

THE  
 FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
 TO  
 TIMOTHY.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE here enter upon the further labors of the Apostle *Paul*. The foregoing Epistles were all directed to the Churches. This, and the second Epistle, together with the two following, to *Titus* and *Philemon*, are to persons. But the subject matter of the whole is the same. All *Paul's* preachings, writings, and ministry, treat of nothing but CHRIST. CHRIST is *Paul's* text, sermon, and application.

*Timothy*, to whom *Paul* here writes, was of jewish descent by the mother's side, but his father was a *Greek*. It was *Timothy's* mercy, that he had been early taught the Scriptures. And the LORD, in his providence, brought him under the Gospel while a youth. In the Acts of the Apostles we meet with the first account of him at *Lystra*. After which we read frequently of him as *Paul's* companion.

The subject of this Epistle need not further be noticed in this place. We shall discover the Apostle's design, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, as we prosecute the several chapters. It is said to have been written by the Apostle at *Laodicea*, and, probably, about the year 55, though some place it later. However, it carries with it marks of divine inspiration. I only detain the Reader in begging of him to enter upon the perusal with me in prayer, that the same Almighty LORD, which hath graciously given us this sweet Scripture, will as graciously give us the understanding heart to apprehend his merciful instructions in it, that it may be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that as the children of GOD, we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

## CHAPTER I.

## CONTENTS.

*The Apostle opens his Epistle with the usual Salutation. He reminds Timothy of the Truth. He speaks very blessedly of the LORD's Grace, and the exceeding Abundance of it in his Conversion.*

**P**AUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is our hope.*

2 Unto Timothy, *my own son in the faith:* Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

I think it not improper to observe to the Reader, that, notwithstanding *Paul* was well known to *Timothy*, yet he reminds this youth of his Apostolic authority. His first miraculous call by CHRIST; Acts ix. 3, &c. his after ordination by the HOLY GHOST; Acts xiii. 1—5, and the revelation GOD the FATHER made of his dear SON in *Paul*, that he might preach CHRIST, these things he would not lose sight of. Gal. i. 15, 16. And I beg to observe in *Paul's* address to *Timothy* in these verses, another thing, which I also think not improper to remark, namely, in calling *Timothy his own son in the faith*. From whence some have concluded, *Paul* meant to say, that he was his *spiritual father*. But, notwithstanding the very great fondness which some have to this title, certain it is, *Paul* never used it himself. It is well known that *Timothy* was no relation to *Paul* after the *flesh*, his father being a Greek, and his mother a Jewess. Acts xvi. 1. And it is as certain, that *Timothy* was not *spiritually* related, if there be such a thing, (which I much doubt,) to the Apostle by conversion, for he was well reported of by the brethren that were at *Lystra* and *Iconium*, before *Paul* had ever seen him. Acts xvi. 2. So that *Paul* calling him his own son after the faith, certainly had no allusion to this subject, for he was not, in this sense, his *spiritual father*. This title hath given great occasion to indulge spiritual pride with many in the Church of GOD, and the enemy of souls, who well knows the weak and vulnerable parts of our nature, hath, in numberless instances, made an handle of it, to induce very unbecoming things being said in the Church. What the Apostle meant by naming those he called *children*, and of having begotten them to the Gospel by his instrumentality, I would not presume to speak decidedly upon. But one thing I do venture to believe, the Apostle never meant from it, that in the succeeding ages of the Church, any should arrogate to themselves, under cover of his example, such titles. The places in Scripture where this subject is in the least hinted at are but few, and those, if examined closely, may, perhaps, without violence, be construed to a different meaning. 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15. 2 Cor. xii. 14. Gal. iv. 19. 1 Thess. ii. 11. Titus i. 4. Philem. 10. But it shocks the mind, when we hear from pulpits, and read in sermons, and behold in inscriptions on tomb-

stones of ministers, those sacred words of the Prophet, in allusion to CHRIST, and which, as the HOLY GHOST hath himself explained, can belong to no other, as if to be spoken by such worms of the earth at the last day; *Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me.* Isaiah viii. 18. Heb. ii. 13. Supposing every thing that can be supposed in favor of this spiritual name, as relating to *Paul* and his ministry, would any man that considers his miraculous conversion, ordination, and the visions of God given him, take from such an instance confidence to call their ministry in the word by such a term? And is it not to be apprehended, by the very common use made of it in these modern times, that many have called themselves spiritual fathers, in the supposed conversion of others, concerning whom great doubts may be entertained whether they were ever converted themselves? But here I leave the subject.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith: *so do.*

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers;

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

I consider what the Apostle hath here said on the subject of the law, to be one of the most decisive and unanswerable determinations, (and from inspiration itself,) which ever hath been, or can be given, to quiet the minds of the faithful respecting it. And sure I am, if it were attended to, under the divine teaching, it would put an end to all the disputes with which the people of God have been disturbed on the point, by the vain arguments and reasonings of men. A moment's attention will place the Apostle's statement of the subject, concerning the law, in a clear light.

*First.* The Apostle sets down the great excellency of the law, as it is in itself. *We know, (saith he,) that the law is good.* And the holiness, perfection, and everlasting blessedness of all that is good, confirms every tittle of the law. *Sooner, saith CHRIST, shall heaven and earth pass, than one tittle of it to fail.* Luke xvi. 17. The law is the very transcript of the mind of God. And, therefore, when CHRIST came in the purity of his nature to fulfil the law, he sums up the infinite blessedness of it in these words: *I delight to do thy will, O my GOD; yea, thy law is within my heart;* or, as the margin of the Bible renders it, *in the midst of my bowels;* meaning, that his whole human nature was formed in the perfect holiness of it, and wrapped up in it. Psm. xl. 8. Seen in this point of view, how truly blessed is it! Well might Paul say, *we know that the law is good!*

*Secondly.* Paul qualifies the character of the law, as it relates to a poor sinner who hath broken the whole of it, by adding, *that it is good, if a man use it lawfully.* That is, if in a conscious sense of the infinite purity of the law itself, and its demands of unsinning obedience, with condemnation to every son and daughter of Adam who breaks it, we so use it, as those who are conscious of having sinned, and come short of God's glory, we lay hold of CHRIST, as *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* In this sense the law is good indeed, and this is to use it lawfully. For by CHRIST's perfect obedience to the whole law, in our room and stead, and as the Head of his body the Church, we are accepted as holy in him. And this comes up to what the LORD said by the Prophet; *Surely shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Isaiah xlv. 24, 25.

*Thirdly.* The Apostle next proceeds to define the purposes of the law. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man. The law, which was delivered on Mount Sinai, the HOLY GHOST informs the Church, was added because of transgressions.* Gal. iii. 19. And Paul, in his own experience, declares, *that he should not have known sin but by the law; for he should not have known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* Rom. vii. 7. Hence we learn, that as from the fall of the first man, none was righteous before God, the law was designed to teach sinners God's holiness, and their total depravity. And this became a blessed way to set forth the holiness of the God-man CHRIST JESUS, who only could, and did, obey the whole law of God. And how blessedly in him is seen, that all his seed are considered righteous and holy before God.

*Fourthly.* The Apostle closeth this part of the subject, with shewing for whom the law was made, and whom it universally condemns, being out of CHRIST. And a melancholy catalogue it forms! The law against all such stands unrepealed, unalterable, and everlastingly fixed. And in confirmation, *Paul* adds, *according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God!* Reader! ponder the vast subject. Behold! how universally condemning the law is against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men! See, the only possible safety from its condemnation is in CHRIST! Call to mind that every man by nature is in this state of condemnation, until called by sovereign grace! And when you have duly pondered the subject, and heard the unalterable sentence of all that live and die in the unregenerated state of the unrenewed mind, then ask your heart whether you yourself, personally considered, are interested in the blessed deliverance from it, which *Paul* describes: *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.* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Every word, more or less, in this account, *Paul* gives of his conversion, and the LORD's abundant grace, yea, exceeding abundant grace, as *Paul* calls it, in this sovereign display of love, is so full of instruction, that I do hope my Reader will not be offended if I call his attention to some of the leading particulars *Paul* dwells upon, as they affected his own mind. It is evident God the HOLY GHOST was pleased, that again and again the Church should

be refreshed with the history. And sure I am no child of God can attend to it too often. I refer the Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary* to what hath been already offered to his meditation, on the LORD's compelling Kings, and the Gentile Court, in the case of *Agrippa*, to hear *Paul* rehearse it; see Acts xxvi. 23. and Commentary; and also before the Sanhedrim and the court of the Jews. Acts xxii. 21. When the Reader hath turned to those Scriptures, and pondered that part of the subject, I beg his attention to some other observations which arise from the Scripture before us, in *Paul's* relation of the same wonderful work of his conversion to his beloved *Timothy*.

And, *first*. Let the Reader remark the view *Paul* had of the divine mercy shewn him, in putting him into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious. He evidently alludes here to the awful conduct he was pursuing at the time of his conversion. *Paul* seems to intimate, that as there is a fulness of the iniquity of the *Amorite*, before which measure is filled, there is no ripeness for destruction, Gen. xv. 16. so there is a fulness of transgression, which the LORD's chosen ones heap up, in the *Adam*-nature of their fallen-state, before the time of their conversion arrives; the recovery from which tends to heighten to their astonished view, as they look back upon the past, the LORD's long-suffering, and their heights of daring rebellion. In the instance of *Paul*, he called to mind how he had, by his cruelties, compelled the saints of God to blaspheme; and which seemed to have wrought upon his mind, in the recollection, the bitterest part of his desperately wicked provocations. Reader! observe to what length, God's chosen ones run in offences! And observe in the midst of all, when sinning with an high hand, how the LORD still is watching over them, and, in spite of all hell's temptations, keeping them from the unpardonable sin! Oh! the wonders of grace! What a subject of this nature will be to be opened, in every child of God's life, when we come into eternity?

*Secondly*. Let the Reader observe, what the Apostle saith of his obtaining mercy, *because he did it ignorantly in unbelief*. *Paul* did not mean that this was the cause for which the LORD called him; or for which the LORD pardoned him. His call was, as the LORD told *Ananias*: because he was a *chosen vessel*; and from everlasting had been appointed to bear testimony for CHRIST, before Jew and Gentile. Acts ix. 15. Neither was his ignorance the least excuse for his blasphemy, or for the persecution he manifested, to the poor saints of CHRIST. And *Paul* plainly testifieth, that he did not conceive his ignorance pleaded excuse; for, in this very account, he declares himself to be the chief of sinners. And how could he be supposed obtaining mercy for ignorance which was *determined* ignorance? It is plain, that he heard the wisdom of *Stephen*, and could not resist the spirit by which he spake; though he was among the first of them that stoned him. Acts vi. 10. But the whole is designed to shew, in *Paul's* instance, the desperately wicked state of the unregenerate while in nature; to enhance the sovereignty of Almighty grace in the recovery. From both which, it is plain, that the chosen vessels of God are, by nature, and by practice, in the same awful circumstances, as the whole *Adam*-race, all alike *dead in trespasses and sins*.

*Thirdly*, The time of *Paul's* conversion was a circumstance which in his view tended to heighten still more the unspeakable mercy; and made it, what *Paul* called it, *the exceeding abundant grace of the LORD*. It was in the very moment when he was hot in the pursuit of the blood of the saints. Like a savage beast of prey, he was breathing out nothing but threatenings and slaughter against the saints of the LORD. Acts ix. 1. The LORD met him, as in the field of battle, and unhorsed him in a moment. And, no doubt, many a time after this, as often as *Paul* thought of it, his only astonishment was, that the LORD, who struck him to the ground, had not struck him at once into hell. If it be asked, wherefore such forbearance? The LORD himself answered *Ananias*, when he expressed the same wonder. *He is a chosen vessel* (said the LORD) *unto me*. Reader! do you know any thing of sovereign grace? If so: say, how was you employed when the LORD called you? If not persecuting as *Paul* was, the Church of GOD; yet prosecuting at least the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of an unawakened mind. Oh! what a source of soul-feeling doth the recollection of our ill, and hell-deservings, when the LORD first manifested his grace in conversion, open to all the after reviews of life? And what a spring of true repentance, causing the tears to fall, when we look back, and behold ourselves cast out like the infant to perish, and *JESUS passing by, and bidding us in our blood, live?* Ezek. xvi. 6.

*Fourthly*. What a blessed conclusion the HOLY GHOST taught *Paul* to make, from his conversion, for the instruction of others; when, under the full impression, in the review he cried out: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*. Worthy indeed, in every point of view! Worthy, as the gift of GOD; the price of CHRIST's blood; the effectual application of it by the SPIRIT. And it becomes the highest testimony of divine faithfulness; because in it GOD proves himself the faithful GOD, being faithful to his Covenant promises in CHRIST, to a thousand generations. And let not the Reader overlook what a stress *Paul* lays upon that proof of divine faithfulness, for all acceptation in that, even to him, the chief of sinners, that faithfulness had been shewn. There is somewhat very sweet in this. *Paul* saith, that he is chief of sinners; by which he meant, in greatness; and in the aggravated circumstances of his sins, against the Person of CHRIST. I beg the Reader to mark this with peculiar notice. *Paul* takes no count of his morality, and the strict observance of the *Pharisee*. All these sunk to nothing in his view. But his daring opposition to the Person and Gospel of CHRIST, made him so odious to himself, that he beheld himself as the chief of sinners. And, in consequence, he always considered himself as such to the close of life. He wrote this Epistle to *Timothy* towards the end of his ministry; and we see he still retained this view of himself. He doth not say, *I was*, but *I am*, the chief of sinners.

One word more. Let not the Reader overlook the cause *Paul* assigns, for this abundant mercy, shewn him: that in me, said *Paul*, first, *JESUS CHRIST might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*. As

if the Apostle had said, who shall ever despond, or despair of obtaining pardon, and peace in the blood of the cross, whose heart is broken for sin, while beholding *Paul* the persecutor, the blasphemers, and injurious; brought into the grace of Jesus? In this first, and greatest of all examples, what God can, and will do; and what, through the gracious work of God the SPIRIT on the heart, CHRIST'S blood and righteousness can, and doth accomplish; the vilest of the vile may be encouraged! Blessed be God the HOLY GHOST, for causing so illustrious an instance of the sovereignty of Almighty grace, to be recorded, and handed down, through all ages, to the present time, in the Church of God!

Largely as I have trespassed, the case is too interesting to be dismissed, without closing it with an observation or two more. *Paul* could not fold it up, without ascribing honor and glory, for ever and ever, to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God: that is, to the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, whom all along, in all *Paul's* writings and preachings, he considered, as the united source of all his mercy, in CHRIST. And such must every child of God, who can, and doth discover, tokens of regenerating, and converting grace, in his own history. And there is somewhat striking in the circumstances of every man's conversion, when duly considered, which comes home in characters special, and peculiar, to endeavor, and recommend it personally to every heart. And though it may not, for it is not necessary it should, be attended with similar circumstances, like those of *Paul*; yet, in all instances, the LORD'S distinguishing love-tokens may be seen in every particular.

Reader! let it be supposed an *early conversion* of the heart to God, while in youth. Oh! what a mercy is it, when, like this *Timothy*, it may be said, that from a child, the regenerated soul hath known the holy scriptures. And to whom the LORD saith, as to Israel of old: *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; when thou wentest after me in a wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* Jerem. ii. 2. And suppose a *later conversion* is appointed, which, like *Paul*, or like the thief on the cross at the eleventh hour, think what abounding mercy, where there had been long abounding sin!

There are also special manifestations, which the LORD sheweth in seasons of conversion, not only in making known the grace itself, but in the manner of its work. *Some*, like *Paul*, lay days in the pangs of the new-birth; while *others*, like *Lydia*, the LORD at once opens the heart, to attend to the truths of salvation. God is a sovereign, and Almighty Agent, and worketh after the counsel of his own will. Some precious souls, have had so easy a transition, from the death of sin, to the new life in righteousness; that when comparing their call of God with that of others, they have been tempted at times to question the reality of it. But the HOLY GHOST hath given the Church by *Paul*, an infallible testimony, to ascertain every man's election, and call, by the effects which follow. See 1 Thess. i. 4, and Commentary. And so far is an early, and an effectual call, from becoming questionable, when the blessed consequences of the new-birth appear, by the actions of the new-life; that it carries with it, sweet testimonies of divine love. The call of *Matthew*, was of this kind; and the LORD JESUS had so marked it: *Mat. ix. 9—13.*



Such *Zaccheus*; Luke xix 1—10. Such the *Philippians*; Philip. i. 5. And such is the blessed variety by which the LORD calls his own, that perhaps, there are scarcely two cases exactly alike. Oh! what a subject of divine love would it open, if all the courtings, and wooings of JESUS, by his HOLY SPIRIT, were made known, by which he wins over the affections to himself, when God the SPIRIT hath quickened the sinner which was before *dead in trespasses and sins*! Say, dear LORD! how didst thou work upon my stony heart, the hardest sure, ever wrought upon, when thou didst make me *willing, in the day of thy power*?

18 This charge I commit unto thee son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.

20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

*Paul* having, in the recollection of his wonderful conversion, in some measure departed from the subject he was before speaking of, concerning the law, and the Gospel, (verses 8—11.) now returns to it, and gives charge to his beloved *Timothy*, how he should preach CHRIST, and CHRIST only, agreeably to the prophecies, which *Timothy*, who had been taught in them, well understood, as referring to CHRIST. And he points to the strong assurances of faith, and a good conscience, both GOD the SPIRIT'S gift; which some who have made a profession, but who never felt the power, had relinquished. Reader! what a beautiful distinction this forms, (and I take occasion by the way to remark it,) between the blessed work of GOD the SPIRIT in regeneration, from whence come faith and a good conscience; and the mere profession of CHRIST, taken up for the moment, from hearsay, not heart-felt knowledge, and put down again from the same cause!

This *Hymeneus* is the same as spoken of 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. And *Alexander* is most likely to be the Copper-smith. 2 Tim. iv. 14. *Paul's* delivery of them to *Satan*, seems to have been for correction. We have a similar passage, 1 Cor. v. 5. to the notes on which I refer.

#### REFLECTIONS.

READER! the more we traverse the inspired writings of this great Apostle, the more we find cause to bless GOD for his ministry. What affection he here manifests, to the Church of CHRIST! What love to *Timothy*, as a minister in the Church! What earnestness he expresseth, that he should be found faithful! And what delight he

takes, to go over again and again, the wonderful story of his conversion! No expressions can he find, sufficiently humbling, to set forth his own worthlessness: neither any sufficiently exalted, to praise the riches of God's grace. Surely the HOLY GHOST intended, from the frequency of this record to be brought before the Church, to shew poor sinners, that no state is too polluted, no life of sin too abandoned, to be out of the reach of CHRIST's blood. Yes! *Paul!* thou art indeed a pattern of the exceeding riches of grace; yea, and abundant grace, to all that hereafter believe on the LORD JESUS to everlasting life. Oh! blessed JESUS! enable me in thy strength to hold faith, and a good conscience, in thee; and daily to cry out with *Paul!* Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, for ever, and ever. Amen.

## CHAP. II.

### CONTENTS.

*The Apostle is prosecuting the Subject of his Advice to Timothy, in this Chapter. He exhorts, that Prayers be made, that Women be adorned with plain Apparel. He closeth with a sweet Promise.*

**I** Exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

We shall do well to observe, what the HOLY GHOST hath here commanded by *Paul*, on the subject of prayer. It is for *all men*. By which we learn, what is here meant, by praying for all, in this indiscriminate manner. The passage indeed explains itself: *that we may lead a quiet, and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.* It is simply for *temporal* things; similar to what GOD commanded the Prophet on the subject of prayer, when the Church was going into captivity. *Seek the peace of the city, (saith the LORD,) whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.* Jerem. xxix. 7. And the close of this paragraph, becomes a further confirmation. *For this is good, and acceptable, in the sight of GOD our SAVIOR; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* What saving is this, which GOD our SAVIOR is said, that he would have all men to have? Not salvation surely. For if so,

how comes it to pass, that all are not saved; or that any is lost. The loss of a single soul, if this were the sense of the passage, would prove, that what GOD willed, came not to pass. And this would throw down all GOD's divine attributes. But, if the words be interpreted by what went before, in allusion to *temporal* safety; then it follows, that our prayers for *all men*, while having an eye only to their *temporal* prosperity, are in perfect agreement, with all men having *temporal* safety in CHRIST: and which CHRIST, as the Maker, and Upholder of all things, is the sole cause of. See Chap. iv. 10. and Commentary.

Reader! I take occasion from this passage, to offer a short observation on prayer, which I conceive to be of no small importance, to regard, in our spiritual life. I mean, in always confining our petitions in prayer for spiritual blessings, to the Church; in conformity to the pattern of CHRIST. *I pray not for the world,* (said JESUS,) *but for them which thou hast given me.* John xvii. 9. It is certainly most suitable, and becoming in the Church, and every individual of the Church, to follow CHRIST's example in this, as well as upon every other occasion which is imitable. As we know not who are, or who are not, the members of CHRIST's body, in numberless cases, we cannot often speak of persons as JESUS did; yet, we shall still follow the LORD's steps in this particular in prayer, if we always qualify our petitions for spiritual blessings for any, with subjoining: If it be the LORD's holy will and pleasure. A child of GOD, when seeking grace for his family, for his little ones, and bringing them to ordinances with this view, to present them before the LORD, for his blessing; will not err, as long as he asketh, all he asketh for them, with this gratifying clause: *If it be thy holy will.* It was thus the people brought their sick and diseased to the LORD JESUS, in the days of his flesh; beseeching him that they might only *touch the hem of his garment.* Mark vi. 55, 56. And if we do the same now, in the day of CHRIST's power; here we ought to rest. And, if the LORD gives a spirit of prayer for them; it is a blessed hope, that the LORD will answer it in mercy. Further we cannot presume, neither to be wise above what is written, or to dictate to the LORD of his doings.

5 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and lie not*;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

Every portion in these verses is important, and merits our special attention. When *Paul* here speaks of One GOD, in allusion to the unity of his divine nature, and essence, he evidently is speaking of that unity, as manifested to the Church, in the Covenant transactions of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; by way of shewing the unity of design, in all the grace shewn the Church, from the HOLY THREE IN ONE. And hence, having declared this oneness in GOD,

both in his nature, and purposes; the Apostle immediately adds: *and one Mediator between God and men; the Man CHRIST JESUS*. I admire the Apostle's manner of expression, on this subject. He first sets down the unity, both of the essence, and of the grace, in relation to Covenant-settlements in the divine nature, as existing in a plurality of Persons: One in nature, and one in design. He then introduceth Him, by whose mediation alone, (for he expressly calls him One Mediator, because, in fact, there could be no other;) the purposes of this Covenant, could only be transacted. And, while the very nature of his Office implied his GODHEAD; the Apostle no less took care to express his manhood; and therefore, calls him *the Man CHRIST JESUS*. As both the Person of CHRIST, and the office of CHRIST, as Mediator, are points of infinite consequence, for the Reader to have a clear apprehension concerning, he will not be displeas'd, if I consider the subject somewhat more particularly.

The very idea of mediation, carries with it the conviction, that some breach must have existed, between two, or more parties, which, before this quarrel, had been in amity with each other. Such was the case between God and man, when CHRIST came forth, under this character, of Mediator. When at creation, *Adam* was first formed, we are told, that *God saw every thing which he had made, and behold it was very good*. Gen. i. 31. Consequently, there was perfect harmony at that time, between God and man. But, when *Adam* fell by transgression, a deadly breach took place. And CHRIST, as God and man in one Person, could be the only Mediator, to make it up. How CHRIST accomplished it, is not in this place so much dwelt upon, for this is fully set forth in other parts of scripture. But the Apostle is here chiefly adverting to his Person, and his office, as Mediator. A few words on each, will serve, under the LORD's teaching, to set the matter in a clear light. The LORD graciously instruct both Writer and Reader.

A Mediator, to bring about a reconciliation between parties so dissimilar, as an holy GOD, and unholy man; must be supposed, in the very nature of things, to possess abilities of a very peculiar kind, and such as but for the wonderful, and mysterious union, of GOD and man in one Person, never could have been found. He, that undertook to make up the awful breach, which sin had made, between GOD and man; must know, what was suitable to the dignity of GOD to receive; and what corresponded to the nature of man to offer. And, as in the *latter* instance, it was evident in the first face of things, that man had nothing in himself to offer, but by a substitute, which CHRIST in his human nature could only accomplish: so in the *former*, none but GOD, who knew what sin is, and what became suitable for GOD to receive, could form any one conception whatever, of the plan, by which peace might be obtained; and, therefore, CHRIST in his divine nature, could only be competent, both to the knowledge, and to the accomplishment. And such, therefore, is CHRIST: GOD and Man in one Person. And, of all subjects upon earth, as connected with our redemption, this is the most blessed, and consolatory. He, that undertook to mediate peace by the blood of his cross: and He alone, by partaking of both natures, GOD and man, became, what *Job* so ardently longed to behold, a proper *Days-man*, as the Patriarch called him, that could *lay his hand upon*

*both parties.* Job ix. 33. He, and He alone, *the man* God's fellow, as GOD himself called him, became the only One, competent to the arduous work. Zech. xiii. 7. And oh! what grace, love, mercy, tenderness, wisdom, and compassion, are all manifested, in the high undertaking?

In this office of mediation, it behoveth him, who acted in this high character of Mediator, to do justice to God; and yet, to do it in such a way, and manner, as should be not ruinous to man. And this, the LORD JESUS accomplished, in becoming the sinner's Surety; whereby, in his obedience and death, he did more to glorify God, than could have been done by the punishment of man, to all eternity. Hence, his GODHEAD not only furnished ability, for the performance of both, but stamped upon both an infinite value, which more than recompensed the injury done by man; and procured a redundancy of merit, for the everlasting happiness of man in the favor of God, which an whole eternity can never fully repay. And herein lay the blessedness of CHRIST, as GOD-Man-Mediator, the only possible One suited to the office. For had CHRIST not been God, the merit of his obedience could not have satisfied. In this case, there would not have been an Almighty power in him, to raise our nature from the ruins of the fall; neither, to have conquered sin and Satan, death and hell, by his personal victories; in the triumphs over which, our salvation was everlastingly concerned. And had CHRIST not been man, his obedience would not have been the obedience the law required; neither could he have made his soul an offering for sin. But now, by the union of both, in one Person, he hath manifested himself to have been the *One*, and the only One, all-sufficient, and all-glorious *Mediator, between God and man; the man* CHRIST JESUS. Heb. ii. 14.

Let the Reader next attend to what is said, of his *giving himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.* A wonderful expression! *Gave himself.* Not any costly offering; not gifts of gold, nor all the spices of the East: Not thousands of rams, nor ten thousands of rivers of oil. But himself. The HOLY GHOST lays great stress upon this precious word, *him* and *himself.* See Ephes. i. 10. Coloss. i. 20. Heb. i. 3. See Commentary. *A ransom for all.* Who are meant by all? Not surely all mankind. For in that case, all that is said of his elect Church, would be an unnecessary distinction. Besides, if all mankind are included in this ransom; then all must be everlastingly saved: and the final destruction of the ungodly, which scripture asserts, cannot take place. But the *all* for whom CHRIST gave himself a ransom, is explained in the latter part of the verse; those *who are testified of in due time:* that is, in whom God the SPIRIT regenerates, and witnesseth to their spirits, that *they are the sons of God.* Rom. viii. 14—16. Our LORD himself, when speaking of the subject of his giving himself a ransom, declares that it is for *many;* which is to the same purport. See Matt. xx. 28. And Paul takes up the same subject as his divine Master, through the whole of his preaching, when declaring himself an Apostle for this purpose, to be *a teacher of the Gentiles,* on those great points *in faith and verity.*

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.

I do not think it necessary to swell our pages by a Comment on what is so plain as to need none. I will only, therefore, detain the Reader to observe, on the latter part of this paragraph, a word or two, in relation to what is said of our first Parents. The question is, did the HOLY GHOST, by *Paul*, mean to throw the whole blame upon the Woman, being deceived; when it is said, *Adam* was not deceived? I confess I dare not speak decidedly upon it. But yet, I rather think, the man was the greater transgressor of the two. The Woman was deceived by the subtlety of the Serpent. But *Adam* was *not* deceived, the HOLY GHOST saith. And, as he sinned against light and knowledge; and chose to be involved with his wife in the ruin, rather than obey GOD; it should seem, that he was the most daring sinner. But, be this as it may, the sweet conclusion of promise, with which the Chapter ends, comes in to the relief of both, in a very gracious manner. *She shall be saved in child-bearing*; that is, not an absolute promise, that women of *faith*, and in the *love* of GOD, shall all be carried through the hour of nature's extremity, in the bearing of children; notwithstanding the sentence on the first woman, in the garden, for her transgression, that *in sorrow she should bring forth children*: Gen. iii. 16. for well we know, many a gracious woman hath died in that season. But the promise seems to be of a *spiritual* nature. And the child-bearing here spoken of, is of *Eve's* seed, even CHRIST: In the child-bearing of Him, shall she (and all of faith in CHRIST like her) be saved, notwithstanding the original, and actual transgressions, of herself, and all her children. This appears to me to be the meaning of the passage. *Eve* herself, personally considered, could have no other interest in the promise, than in this, or somewhat a similar spiritual sense, since she herself had been dead for ages before this promise was given.

## REFLECTIONS.

In the opening of this Chapter, we derive authority for the use of prayer, not only for the Church, but for the world: while the precept, which enjoins prayers for all men, plainly directs, to what the subject of those prayers should lead. And, while the Church becomes a blessing, as a dew from the Lord, in the midst of many people, to keep the whole community from consuming drought; the Church derives protection, in temporal quietness, from the prosperity of the nation where it dwells.

Blessed Mediator of thy people! Every renewed view of thee, is refreshing to the soul! LORD! let it be testified in due time, to all thy blood-bought children, the infinitely precious ransom, which thou hast given of thyself, to redeem them from all iniquity. And oh! let the sweet assurance of salvation, in the child-bearing, when our great *Emmanuel* was born of a woman, open an everlasting source of consolation, to all his faithful seed. And if it please our God, let all the faithful daughters of thy chosen generation, while partaking in the *Eve*-fruit of transgression, in passing through the hour of sorrow, partake also in this sweet promise in thee; and cause them by thy HOLY SPIRIT, to continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.

## CHAP. III.

## CONTENTS.

*The Apostle here enters upon the Subject of the Ministry. He shews how the Office should be sacredly observed: with their Connections. The Chapter closeth most blessedly, concerning the great Mystery of Godliness.*

**T**HIS is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous.

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without ; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre ;

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

10 And let these also first be proved ; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

11 Even so *must* their wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly :

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

I do not think it necessary, in a work of this kind, intended for *the poor in spirit*, and the humble in CHRIST'S flock ; and not likely to fall under the notice of the high in rank, and dignity ; the bishops, and shepherds of the fold ; to enter into an account of their offices. Indeed, the Apostle hath said all that can be necessary, on the subject. One point only I venture to remark, in what *Paul* hath here said ; namely, he calls the office of a bishop a *good work*. And a good work, or labor, it most assuredly is, if well followed. The close of the service will shew, that the highest, and the lowest office of the ministry of souls, is alike an accountable trust, where men will be answerable as servants, not as lords. Among men, it may be proper, to preserve distinctions of rank, and honor. But in the sight of God, these things lose their very name. Usefulness, diligence,



faithfulness, and honesty, are the qualifications then to be accounted for; and none else will stand the examination. It were well, if all who minister in holy things, of whatever rank they move up and down in, among men, were every day, before they enter upon their sacred function, or mingle in family duties, of reading the scriptures, and prayer; to read over in private, what *Paul* hath here marked down, from the inspiration of God the HOLY GHOST. This would serve, under the same Almighty Teacher's influence, to shew, how all ought to behave themselves in the house of God. That as CHRIST himself, is both the foundation, and pillar of his Church; so, his servants, which minister faithfully in his name, may be found as monumental pillars, bearing inscriptions, to his truth and glory.

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

What a rich cluster of mysteries is here! All blessedly hanging together, like some large bunch of the richest grapes, on the most luxuriant Vine! The mystery begins with, *God manifest in the flesh*: and the verse ends with, *CHRIST received up into glory*. God the SON, tabernacled in a body of flesh! *Justified in the SPIRIT*; both in the formation of that pure portion of human nature, wrought by his miraculous impregnation, in the womb of the Virgin, in testifying at CHRIST's baptism, in all his miracles, when he offered himself through the eternal SPIRIT on the cross; when risen from the dead, when returned to glory; and when, in exact conformity to the LORD's most sure promise, God the HOLY GHOST came down at *Pentecost*, in an open display of his Person, and Offices; and now in a private manifestation in the hearts of all CHRIST's seed, from the first moment of regeneration, until grace is finished in glory. In all these, and numberless other instances, CHRIST is justified in the SPIRIT, when *he takes of CHRIST, and shews to the people*. And *seen of angels*, who saw him at his birth, attended him in his temptations in the wilderness, in his agonies in the garden, at his resurrection, ascension, and return to glory. *Preached to the Gentiles*. And this became a mystery to the Jewish Church, that *God should also to the Gentiles, grant repentance unto life*. Acts xi. 18. And what was yet, and is now, and ever must be, a greater mystery still, that CHRIST should be *believed on in the world*. For such is the natural enmity of every man's mind by the fall; that nothing short of sovereign grace can gain acceptance for CHRIST, in a single heart. And there must be the concurring operation of all the Persons of the GODHEAD, in the drawings of the FATHER, John vi. 44. the manifestations of the SON, 1 John v. 20. and the quickenings of the HOLY GHOST, to induce belief in the soul. Ephes. ii. 1. And the LORD's being *received up into glory*, closeth the wonderful account, in this precious mystery of godliness, which, without controversy, must be acknowledged great! Reader! what a mercy is your's, and mine, if

through grace, we can both subscribe to the blessed contents? Great as the mystery of godliness is, God hath revealed the truth of the whole to our spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 10.

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### REFLECTIONS.

OH! LORD the SPIRIT! do thou in mercy to the Church, ordain Pastors after thine own heart: and make all such, as thou hast called to the ministry, however known, or distinguished among men, more anxious to win souls, than to gain kingdoms.

Precious JESUS! let the mystery of thine incarnation be the constant, unceasing subject of my meditation! Oh! the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge! Didst thou, dear LORD, who when rich beyond all the calculation of riches, condescend for our sakes to be made poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich! And, oh! the sweet testimony of God the SPIRIT, in justifying all the works of CHRIST, both to the Person of CHRIST, and in the heart of his people, in his finished salvation. Angels, behold; Gentiles, believe; yea, my poor blind and stony heart is made *willing in the day of God's power*. And GOD the FATHER hath given assurance unto all men of the mystery of godliness, in having raised CHRIST from the dead, and received him up into glory. Blessed, blessed for ever, be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

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## CHAP. IV.

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GOD the HOLY GHOST is here introduced as speaking expressly of the *Latter-day Heresies*. Paul cautions Timothy to be on the look-out with the Church against the *Times of such Peril*.

**N**OW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their consciences seared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

The opening of this chapter is uncommonly interesting. When God the SPIRIT speaks, well may man hear. But beside this attention in a general way, there is somewhat here, which from the manner of expression made use of, calls up that attention with more awakened earnestness. God the SPIRIT *speaketh expressly*. We do not find a similar phrase in all the Bible. We very frequently hear of the LORD speaking by his servants the Prophets, in the Old Testament Scripture, saying, *Thus saith the LORD*; and, *The LORD hath spoken*. But here the SPIRIT, in his Person, is described as speaking, and speaking *expressly*. Was it not as if to silence the awful blasphemy of the latter day times, which we now live to see, when his Almighty Person, and ministry, and glory, in the œconomy of grace, are so openly denied? If the SPIRIT speaketh expressly, can He be otherwise than a Person who thus performs the action of a Person? And if the SPIRIT at such a distance as *Paul* wrote, spoke expressly in declaring the heresies which should come in the last days, could He be less than God who thus exercised the perfection and attribute of foreknowledge? And if the HOLY GHOST thus spake in the Church at that period, did He not thereby exercise his ministry in the Church when he thus presided over? Reader! if this verse alone be fully considered, what an unanswerable decision doth it give to the blasphemies of some, and the disregard of others, in this God-dishonoring, CHRIST-despising, HOLY GHOST disowning generation?

I do not think it necessary in this place, to go over again the many precious testimonies with which the word of God abounds, to the Person and ministry of God the HOLY GHOST, having already, in many parts of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, somewhat largely considered the subject. I would particularly refer the Reader on this account to Acts chapters ii. and xiii. and Heb. ix.

But we must not stop here. If the SPIRIT speaketh expressly, and speaketh of the latter-day heresies, which so plainly refer to our own times, we have yet a more abundant reason to attend, and to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches. Rev. ii. 29. The relation of them is truly awful. *Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.* Oh! what a trembling account! But, blessed be God, though some shall be thus found, yet not all. And the faith, though some depart from, is not the faith of God's elect; for God hath said of all such, that in the everlasting covenant he hath made with them, he will put his fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from him. Titus i. 1. Jerem. xxxii. 40. A departure from the mere faith of a profession, may be, and indeed must be, for it holds by nothing which can keep it. It was taken up by hearsay, or head-knowledge, and will be put down again when these fail. But where God the SPIRIT regenerates, there the faith of God's elect is given, and, through grace, the soul then chooses that good part, which shall not be taken away. Luke x. 42.

I cannot, in a work of this kind, enter into a long discourse concerning the heresies here spoken of expressly by the HOLY GHOST. Very sure I am, that the same Almighty LORD who foretold the

people of their coming, will keep his people from finally falling by them. But it is impossible to say to what lengths they may be permitted to proceed. It is the happiness of the Church, however, that their security is in CHRIST, And though the LORD JESUS hath admonished his people, that there will be awful judgments, and delusions so great, that, *if it were possible, they would deceive even the very elect*; yet the LORD's most gracious words, while he speaks of those things, decidedly prove, at the same time, that to deceive them is impossible. Mark xiii. 22.

What greater apostacy, among Professors of Christianity, than the present days manifest, may be yet for to come, I know not, and what *seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*, as we approach nearer the end of the world will appear, is not for me to conceive. Very much more than even the crying sins which now come with uncovered front before us, may, according to Scripture, be looked for. Mark xiii. 20. Rev. xii. 12. But, in my apprehension, there never was a period, since the Reformation of less vital godliness, and more of the form and carcase of religion, than the present. It is too notorious to be unknown, and too awful to be known without trembling for the eventual consequences. But, when we find a liberty assumed, under the cover of religious freedom, of denying all the glorious and distinguishing truths of our most holy faith, and both the press and pulpit, in every direction, teem with discourses which set at nought that *faith which was once delivered unto the saints*, we may reasonably conclude that impending judgments are not far remote. Jude 3--7.

And what appears to me among the most alarming signs of the present times is, that many who profess themselves the glorious truths, which distinguish our holy faith, manifest a total indifference as to the conviction of them by others. There is a spirit of accommodation crept in among us, under the specious covering of universal love, which makes a sacrifice of divine truths. We conceal our belief in what is dearer to us than life, in order that those with whom we mingle for general purposes of charity, may not take offence. And we fondly persuade ourselves that all descriptions of religion may meet together, and join to promote the divine glory, when those blessed truths which bring the greatest glory to the LORD, are cautiously kept out of view. Surely, that faith can be but little valued by us, if fearful to be owned. And if the GODHEAD of CHRIST, redemption by his blood, justification by his righteousness, be dearer to me, (as that they are,) than my necessary food, I cannot, I dare not, conceal those sentiments, nor knowingly join with those who deny them, under the mistaken idea of promoting the divine glory, while restraining the open confession of my faith to the divine praise. "The LORD pardon me if I err. But according to my view of things, this accommodating spirit is among the most awful signs of the present day. I know that I am singular. But it appears a time to be singular. GOD the SPIRIT hath spoken expressly of those latter ages of the Church. Consistent with my apprehension of the LORD's speaking, let others think as they may, I cannot think otherwise than I have said. Though concealing our attachment to the great truths of GOD, may not amount to a *denial*, yet is it not a tacit *departure* from the faith? Though not

*giving heed to seducing spirits, yet is it not giving in to a Laodicean spirit, which the SON of God so highly condemns? Rev. iii, 15, 16.*

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself *rather unto* godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth little : but godliness *is* profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

9 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

The Apostle's advice to *Timothy*, is in no small degree of correspondence to what I have on the preceding verses remarked. If it behoved this young man to put the brethren in mind of those great truths *Paul* had before been delivering to him, and if by doing so he would shew himself to be a good minister of JESUS CHRIST, the same holds good of all the LORD'S people, whether ministers or saints, in all ages of the Church. And if the SPIRIT hath spoken expressly of the latter-day heresies, it must be an awful thing in them who profess faith in the momentous truths of the Gospel, to be silent about them, when heresies appear!

10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

11 These things command and teach.

12 Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

15 Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

If in connection with what the Apostle here saith of the living God being *the SAVIOR of all men, specially of those that believe*, the Reader will consult what was offered in this *Commentary* on chap. ii. 4. he will, under divine teaching, discover in what sense both those Scriptures are intended. GOD our SAVIOR is, in truth, the SAVIOR of all men, in nature, and providence. For He is both the Maker and Upholder of all things. The very enemies of CHRIST, are upheld by CHRIST; for all power is his, in heaven, and in earth. In his mysterious union of Person, and his government; every thing is ruled by his controul. *The deceived and the deceiver are his.* Job xii. 16. See those scriptures, Coloss. i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 2, 3. Matt. xxviii. 18. Ephes. i. 10. Hence it is most truly and blessedly said, that CHRIST is *the SAVIOR of all men.* For *he killeth, and he maketh alive; he wounds and he heals.* Deut. xxxii. 39. But while those things are strictly true, in relation to the departments, both of nature and providence; in the departments of grace and glory, as this scripture most blessedly adds, he is specially *the SAVIOR of those that believe.* In no sense but the *former*, as relating to *temporal* things, can Jesus be said to be the SAVIOR of all men. And in none but the *latter*, in things both temporal, spiritual, and eternal; can any but his body the Church have claim? Ephes. i. 22, 23. Oh! if the world did but consider how much they owe their preservation, and the enjoyment of the most common blessings of nature and providence, to the LORD JESUS, how would they stand amazed at his goodness, and be shocked at their own undeservings! And if the LORD's people had but a more lively sense of their special mercies, in all the departments of life, nature, providence, grace, and glory: how would their souls be often melted in them, in the contemplation of that *love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge.* Ephes. iii. 19.

I detain the Reader no longer, than just to observe, what a lovely representation is given, in the different parts of this Chapter, of what constitutes a faithful Minister of CHRIST! And what a life, if closely followed up, in the various departments of it, must be such a service? Happy the LORD's people who have such a servant! And *happy the people who have the LORD for their God!*

#### REFLECTIONS.

O LORD the SPIRIT! let thy Church have grace to praise thee, for the love manifested towards it, and thy watchful care over it, through all generations. Yea, blessed LORD, we have to thank thee, for the gracious warnings, which thou hast expressly spoken of, concerning the awful heresies which will beset the Church from the world. Truly, LORD, there are already many Antichrists, by which we know *it is the last time.* O do thou help thy truly regenerated ones to resist all and every one of them, whether seducing spirits, or doctrines of devils, and be stedfast in the faith: and when at any time *the Enemy cometh in like a flood*, do thou, Almighty SPIRIT, *lift up a standard against him!*

Be gracious also to the Ministers, and Stewards, of thy mysteries. Cause them to put the brethren in remembrance of all the great and glorious truths of our most holy faith; that they may prove themselves good ministers of JESUS CHRIST, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine; refusing profane and old wives' fables, and exercising themselves unto godliness.

And, dearest LORD JESUS! we praise thee for thy upholding, and preserving providence, over all men; and specially for thy saving health unto thy people. Here we learn, O LORD, how it is for thy sake the world standeth; and while thou art carrying on thy salvation, the ungodly remain. And until thou hast brought home thy redeemed to glory, the seed time and harvest, the tares and the wheat, shall not cease. Oh! let thy children learn to whom the whole difference is owing. And while they enjoy thy distinguishing grace, often may they hear the voice: *Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it!*

## CHAP. V.

### CONTENTS.

*The Apostle is here instructing Timothy, as a Minister of CHRIST, how to conduct himself in the Church of God: and especially towards Elders, aged Women, and younger Persons.*

**R**EBUKE not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

I forbear to comment on those directions. They are too plain to need any. I only pause over the last of those verses, to observe the very strong language *Paul* useth, when speaking of a man's not providing for his own, in calling him worse than an Infidel. And it is the highest reproach to a member of CHRIST'S body, when he passeth by the ties of grace; while we find carnal men are sometimes so eminent for observance of them in the ties of nature. And the argument runs thus: a carnal man, when entering into the concerns of his natural alliances, proves thereby the common nature he feels for those with whom he is interested. If therefore a man professeth to be a partaker of grace, and consequently supposed to be a member of CHRIST'S mystical body; and yet can behold another member suffer want in any sense, either spiritual or temporal, and doth not relieve him, he denies the very principle which he professeth; and is worse than the Infidel, who knows nothing of gracious feelings, and makes no profession of them. Reader! if this maxim of the Apostle was made the standard on those occasions, to ascertain a man's faith, is it not to be feared, that very frequently many would be found that do not come up to it? And yet *John*, the beloved Apostle, gives it to the Church, for a general rule, to ascertain character. *We know* (saith he) *that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* 1 John iii. 14.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.



16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

It is worthy remark, what attention the HOLY GHOST hath shewn to the honorable women, in every age of the Church, whom He had graciously regenerated, and made eminent for services to his household. What blessed characters are given to the *Sarahs*, and *Rebekahs*, and *Rachels*, and *Deborahs*, and *Jaels*, and *Hannahs* of the Old Testament Scripture: and how interesting the *Maries*, and *Elizabeths*, and *Joannas*, and *Dorcases*; and other holy women of the New? Mothers in Israel are among the excellent in the earth; and are handed down to us with such marks of blessed testimony as shew, that their names are *written in the book of life*, and are enrolled among those of *whom the world is not worthy*. Heb. xi. 35 to the end.

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

It is very blessed to observe how attentive the HOLY GHOST is, that none of his household shall be overlooked, or forgotten, in the provision he here makes for his Ministers, to watch over, in their daily ministration. The Elders are here introduced, as being worthy of double honor. Age is honorable. And if they are among the Ministers of CHRIST; their long services are considered as yet the more entitled to this attention. 1 Cor. ix. 11. The Apostle useth a striking figure to illustrate the precept. He quotes a passage in the Old Testament scripture, of the tenderness shewn the ox, when treading out the corn, that he did it unmuzzled: purposely, that as he trod out food from the ears of corn for others, he might himself partake. And the sense is, if a minister of CHRIST, while laboring like the ox to give food of a spiritual nature to the people, is himself sustained with portions of the same; this is but a just privilege. And who would begrudge him his moiety? And to be ready to receive an accusation against such, must argue a sad mind.

21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe

these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure.

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

24 Some men's sins are open before hand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest before hand: and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

I admire the Apostle's solemn charge to *Timothy*. Let the Reader figure to himself the venerable Apostle, standing to admonish the young Bishop, (as he is supposed to have been,) on those grand points, which he here enjoins. Modern times can furnish no idea of what this must have been. But if all charges were directed to such a purpose, and delivered as before God, and under his authority, as this of *Paul's* was, we should form very different judgment to what we are now accustomed to form on this subject. By the elect Angels, we are to understand those chosen to be kept by CHRIST. Not in union with CHRIST. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels. Heb. ii. 16. But elect Angels preserved in their integrity by him: and different from those which fell, not being elect. Jude 6. Elect Angels therefore preserved by CHRIST; but not as the church is elect and preserved in CHRIST. And let the Reader here learn, by the way, this precious truth. Election is not confined to men but reacheth to Angels. And all from Him and his pleasure who worketh after the counsel of his own will. But let the Reader no less keep in remembrance this precious truth also. Though there are elect Angels, which are kept by CHRIST, perfect, and secure from the possibility of falling, yet they have no union with CHRIST as we have. He is their LORD and Preserver by dominion. But He is our LORD, Head, and Husband by union. Oh! the preciousness of that Scripture, he passed by the nature of angels, and took on him the seed of Abraham. Heb. ii. 16.

Now *Paul* chargeth *Timothy* before God, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the elect angels, to observe these things, meaning the duties of his function. It is a sweet thought! Angels we know are ministering spirits. They attend the LORD's people, watch over them for good, encamp about them, and minister to their comfort. And, as they attended CHRIST when he returned to glory, so will they grace his triumph when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. 2 Thess. i. 10. See Heb. ii. 16. and Commentary. I do not think it necessary to offer any observations on what follows in this chapter, as they chiefly relate to the persons of the Apostle and *Timothy*. And I am unwilling to swell our Commentary beyond the limits of what may be proper.

## REFLECTIONS.

READER! behold how venerable, in the sight of God the SPIRIT, are the hoary saints considered, when we see such a charge given concerning them. Blessedly God hath said, *even to your old age, I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you!* And, therefore, the LORD, who watches over them himself, will have no rebuke given them from others. Our fathers in the Church, and our mothers in Israel, are counted worthy of double honor, when the hoary head is found in the righteousness of CHRIST.

And blessed are those Ministers and Stewards of God's mysteries which labor in the word and doctrine, who do nothing by partiality, but view all the members of CHRIST's mystical body, equally entitled to their good offices, and to their affection, without preferring one before another. LORD make all thy servants faithful, and let thy people praise thee, that God in all things may be glorified in, and through JESUS CHRIST.

## CHAP. VI.

## CONTENTS.

*The Apostle is prosecuting, in this Chapter, his Exhortation to Timothy concerning Church government. And having noticed several wise Regulations on this Subject with others, closeth his Epistle with praying for Grace to be with him.*

**L**ET as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and raiment, let us be there-with content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into many* foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The corruption of human nature which hath produced all the evils of life, very early in the world, among other deadly fruits, produced that abominable traffic the Slave trade, and which, awful to relate, hath continued from one generation to another, even to the present hour.

This chapter opens with directions to both servants and masters concerning their mutual behavior to each other, in those instances where sovereign grace hath called a child of God from either department. It is hardly possible to conceive what effects have followed the conversion of the heart to God, in cases where masters have been called by grace, who were before concerned in this nefarious practice. Oh! the change when God changeth the heart!

The Apostle hath beautifully closed this paragraph, in shewing he folly, as well as wickedness of coveting more than the common necessaries of life; and by that humbling truth, of bringing nothing into the world, and the consciousness of carrying nothing out. It is a similar expression to that of *Job*. *Naked* (said he) *came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.* Job i. 21. Oh! who that considers his original nakedness and helplessness, when coming first from the womb of the earth, or from the womb of his mother, and the humbling state to which he will shortly return, to the same poverty and insensibility again, would be anxious to load himself with golden clay, or croud between those periods of entering and returning from the world, anxieties for any thing, but *the one thing needful*. Precious JESUS! be thou my portion, for durable riches and righteousness are only with thee. Having thee, thou dear LORD! thou wilt cause me, indeed, *to inherit substance, and thou wilt fill, and be thyself all my treasure.* Prov. viii. 18—21.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on

eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.

14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ :

15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate ; the King of kings, and Lord of lords ;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see : to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

There is somewhat particularly striking in the name which *Paul* here gives to *Timothy*, as a minister of CHRIST, *Man of God*. Man of God, by virtue of right, in electing, redeeming, regenerating grace ; and, specially, as ministering in holy things. So the Prophets of old were distinguished. 2 Kings iv. throughout. And the direction to flee from the corrupt affections of the heart, and the pursuits of the world, and follow CHRIST and his righteousness, with all the sweet and blessed connections in CHRIST, is very beautiful.

What a very sublime description is here given of the divine essence? God, in his threefold character of Persons, is undoubtedly invisible, and incomprehensible, and never to be known, or seen, or apprehended, but in the Person of the GOD-man Mediator. It is the SON of GOD who hath come forth from the invisibility of JEHOVAH, to make known all that can be made known of the essence and nature of God. John i. 18. See Coloss. i. 20. and Commentary.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called :

21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana.

These are all most beautiful, and highly interesting recommendations, to the faithful discharge of the several relative obligations, which arise out of the diversities of life. But they are too plain to need a Comment. And where grace is begun in the heart, divine teaching both dictates and gives ability to the performance. Here, indeed, lies the great beauty of all Gospel truths, that in all cases where God the SPIRIT hath quickened to a new and spiritual life, there will be a quickening also, and a strength imparted to the performance. Blessedly the Apostle hath shewn this, when drawing the carnal state of an unawakened nature, and the blessed effects which follow being taken out of it. *If so be, (saith Paul,) ye have heard CHRIST, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in JESUS: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which, after GOD, is created in righteousness and true holiness.* Ephes. iv. 21—24. It were unnecessary to offer any observations upon the Apostle's conclusion of grace. Every thing that is truly blessed is contained in it, as it relates to all the Persons of the GODHEAD, in their joint love and favor to the Church. So *Paul* prays, and then closeth his Epistle with Amen.

#### REFLECTIONS.

READER! think what a lovely family that is of the all lovely, and all loving JESUS, which considers all the members as mutually engaged, and everlastingly supposed to be actuated by one spirit, for the general and compleat happiness of the whole. Oh! if masters would thus consider servants, and servants masters, there could be no schism of the body, but all would study each other's happiness, and have the same care one for another. And, surely, if any thing under grace can tend to the promotion of this great end, the consciousness of a dying, sinful, sorrowful world, from which we are hourly departing, and from which as we brought nothing in, we can carry nothing out, would be enough to induce these blessed effects.

But, oh! precious JESUS! It is thou LORD who must both go before, and guide in this, and every path, which thy redeemed have to follow. Blessed and glorious Potentate! Oh! what a good confession didst thou witness before many witnesses! LORD! grant to all thy servants to keep the commandment of the same confession, without spot, and unrebukable, until thy appearing. JESUS will shortly come. He, and He alone, will shew, as the only visible JEHOVAH, who is the blessed and only Potentate, *King of kings, and LORD of lords!* Till then may every knee bow, and every tongue con-