostle dwells upon, in reference to the resurrection, when considering Christ the second Adam, so called, as a quickening spirit. The last Adam (saith he') was made a quickening spirit. And the Apostle draws this most precious and blessed conclusion from it, that as in the Adam-nature of the first man, such are they that are earthy; so, in the received nature of the second Man, are they that are heavenly. All which corresponds to what Christ himself taught, that as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom ke will. John v. 21.

I beg the Reader's close attention to this point. It is in my view most sweet and blessed. And every truly regenerated child of God, conscious of his union and oneness with Christ, will find it, under

the Holy Ghost's teaching, most sweet and blessed indeed.

I shall not in this place stay to dwell on that grand point, (though it is the foundation of every other,) in respect to the blessedness of the resurrection itself, I mean that Christ's resurrection is the sole cause of ours. This I will take for granted, the child of God hathbeen taught by the Holy Ghost, and knows it as a practical and living principle in his renewed nature. Daily experience in his access to the throne, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, hath brought home the sweet truth to his soul, that Christ was delivered. for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Rom. iv. 25. This he bottoms his joy, and hope, and comfort wholly upon. But what I have now particularly in view is, from what the Apostle hath here said of Christ, the second Adam, as a quickening spirit, to observe, how blessedly secured the resurrection of the Lord's people is from this divine principle. It is by virtue of the union and oneness with Christ, as members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, that Christ quickens his people, and raiseth up the bodies of his saints at the last day.

Now, in proof of this most precious and soul-refreshing doctrine, there are one or two interesting points to be attended to, which set this subject in the clearest light, and which not only explain the principles of the resurrection, as all coming from Christ himself, but render the expectation of it a joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

I beg the Reader to examine them one by one.

And first. Taught as we are to consider Christ and his people one, and to behold him as a quickening spirit, it immediately follows, that from that quickening, as the Head of his body the Church, every individual member of his body shall be raised, and brought

forth into life at the last day. This was what Jesus himself preached at the grave of Lazarus, when he said, I am the resurrection and the life. John xi. 25. And the same his servant Paul was commissioned to tell the Church, when he said, your life is hid with CHRIST in God, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Coloss. iii, 3, 4. So that Christ himself is the life of his people, precisely, as the head of an human body is the life of that body, and the efficient principle of communicating new life to the dust of his saints, is in him, and from him. This the Lord himself preached by Ezekiel also, when he said, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you. Then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken, and performed it, saith the LORD. Ezek. xxxvii. 12-14. So, again, by the Prophet Isaiah. the same blessed truth is proclaimed, and certified to be accomplished in the same way. Yea, God the Father gives his Personal word in the confirmation of it also. Thy dead men, said God the Father to his dear Son, as Christ mediator, thy dead men shall live. To which Christ is represented as answering, together with my dead body shall they arise. Then comes Christ's call to his dead: Awake and sing ye that dwelt in dust. Compare this with what the Holy Ghost hath said by Paul concerning them which sleep in Jesus, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 1 Thess. iv. 13 to the end. Then God the FATHER takes up the conversation again, and by a leautiful figure, explains how the glorious act shall be accomplished: For thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead. Isaiah xxvi. 19. As in the wintry season of the year, there is nothing in the whole vegetable creation, so unpromising as the dry sticks of herbs, and yet from their root there comes forth in the spring moisture to give them new life and verdure; so Christ, the root of his people, in the morning of the resurrection, reanimates the dust of his mystical body, and his dew is the sole cause of their renewed life. To this effect also is that sweet promise. Psm. cx. 3.

From hence it very fully appears, that in Christ's resurrection, the resurrection of his people is not only secured, but by it effected. CHRIST himself is the sole efficient cause. It is accomplished by their union with him, according to what he said, because I live ye shall live also. John xiv. 19. And what I beg the Reader most particularly to consider, indeed it is the grand point I am labouring under God the Spirit, teaching to impress upon his mind, that the resurrection of the just, (justified believers in Christ,) differs wholly from the ungodly, the unregenerate, and uncalled. The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth. John v. 28. But this is said to be effected on the graceless dead by the naked power of God, in hearing his voice. Not so, the members of Christ's mystical body. They arise from their union with Him, as a quickening spirit. And the Holy Ghost gives his further confirmation to it, by his servant Paul, when speaking to the Church, If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness; that is, the body not being renewed, because it was never intended while in the present time-state, when the spirit at regeneration is made holy in CHRIST, returns, at the time appointed, as a body of sin and death, to the dust of the earth, and there remains until the morning of the resurrection. But the spirit being life because of righteousness, that is, being one with Christ, and interested in Christ's righteousness: the body sleeps in Jesus, and is His by redemption also. And, therefore, the Holy Ghost adds by the Apostle: But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you. Rom. viii. 10, 11. The indwelling Spirit of Christ becomes the sole efficient cause of raising the body from the grave of death at the resurrection, as the Spirit of Christ became the sole efficient cause of raising the soul from the grave of sin at regeneration. I hope that I have explained myself to the Reader's apprehension, on this most soul comforting subject, and from those precious scriptures of God, very fully shewn, the sweetness of that glorious office-character of Christ, as it concerns his people, that as Paul hath here said, the last Adam is a quickening Spirit.

Secondly. It is another grand point in the doctrine of the resurrection to have in view, and, under divine teaching, always to keep in remembrance, and live in the enjoyment of, that the bodies of believers will arise the same identical bodies as they go down to the grave. As Christ arose the very same body as was put into the sepulchre, so shall his people. As was the Head, so must be the members. Job was taught this precious truth, and rejoiced in it. ages before redemption-work was accomplished: Job xix. 25-27. And Paul most decidedly confirms the same, when saying, this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Indeed, on the supposition that this was not the case, the doctrine of the resurrection would be lost. If the Lord gave to his people a new body, this would not be resurrection, but a creation. And in this sense, what is become of the mystical body of Christ? Wonderfully changed it will be indeed, and prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of God in glory. So Paul describes. And blessed be God, so we shall find it. It will be no longer the subject of sin, and sorrow, and temptation, and evil. It was sown a natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body. And, as spirits are not liable to bodily infirmities, all the cares and disquietudes to which our flesh is heir, in this mortal state, will be known and felt no more. But, identity will be preserved. The very person that I now am, and that You now are, will be then the same. The hand that is writing those humble lines of the Poor Man's Commentary, and the eye that reads them, or the ear that hears them, will be the same. Changed from weakness to power, and from dishonor to glory, we shall be but, personally, the very beings we now are. Jesus will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Phil. iii. 21.

I must detain the Reader no longer. But may the Lond the Holy Ghost lead every truly called, and regenerated believer into an

heartfelt enjoyment of these soul-refreshing things. In the blessed expectation of it, we may all cry out with Job; O hide me in the grave, and keep me secret till the set time, and remember me! All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Job xiv. 13, 14.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not

all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption,

and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O Death, where is thy sting? O grave,

where is thy victory.

56 The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the

victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

What the Apostle calls a mystery, must be understood, that it is in itself never to have been known without an immediate revelation, being not discoverable by the light of nature, or human intellect, And, indeed, what Paul hath here said, is such a mystery, as no other part even of scripture hath revealed. That some may be living upon earth at the great day of account, might have been supposed. This the Apostle elsewhere asserts. I Thes. iv. 17. But the miraculous and instantaneous change from mortality to immortality, which he here asserts, and which is to be wrought without passing through death, this is a mystery no where else spoken of. Reader! You and I find unceasing cause to bless God for Paul's ministry. Where, and when, the Lord taught him this, whether when caught up to the third heaven, or in any of the other visions he was favored with, is

not so material for us to know, as to have received his testimony, as the Lord commissioned him to deliver.

The song of triumph with which Paul closes this most blessed chapter, is what all true believers in Christ, with equal joy, are called upon to join in. And while we sing them, because all our triumphs are in Christ, let no one forget that they are the Lord's own words, proclaimed in a way of Covenant promise, and which Paul, taught of the Lord, hath converted into an hymn of praise, as God's promises in Christ, which are all yea and Amen, should be. See Hosea xiii. 14. Oh! for grace to join the holy song. Christ hath destroyed death by his death. He hath taken out the sting of death, which is sin, by taking it away, and healing the wounds of sin by his blood. Acquitted now, there can be no condemnation then. When a redeemed believer dies, he dies in Christ, and to Christ, and is one with Christ. Jesus speaks: Fear not, I have the keys of hell and of death. Amen. Rev. i. 18.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! thou that art the resurrection and the life! Hail! thou glorious Almighty LORD JESUS! Thou hast, indeed, declared thyself to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by thy resurrection from the dead. And thou hast thereby shewn to the fullest demonstration, that in thy life thy people live, and by thy resurrection their's also is secured, thyself becoming the first fruits of them that slept. Praises to thy great and glorious name! Sin is now pardoned. Justice is now satisfied. Law is now fulfilled. Satan conquered. Hell subdued, and heaven open to all believers!

Oh! ye faithful in Christ! rejoice in hope of the glory of God! Death hath no longer a sting; the passage through the grave is but the valley of the shadow of death, for the substance is done away. Christ hath perfumed the grave with his holy body. It is no longer the territories of the devil, but the chamber of rest to the Lord's people. From thence, clear views are now seen of the city of the living God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us unto this lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! Blessed be God the Son, who is the resurrection and life of his people. And blessed be God the Holy Ghost, who by the washing of regeneration, which he hath shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior, hath made us partakers of the divine nature, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life! Amen and Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this Chapter. Several very earnest Admonitions are given, which are followed up with Salutations to the Church.

NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall

go with me.

It will not be necessary to offer much observation on what the Apostle recommends in collecting for the poor. Every Church, like Corinth, hath the poor among them, for the LORD hath said, they shall never cease out of the land. And the Lord commands the hand to be opened wide to his poor. And when the Lord gives a wide hand, and a wide heart together, there will need nothing more to enforce collections. Deut. xv. 11. Zephan. iii. 12. There is somewhat very sweet and seasonable in the exercise of tenderness and compassion to the Lord's poor, as the Lord's poor every day, but eminently more so on the LORD's day. On that day we give a truce to all worldly cares, and are concerned, or supposed to be concerned only, for the one thing needful. Sweet day! which commemorates all in one, the Lord's rest from the works of creation, the resurrection of Jesus, and the first descent of the Holy Ghost, in the open display of his Person at the feast of Pentecost. What day so suited for the heart to be flowing with love to our poorer brethren, as when we celebrate Jehovah's love to us, in his threefold character of Person, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, as manifested in creation, redemption, grace, and glory?

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia; for I do pass through Macedonia.

6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry awhile with you, if the Lord permit.

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

9 For a great door and effectual is open unto me, and there are many adversaries.

10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be

with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.

11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

When we read this account of the Apostle, respecting his ministry to Ephesus, and which is recorded, Acts xix. it should seem that Paul had strong views of the Lord blessing his ministry there. It was, indeed, a great door, and an effectual one, which was opened unto him; and, as he foresaw, so he found, many adversaries. De+ metrius and the craftsmen greatly opposed him. Perhaps Paul alluded to those transactions, when he compared his conflicts to that of fighting with beasts at Ephesus. 1 Cor. xv. 32. See Acts xix. 20. Reader! You and I, yea, the Church of God in all ages, have reason to bless the Lord for Paul's acquaintance with the Ephesians. That blessed Epistle, which, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he sent to the Church at Ephesus, and which is handed down to us, arose out of Paul's ministry there.

Of Timothy and Apollos, we need not enlarge in observations concerning them. Paul's Epistles to the former of them, will engage our notice, when we come to our Poor Man's Commentary on those Scriptures. And the latter hath been already brought before us, in all that is said of him, Acts xviii. and I Cor. i. 12. and iii. 4, 5, 6.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you you like men, be strong.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to

every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and your's:

therefore acknowledge ye them that are such,

3 P 2

There is somewhat truly interesting in this short, but striking exhortation of the Apostle. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Paul doth not simply look to them, or teach them to look to themselves; as if either, or the whole of these Christian graces were of their own procuring, or depended upon their own strength to make effectual. The exhortation is more like the Prophet on the watch-tower, directing them to be on the look-out for the daily, hourly, minutely manifestations of the Lord's grace, to be made perfect in human weakness; that, in a consciousness of their nothingness, they might be made strong in the Lord, and in the

power of his might. Ephes. vi. 10.

I never can say enough to myself, neither to the Reader of this humble work, on the subject of this watchfulness, and the standing fast in the faith, and the like. Stedfastness in faith is not so well understood as its importance demands. We are everlastingly looking for it in ourselves, and in our own attainments; whereas the Scriptures are uniformly teaching us it can be only found in the LORD. That precious child of God, be who he may, can only be said to be stedfast in faith, when counting the state of grace in which he stands, he forms his conclusions, not from what he feels in himself, but from what Christ is. Not from what hath passed in him, but from what hath passed for him, in the council of peace before all worlds, and from Christ's suretyship engagements and fulfilments for his Church and people in time. A child of God may sometimes be enlarged. and sometimes straitened, sometimes in the mount, and sometimes in the valley. But neither of these states becomes the standard to judge by of his interest in Christ. I will be free to confess, that it is comfortable, as it is our privilege, to be always rejoicing in hope of the glory of GoD; yet, the hope and the glory of GoD do not depend upon our rejoicing sense of them. Paul meant somewhat more than the mere accommodation of the body, when he said, I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Philip. iv. 12. It is blessed to be strong and stedfast in the faith, when things are dark and discouraging, and to trust Christ and his promises, when the way to the accomplishment of those promises we cannot see through.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¶ The first *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Stephanas and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus.

It would have been unnecessary to have dwelt upon the salutations with which the Apostle closeth his Epistle; every one knoweth how very decided a part they form in Christian fellowship and communion. But we have in this paragraph, with which the Apostle takes leave of the Church in this first Epistle, an expression which we meet with in no other part of the word of God, but which Paul delivers in a kind of denunciation which demands our attention. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha. In order for the right apprehension of the words, it should be considered what they mean, and to whom they are applicable.

As to their meaning, it should seem to have been a form made use of by the Jews, when they intended to express somewhat more than ordinarily severe, to say, let him be anathema maran-atha, that is, let the Lord determine his punishment, for we cannot, his crime is so great and heavy. The Jews had a word for excommunicaion, namely, Cherem, which implied a total separation for ever from all hopes of recovery, and such as was never used, but to imply the being devoted to eternal wrath. This word corresponded to the expression here used by Paul of anathematizing. And in application to the persons the Apostle had in view, the sense is, that, if any lived and died without being regenerated, and, consequently, not loving Christ, because a state of nature in the carnal mind, is enmity against God, he was of necessity in this state, and, as such, is justly exposed to everlasting wrath. And, if Paul used the expression as the Jews used it, then it would follow, that by it, the Apostle left the nature and degree of punishment to the Lord. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha!

But, in reference to modern times, it may not be amiss to ask to whom the words are applicable? There may be, indeed there must be, multitudes among the unawakened and prophane, of whom it may be truly said, they do not at present love the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet such a sentence cannot be passed upon them. What numbers are there of the Lord's own people which are now in nature's darkness, who, therefore, love not the Lord; but yet from belonging to the LORD, when the fulness of the time is come, and God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their heart, they will cry Abba! Father! Now, the anathema, maran-atha can never belong to them. Neither, if during the time of their unregeneracy, they should grievously afflict, and persecute the Church of God, as Paul himself did, while in a state of unconversion; yet, as in these instances, the LORD is shewing forth all long-suffering, and all the while, though persecuting Christ in his members, they themselves are the unconscious members also of Christ's body; here can be no anathema pronounced against them!

Reader! there is a case, however, of great clearness, in which the faithful cannot err, and you and I may, (and we ought indeed,) try our faith and love to the Lord Jesus by the standard. Supposing we see and know any one person or persons living and dying in an hatred to Christ, and supposing this person is near and dear to us in the tyes of nature, while full of malignity, in respect to the doctrines of grace; can we join the Apostle? Can we say of such as Paul did: If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be an anathema maran-atha! here is the trial of faith and love!

Sweetly the Apostle concludes his Epistle, as we have cause to conclude every day and night, every deed and prayer, ordinance and service; the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and our love in

CHRIST JESUS be with all his people. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us not take leave of this beautiful, and blessed Epistle of the Apostle, without first praising the Lord the Holy Ghost for so precious a portion of inspired truths, and thanking Him

for the services and ministry of it by so faithful a servant.

And, while we both look up to the Great Author of his Holy Word, for his divine teachings to accompany our perusal of the whole contents of it, as often as we are favored with the opportunity, let us, as we pass on from chapter to chapter, be everlastingly on the look-out for Him whom Paul preached, and whom Paul determined to know nothing beside; even Jesus Christ, and him glorified; the sent of God, the Lamb of God, the word of God, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, for salvation to every one that believeth; yea, Jehovah's One, and only One plan of mercy, in the joint love of the Holy Three in One; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.

Farewell Paul! for the present! We bless thy Lord, and our Lord, for having counted thee faithful, putting thee into the ministry. May the Lord render thy services yet blessed, as the Lord hath in the ages past, and in the present hour, so on to thousands yet unborn. Oh! may the Lord commission those sweet and sacred Epistles to the edification and establishment of the Church upon earth, as long as time shall remain, until the whole redeemed of the Lord

are brought home to join the Church in heaven. Amen.