

REFLECTIONS.

ALMIGHTY GOD and FATHER! may all, whom the HOLY GHOST hath made ministers in the service of the Church of JESUS, hear the solemn charge of *Paul to Timothy*, to prompt to faithfulness in their high calling. And, no less, Almighty JESUS! may the sure expectation of thy appearing, and thy kingdom, to judge the quick and dead, awaken such, to be diligent in thy service to thy coming. LORD! give them grace to preach the word, and to be constant, in season, out of season; and especially in these awful times, when the way of truth is evil spoken of, and men will not endure sound doctrine. And, oh! thou blessed, and Almighty SPIRIT of all truth, do thou guard, and guide, lead, and instruct all thy family; that the hearts of thy people, may not be turned unto fables.

Blessed be a faithful Covenant-God in CHRIST, for the fulfilment of his faithful promise, in the instance of *Paul*, in giving such a Pastor, after his own heart. The Church of God bless the LORD for this man's services, in all his past labors; and in all his future usefulness. Oh! grant, LORD, that all thy faithful, whether ministers, or people, may like *Paul*, and from the same cause, live and die, in the full assurance of faith, in expectation of the crown of righteousness, which the LORD the righteous Judge, will give at that day to all them that love our LORD's appearing!

Praises to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, for this, and all the other precious portions of GOD's word; to make the Church, under divine teaching, more and more acquainted with the Person, and glory of JESUS, for the happiness of the life that now is, and that which is to come. Amen.

THE
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
TITUS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THIS Epistle of *Paul to Titus* is but short, though highly interesting, and we have much cause to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for it. Very clear marks of the LORD's inspiration are discoverable in it.

It is supposed by some to have been written from *Rome*; and others have thought that *Paul* wrote it from *Ephesus*. In either case the time must differ, though it generally bears the date of our LORD GOD 55.

The Person to whom *Paul* wrote it, is in several parts of the Apostle's other writings spoken of in very high terms of affection. *Paul* calls him *Titus* his own son, and his brother and partner and fellow helper ; and as one who walked in the same spirit ; and in the same steps. 2 Cor. xii. 18. see also Gal. ii. 1—3. 2 Cor. viii. 23. So that he was evidently very dear to *Paul*.

The subject of the Epistle is generally concerning the blessed doctrines of the Gospel ; and directions to *Titus* concerning the ministry. I beg the Reader to enter upon the perusal of it, on the knee of prayer, that the Almighty Author of his written Word, may lead the souls of his people by it, to the uncreated WORD, and bless it in JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle opens his Epistle, with his usual Benediction. He points out to Titus, the Qualifications for the Ministry. He gives a sad Account of the Grecians, among whom Titus dwelt ; and concludes the Chapter with the same.

PAUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness ;

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began ;

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour ;

I detain the Reader at the very entrance on this Epistle, to observe to him, the striking expression of the Apostle on the subject of faith. He calls it *the faith of God's elect*. I would not speak decidedly on the occasion, because I would rather that the godly Reader should, under grace, decide for himself. But I would humbly ask, doth not the Apostle, by the very phrase, evidently imply, that amidst all the professions of faith, to be met with in the world, there is but one, which is true and genuine, namely, the faith of God's elect ? And what that is, the scriptures, in every part shew. The faith of God's elect, looks at the special act of JEHOVAH, in the purposes, will, decrees, and pleasure, of his infinite and eternal mind, as manifested in his threefold Personality of character, toward the Church of God, in CHRIST JESUS. And this faith of God's

elect, is the special gift of God to the elect; distinguished from all other, and is the *fruit* and *effect*, of the first, original, and eternal *cause*, in God's election; whereby, without any regard to any one motive whatever, but God's own free will and pleasure, he hath *chosen the Church in CHRIST, to be holy and without blame before him in love.* Ephes. i. 4. And hence, in the riches of his grace, hath made all suitable provision, for the accomplishment of all the purposes, connected with this act of sovereign love, during the whole time-state of the Church, until the Lord hath brought her home to eternal glory. The faith of God's elect, includes, therefore, in its view, all the blessed acts, and works of grace to render the whole effectual, for the accomplishment of that *hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began.* This is the faith of God's elect.

And what tends to make it special, and endear it yet more, is, that it is only in the privilege of the elect themselves to exercise; and they only by God's gift. For so the charter of grace runs. *Unto you it is given in the behalf of CHRIST, to believe on him.* Philip. i. 29. Sweetly therefore the same Apostle, when writing to the *Thessalonians*, dwells upon the subject, when he saith; *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God, for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the SPIRIT, and belief of the truth.* 2 Thess. ii. 13. Reader! do not hastily turn away from the view of this most precious scripture, of the faith of God's elect. Look at the distinguishing properties of it, again and again, with thanksgiving and praise. Observe, it is not the common faith of men, or devils. It is not historical faith, hearsay faith, head knowledge faith. But it is the special, personal faith, of God's elect. It is a given faith, the fruit and effect of the same source and cause; from whence all the blessings connected with it spring; namely, the electing love of God. It cannot be possessed by any, but the elect. And by them only, as the gift of God. Oh! the preciousness of the faith of God's elect! Lord give it me to possess, in all its blessed, distinguishing properties! May my spirit live, in the daily, hourly enjoyment of it; having it kept always alive in my soul, in living upon CHRIST, and CHRIST in God; as manifested in the electing, predestinating love of God my FATHER; the blessed betrothing, redeeming, justifying, sanctifying love of God my SAVIOUR; and the regenerating soul-quickening, spiritual-life-preserving grace of God the HOLY GHOST. Oh! the unspeakable mercies, which give birth to the faith of God's elect! But it would be wrong to pass over unnoticed what the Apostle saith in connection with the faith of God's elect, namely, *and the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness.* This was blessedly added by the Apostle, as if to put a stop to the charge against the faith of God's elect, as though it were a doctrine contrary to godliness. Whereas the fact is, there can be no real godliness without it. All the labored attempts of carnal men, to make a shew of outside godliness, having no spring within, can be but a shew; for it hath no resource, to give life to it at first, or keep it alive after. But the faith of God's elect being founded in the love of God, hath, for its spring, the grace of God, which bringeth salvation: and this both teacheth and enableth to the *denying ungod-*

liness and worldly lusts, and to the living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. Chap. ii. 11—13. The faith of God's elect, can never fail of producing those effects, in every instance. And no faith, but the faith of God's elect can produce them. The faith of devils, the faith of mere Professors, and Pharisees, the lip confession, learnt from the creeds of men, and all the other trumpery of human invention, have no belief, but that which produceth fear and trembling. James ii. 19. It is only the faith of God's elect, which connects with it the acknowledging of the truth, and the practical effects of truth, *which is after godliness.*

One word more on this paragraph. What is this faith of God's elect exercised upon? *Paul saith; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.* Reader! I beseech you look at the bottom, and foundation of this hope. *Paul calls it a blessed hope.* Chap. ii. 13. And a blessed hope indeed it is, in all the properties of it. For *first.* It originated in God's own purpose, and that from all eternity. Nothing moving the LORD to it, but his own infinite mind; and his holy will and pleasure. Not our misery or need; for it was before the world began; and, consequently, neither our misery, nor his mercy to that misery, gave rise to it, for it was before both. The Apostle saith, that it was *according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.* Ephes. iii. 9—11. What a bottom is here to found the sure mercies of *David* upon; when beheld as *in God, and from God, and by God;* and that from all eternity?

Secondly. Consider the sweet properties of it, and it will appear indeed a *blessed hope.* All are founded in Covenant securities, in which every thing is provided for, to make it permanent, sure, and everlasting. The antient settlements of eternity, in the council of peace, between the Persons of the GODHEAD, all are so formed, as to guard against the possibility of failure. God the FATHER, who cannot lie, hath sworn to it. CHRIST, who is our Righteousness, hath fulfilled all the purposes concerning it. God the SPIRIT, who is all holy; confirms it in the hearts of the people. And, as all the individual members, for whom this eternal life is designed, and to whom it is given, are all chosen and numbered, in the decrees of God; nothing can arise, to prevent the accomplishment of it, from any causes whatever, during the time-state of the Church, but what hath been foreseen and provided for from all eternity.

And, *lastly,* to mention no more. What endears it, and recommends it to every heart, of the highly favored objects of this divine promise is, that it is altogether free, unsought for, yea, unthought of; and neither bestowed for deservings, or restrained by undeservings; but freely given without regard to either, as if to magnify the riches of divine grace, and to display divine sovereignty according to that unalterable scripture: *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* Exod. xxxiii. 19. with Romans ix. 15. Oh! the riches of God's eternal purposes in CHRIST! Oh! the sweet, and precious faith of God's elect!

4 To Titus, *mine* own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

I have, in the opening of the first Epistle of *Paul* to *Timothy*, given my views of what the Apostle meant, in calling those companions of his *sons*. On this point I need not enlarge. Neither shall I detain the Reader, with any unnecessary observations, on the history of *Crete*, where *Paul* saith he left *Titus*, to arrange the government of the Church in that place. We know but little of this place from scripture. It was one of those islands, in the *Mediterranean Sea*, where *Paul*, in his voyage, passed. Acts xxvii. 7. But it could not have been at that time, the Apostle left *Titus* there. It might have been more likely, when he went over various parts of *Greece*. Acts xx. 2. But this is not so material, to our present purpose, to enquire. I would rather call upon the Reader, to remark, with me, *Paul's* anxiety as is here, and elsewhere expressed, respecting the ordination for the ministry. Let any person bring into one view, all that the aged Apostle, hath said on this subject, in his Epistles to the Churches, and to Persons; and it will strike him, I think, as it doth me, with full conviction, that nothing lay nearer the heart of *Paul*, than the caution, which ought to be observed, in sending men to labor in the word and doctrine. If the Reader will indulge me, I will take advantage from what the Apostle hath here charged upon *Titus*, on the subject, to offer a short observation.

The work of the ministry, is in itself so arduous, its duties so various, and its eventful consequences so infinitely important; that no man of the least seriousness, if he thought at all, would run unsent. *Paul*, when speaking of himself on this occasion, seems to express the greatness of his surprize, that one, less than the least of all saints, should have the grace given to him for such a purpose; *that I* (said he) *should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of CHRIST.* Ephes. iii. 8. Had the Apostle considered the gifts of nature, or of art, as qualifying for the ministry; certainly his liberal education, and his powers of eloquence, might have been thought very suitable requisites. But in *Paul's* view, these things rather hindered, than forwarded the LORD's service. *What things were gain to me; those* (said he) *I counted loss for CHRIST.* Philip. iii. 7. And certain it is, the Apostle had in view at all times, his wonderful conversion; and his call of JESUS to be his Apostle; as well as the ordination of the HOLY GHOST to the ministry; as the great authority, by which he acted, in the service of the LORD. How would *Paul* have shuddered, had he been told of men, rushing into the ministry, unsent of God, and unanointed by the HOLY GHOST? What a contradiction in terms, would it have appeared to the Apostle's mind, had he heard of Preachers going forth to the conversion of others, when unconverted themselves? The characters *Paul* here speaks of, whom *Titus* was to ordain, were such as not only lived in the Spirit, and walked in the Spirit, in the exercise of the graces of the HOLY GHOST, he hath here enumerated; but *holding fast the faithful word, which he himself had been taught; that he might be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince gainsayers.* But how awfully doth the Apostle speak of *many unruly and vain talkers; whose mouths* (he saith) *must be stopped: and who teach things, which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.*

Reader! let us turn from the view, for it is most awful. Let us seek relief to our mind, from the painful contemplation in beholding, if but a moment, the beautiful account of *Paul's* own ministry. *Paul* stood amazed, at the grace shewn him, that the LORD should count him faithful, putting him into the ministry. And the constant sense he had of his own vileness; and the discoveries made to him, of the Person, glory, excellency, and riches of CHRIST and his grace tended to keep the Apostle always at the feet of JESUS, humbled, and self abased before him. And it was thus *Paul* went forth to the ministry, preaching CHRIST. It was CHRIST that *Paul* preached. CHRIST, as he is in himself; and CHRIST, as he is to his people. The plainest, the simplest language, and not excellency of human gifts, and human attainments, marked all his discourses. *Seeing then* (said he) *that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.* 2 Cor. iii. 12. Blessed be God for putting him into the ministry! Blessed be God for all the grace given to him, in this service. And blessed be God, for every instance both then, and now, and in all ages of the Church, where JESUS his Almighty Master, hath blessed his ministry, to the souls of his people!

12 One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure : but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure ; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess that they know God ; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

The words of this first verse are a quotation from one of their Profane Writers ; and the Apostle declares, that what is here said was correct. Lying is the common crime of all human nature. The scripture saith, *the wicked are estranged from the womb ; they go astray, as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* Psm. lviii. 3. Reader ! it is our mercy to know it : and in that knowledge, to be looking to JESUS, for deliverance from this, and every other evil of our fallen nature, in his righteousness ; *who is the way, and the truth, and the life.* John xiv. 6. And while *Cretians*, or *Jews*, or all other carnal, and unregenerated men, are giving heed, to mere fables and commandments of men : seeking in outward things, acceptance with GOD ; how blessed is it, to mark the vast difference, arising from inward and renewing grace, in the soul, making all things pure, where GOD hath purified the heart, through faith. Oh ! the blessedness of being born again. It is this which makes the whole state blessed. A child of GOD, renewed of GOD, from the *Adam*-nature of the fall, is brought at once into a state of justification before GOD, and this regeneration makes the new creature alive, in the spiritual enjoyment of union with CHRIST. All things, pertaining to life, and godliness, are pure to him, in CHRIST. Whereas to the unregenerate, defiled as they are in the old nature of sin ; there can be nothing pure. Their persons, and their prayers, their sacraments, and their offerings are all alike offensive ; and can never find acceptance with GOD. For all are offered without an eye to CHRIST, and consequently sin. They may, and perhaps do, profess, as the Jews of old did, to know GOD. Yea, they may acknowledge, as many nominal Christians do, in creeds and prayer books, their belief in the Persons of the GODHEAD. But all this, is but a profession, void of saving knowledge. Where no work of grace hath passed upon the soul ; there no real knowledge of GOD in CHRIST is found. And the close of this Chapter awfully states the case of some, wherefore they are in this unbelieving condition ; *being*, saith the Apostle *abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate* ; or void of judgment, (as the margin of the Bible renders it ;) that is, without understanding. See Job xxviii. 28. compared with Isaiah xxvii. 11. and Jude 4. Reader ! do not pass away from this scripture, without pondering over the distinguishing

mercy. Oh! what a work of GOD is that, which by quickening from a death in trespasses and sins, brings the child of GOD into a new and spiritual life, to the knowledge of GOD the FATHER's love, the SAVIOUR's grace, and the SPIRIT's fellowship? What a work is wrought, when the child of GOD is new born? Reader! hath the LORD wrought it in your instance? Can you say with *Paul*: GOD *who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us; even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with CHRIST?* Ephes. ii. 4, 5.

REFLECTIONS.

I desire to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST, for all his abundant mercies in his divine teachings, and his holy scriptures of truth. And beg his grace, to give me a right understanding in all things, that my faith, may be the faith of GOD's elect. None but this, I am well assured, can come up to the standard of *the truth which is after godliness*. And whatsoever is not of this faith, is sin. Precious LORD JESUS! thou great Author, and finisher of faith, increase my faith!

And do thou, Almighty FATHER of mercies; confirm, and establish my soul, in this blessed hope of eternal life, founded in thine everlasting love; and secured in thine unchangeable promise, given in CHRIST JESUS before the world began. Oh! the preciousness of this life, which is eternal; confirmed by covenant engagements; revealed in the holy scriptures; and resulting from free, unmerited, unsought for, yea, unthought of grace!

Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! distinguish thine ordained servants in the ministry, by the special marks of thine own ordination. They, whom thou hast sent forth, will, through thy grace, be found blameless in CHRIST, as the stewards of GOD. But, LORD! stop the mouths of those, who run unsent of thee. The pure in spirit, by regenerating grace, will be pure. But to the unregenerate, who are still in the old unrenewed nature, nothing is pure. Praises to our GOD in CHRIST, for discriminating grace!

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is following up the same Directions to Titus, in this Chapter, as the former. His Doctrine, and Commands to the Aged, and Youthful, and Servants, are dwelt upon. The Apostle, blessedly speaks, of the Grace of GOD in CHRIST, and the Design of its appearing.

BUT speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things ;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works : in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

9 *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all things ; not answering again ;

10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity : that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

I admire the Apostle's expression, when he calls the great, and distinguishing truths of the gospel, *sound* : meaning, what is firm to depend upon, in opposition to what is rotten, and deceitful. The doctrines of grace, by which *Paul* means, the electing love of God to his Church ; redemption by CHRIST ; justification by his blood, and righteousness ; the regeneration of the HOLY GHOST ; and the final perseverance of the saints. These are sound, solid, substantial truths ; founded in the promise of God, who cannot lie ; and such as God will have his people taught, and established in. For to this purpose, the LORD himself hath confirmed the whole, by word and oath. And at the time the LORD did it, he expressly said, that it was on this very account, because, *he was willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel.* Heb. vi. 17, 18. And can any man be so presumptuous as to suppose, that God hath appointed the means, and will not bless the end. Will any man daringly put forth his hand to touch the ark, as if God cannot without him, preserve it from falling ? It is astonishing, what the proud presumptuous reasoning of the human heart is capable of producing on subjects of this nature. And hence, while the LORD declares, that he will have the heirs of promise comforted

with the assurance of his unalterable purpose, and counsel; such men wish to guard, as they term it, the Gospel, lest the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, should lead to licentiousness. If those men would, or could, but attend to one single point of the Gospel, and make this the standard by which to ascertain their opinions, they might be modest enough to learn, that CHRIST himself hath formed the fence, which none can go over. Those five words of our LORD, puts an everlasting silence to all their presumptuous reasoning: *Ye must be born again.* John iii. 7. Every one that is born again (and it is to such only that *assurance is given*) hath in him the testimony of God the FATHER's electing love; CHRIST's redeeming grace, and the HOLY GHOST's sovereign work upon their souls. And all that are thus born again, are infallibly secured from finally falling. And it is awful, in any one, to call it unscriptural, and highly dangerous, to question concerning such, their final perseverance, or to withhold from them the LORD's assurance, when the LORD himself hath commanded concerning them saying; *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people, saith your GOD. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her: that her warfare is accomplished: that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand;* (and so she hath, in the Personal sufferings, and death of her Head, and Husband, and Surety,) *double for all her sins.* Isaiah xl. 1, 2. Reader! do you look to GOD the SPIRIT, for the testimonies and evidences, of the new-birth. And if through grace, you discern the precious marks, of the LORD the SPIRIT's regenerating work, upon your soul; listen to the same Almighty Teacher's own witness, to your sonship in GOD, and your redemption by CHRIST, against an host of self-righteous, and self-taught men! Rom. viii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. v. 5.

Let not the Reader overlook the very beautiful, and striking inferences which the Apostle raiseth, from the subject of *sound doctrine*. The aged men and women: the younger women, in their married state; and the young men; and servants also in families; all orders in social life, which are here commanded to be spoken to, by *Titus*, are *the sound in faith*. Let not the Reader overlook this: for this is the foundation, on which the Apostle grounds his exhortation. They are therefore the members of the Church; truly regenerated believers. It is to them, the precept is given, that they may all act, under the influence of the SPIRIT, which they have received, as becometh sound doctrine. *Paul* is not teaching *Titus* to expect those things from the unconverted. *Make the tree good,* (saith the LORD JESUS himself,) *and his fruit good.* Matt. xii. 33. But without the change of heart by the regenerating work of GOD the HOLY GHOST: neither the aged, nor the young, can be sound in good works, not being sound in the faith. *Men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles.* And that *Paul* so meant, and so said, is evident, from what he observes will follow, lives of grace, manifested in lives of practice; that *the word of God*, (saith he,) *be not blasphemed;* and *that they of a contrary part*, (mark the expression,) *may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.* By which, as plain as words can make it, the Apostle draws the line of distinction, between the Church of regenerated believers, and

the contrary part of the ungodly and unawakened. All which plainly prove, that those scriptures are all along as *Paul* intended them designed for, *the saints of God and the faithful in CHRIST JESUS*. Ephes. i. 1. Chap. i. 4.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

I beg the Reader's close attention to the whole paragraph. And I pray God the SPIRIT to be my Teacher. By *the grace of God which bringeth salvation*, is evidently meant the Gospel, which makes it known. And by its having appeared unto all men ; can mean no more, than that now it is no longer hid as it was before the revelation by JESUS CHRIST. Ephes. iii. 5—11. But being now preached openly to both Jew and Gentile, the obvious tendency of it is, to make known salvation by JESUS CHRIST. And in this sense, it hath appeared unto all men, wheresoever the Gospel is preached ; though the effects of it will be different, as the Gospel itself declares. But in no other sense, can it be said, to have appeared unto all men ; for thousands, and tens of thousands, have never heard of the Gospel, nor ever will. Millions have died without the knowledge of it ; as was designed they should. And multitudes, to whom the outward ministry of the word hath been delivered, have never felt or known, the inward saving power. Hence, when the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself was the Preacher, what troops of hearers turned from him, with the most fastidious indifferency, and even contempt. *Chorazin*, and *Bethsaida* and *Capernaum* in this sense, were exalted to heaven, it might be said, by reason of their gospel privileges. But they were cast down to hell, by reason of their despising them. Matt. xi. 20—24.

It is curious to behold, in the present day, the great concern which some men seemingly profess, for the salvation of others ; who never felt any real concern for their own. And it is among the signs of the times, that multitudes are engaged in societies as all eager to send the Bible abroad, to be read by all the world, who never, in numberless instances, read it themselves. But where is the path of duty, and the consolation by grace to the truly regenerated

child of God? Surely it is written, as with a sun-beam. To wait like the Prophet, on his watch-tower, the leadings of the LORD. Habak. ii. 1, 4. Where JESUS leads, there follow. Where the LORD, and not man, opens the door, there enter. In the mean time, *to stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.* Exod. xiv. 13. Isaiah xxx. 7. The cause of CHRIST is of no doubtful issue. His Church must stand. His cause must prosper. Not one of his little ones hath perished in all the dark ages which are past. Not one shall perish in all that is to come. This sweet and consoling promise of the LORD, brings up after it, all that is necessary: *All that the FATHER giveth me, shall come to me. And of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.* John vi. 37—40.

But while these grand events are made everlastingly sure, and certain, by Covenant-settlements; (2 Sam. i. 2, 3, 5. and the grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared for the accomplishment of them; the HOLY GHOST hath very blessedly added in this sweet scripture, *that it teacheth us*, (that is, the regenerated Church,) *that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* Reader! do mark the loveliness and force of the words here used. That it is *the us*, who are truly, and savingly called by grace, which are thus expected to live, is obvious to the plainest sense. For we know, by woeful experience, in the awful crimes going on daily in this nation of professing christianity, and the sad instances of capital punishments which continually follow; that no teaching of the Gospel, no, nor all the threatened punishment to disobedience, can give the least bias to the carnal, and ungodly, to restrain from evil, and to compel to good. Grace only can accomplish this purpose. *Some* that have the privilege of hearing of this grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, and hath appeared to them in the outward ministry of the word; only manifest a greater bitterness of heart against it, by awakening, and calling forth their greater enmity against GOD and his CHRIST. And *others*, when they hear of the restraints of the Gospel, to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, only feel their corrupt passions the stronger, as dropsical persons thirst the more, because the very nature of their disorder is to drink. And, it is among the plainest truths of our most holy faith, that as without the new birth in regeneration, not one of the fallen race of *Adam*, hath the least tendency to any real act of good; so, by this quickening principle from the SPIRIT of holiness alone, is imparted the desire, both of *denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and of living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* And, as this is a point of such immense consequence; and the Apostle hath also in this same sweet scripture, added to what is here said, a further testimony concerning it, in that he tells us, *CHRIST gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works* I would crave my Reader's indulgence, to dwell a little longer on the interesting subject.

I stay not to remark, the nature of that claim, which CHRIST hath upon his redeemed, by virtue of his having bought them out of the hands of justice, by his blood. This, though a most blessed consideration, would lead rather to another subject. Here it might be

shewn, that, according to all the principles of law and equity, what a man redeems is his own; and what he buys, is his property. And CHRIST, having bought his Church with his blood, might justly make her his servant for ever. But I am not now taking up the subject in that point of view. I am simply considering, how the blessed consequences are induced, whereby the redeemed, and regenerated Church, is both *taught*, and by grace is *made*, this peculiar people, CHRIST, and not they, hath *purified* unto himself; whereby they do become *zealous of good works, and deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*

In confirmation of these precious things, I beg the Reader to observe, *first*; that by the original, and eternal purposes of God in election, this was one great point, when God chose the Church in CHRIST, that the whole body should *be holy and without blame before him in love.* Ephes. i. 4. And hence, by this will and act of God, the Church, when *quickened*, which was before in the Adam-nature of the fall, *dead in trespasses and sins*, is said *to be created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which God had before ordained that the Church should walk in them.* Ephes. ii. 1—10. I beg that this may be marked down, in the memorandum of the Reader's mind, in characters strongly impressed, suited to its importance. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! well knowing the treachery of my poor, forgetful heart; do thou write the blessed truth therein with thine own living principles of grace.

Secondly. It is said among the Covenant-promises of the FATHER to the SON: *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* Psm. cx. 3. Hence, in that blessed day, when the LORD calls the poor sinner from darkness to light, and from the power of *Satan* to the living God; there is a willingness imparted, to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth. They are then made volunteers, in the service of God; and, amidst all the corruption of the flesh, with their spirit they serve the law of God. Hence *David* cried out, under the feeling sense he had of quickening mercies: *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast enlarged my heart.* Psm. cxix. 32.

Thirdly. A willingness, without ability, would not be sufficient; and the LORD doth not leave his purposes to a peradventure. And, moreover, his people are here said to be a peculiar people, not merely *willing*, but *zealous* of good works. Here, therefore, comes in, to our joy and comfort, what this scripture so blessedly adds; that when CHRIST redeemed his Church from all iniquity, it was to *purify* her unto himself. Hence, therefore, it will follow, that while the LORD wills his people to this zeal for good works, he imparts also an ability at the same time, to perform them. It were much to be wished, that those who are so fond of exhorting the world, to what the world hath no power to do; would turn their attention, to what the scripture declares, of the LORD's people, they are enabled through grace to do. Such derive from CHRIST all the power they have, and by which they are enabled to perform what is enjoined them. Hence that beautiful scripture: *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure.* Philip. ii. 12, 13. Reader! ponder well these things. Behold how the LORD hath made provi-

sion, that the good works he hath created his people *to*, he hath ordained and given ability to walk *in*. His willings, are enablings. With the precept, there is accompanied the promise; and with the teaching to deny ungodliness, and to walk godly, there is a power imparted, to the restraining from the *one*, and to the performance of the *other*.

One word more on this very blessed paragraph. The Apostle saith, that the Church, in the daily exercise of godliness, is to be *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST*: or, as it might have been rendered, the great God, *even* our SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. For I must take the freedom to say, that it is the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and He only, who is here spoken of. And this appears very evident for several reasons. *First*. The Greek article, which is placed before the words *great God*, is not used again before the words our SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, as is usually done, except when meaning one and the same Person; and therefore, the omission in the latter part, implies, that it is exegetical of the first. *Secondly*. The Greek article here rendered *and*, before our SAVIOR, is, in many places in the New Testament, translated *even*. See Rom. xv. 6. 2 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 31. Philip. iv. 20. 2 Thess. ii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 3, &c. *Thirdly*. The *appearing* which is here spoken of, uniformly means CHRIST, through all the scripture. We are taught to expect CHRIST to appear, but never is it said of the FATHER. Coloss. i. 27. 1 Thess. v. 16. 2 Thess. i. 10. *Fourthly*. It is one of the peculiar characters of CHRIST our SAVIOR. But never under the article of redemption, do we find the Person of the FATHER, or of the HOLY GHOST, so spoken of. From all these causes there cannot be a doubt, but that it is the Person of CHRIST for whom the Church is said to look. Reader! ask your own heart then, who less than God can be so described?

Concerning this appearing of CHRIST, and the hope and expectation of his coming, which the Church is said to be looking for, I beg the Reader to remark with me, one or two striking particularities. *First*. It is spoken of, as a *blessed hope*, and a *glorious appearing* to the Church, who are described, as looking for it with delight, in a life of faith and holy conversation. A plain proof, that the Church is considered, as in a justified state before God. For it could never be called a *blessed* hope, if there were any doubts remaining, in what state the child of God would be then found. If any sin should then remain on the conscience, unwashed by the blood of CHRIST, the hope, and expectation of CHRIST's coming, could not be called *blessed*. Many there are, that under the garb of a supposed humility, suppose it somewhat presumptuous to talk with certainty, on this infinitely momentous point. But this is more an affected humility, than real. It is no more than faith warrants to every child of God, *to believe the record which God hath given of his dear SON*. And he that hath the SON, it is said, *hath life*. 1 John v. 10, 11. He hath it now, by faith, as much in reality, as the Church in heaven, hath by sight. And, therefore, to a child of God, regenerated by the HOLY GHOST, and justified by the blood, and righteousness of CHRIST; he is as really, and truly saved now by CHRIST, as the Church is in heaven.

Secondly. The Church is said to be looking for CHRIST's appearing, with a blessed hope of expectation, as if bringing into present enjoyment by faith, that glory which will then be realized to their possession; and thus embracing by anticipation, their inheritance, which nothing but their minority of being, now prevents them from entering upon. And this becomes an absolute confirmation, of the final perseverance of the saints. It was this assurance made *Paul* call it blessed. And *Peter* no less speaks as of not only looking for it, but *hasting unto the coming of it.* 2 Pet. iii. 12. Both which were impossible, if the shadow of a doubt remained on the mind, as to the final issue of the great event.

I only detain the Reader just to remark, how the Apostle enforceth on the mind of *Titus*, in the close of this Chapter, his dwelling on these things, in his preaching among the people. These sound doctrines of grace and salvation, founded, and secured in the everlasting love of God, and the redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, confirming the faith of the saints, and their eternal safety in CHRIST: these, (saith he,) boldly, firmly, and faithfully, do thou speak, and exhort. And, if any dare oppose, rebuke all such with all authority, that none may despise thee, as if ignorant of these great truths; or for thy keeping them back. Reader! who can disprove what GOD the SPIRIT teacheth! Who shall presume to question the hope of the faithful in CHRIST JESUS, which GOD the HOLY GHOST calleth blessed?

REFLECTIONS.

READER! is there not renewed occasion, at the close of this, and every Chapter, for all the marked attention, GOD the HOLY GHOST hath shewn the Church, in watching over the interests, and happiness of his people, that both *young men and maidens, old men and children, may praise the name of the LORD: for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth?* And what a lovely family of the LORD's would it be, if all were sound in doctrine, sound in faith; and *all adorning the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOR in all things!*

Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, that the grace of GOD that bringeth salvation, hath appeared. And blessed be the LORD, that He hath both taught his Church, and given her members ability, by a life of faith, upon the SON of GOD, to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts; to put off the old man, which is corrupt; and to put on the new man, which, after GOD, is created in righteousness, and true holiness. Oh! for grace, to be always on the look out, for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of JESUS. LORD! we groan being burthened, under the weaknesses, and unworthinesses of our vile body. Haste, haste my Beloved, and bring on that blessed day, when *thou wilt change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto thy glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby thou art able even to subdue all things unto thyself.*

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

The Chapter opens with a Continuation of Exhortations. The Apostle blessedly speaks of the Doctrine of Regeneration. He closeth the Epistle with Directions, and his Apostolical Benediction.

PUT them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

We cannot sufficiently admire, the very happy method the Apostle adopted, to conciliate the minds of the people to the observance of those civil obligations he here recommended, in shewing, in his own instance, as well as in all others, how unavoidably disposed a state of unrenewed nature is, to every thing that is evil. What an humble representation *Paul* hath here made of himself, and all mankind, considered only in the state of original corruption. Reader! it is always blessed, to have it in remembrance. Nothing, under the teachings of God the SPIRIT, can be more profitable. It tends to lower all pharisaical pride, which might creep into the heart. It tends, through grace, to keep the soul humble in the dust before God. It keeps open a stream of true godly sorrow, in the consciousness of our first nothingness, and continued undeservings. And, what is preferable to all, it doth endear the Person, and work, and relations, and offices of CHRIST, to the soul; and thereby sweetly enforceth our need of JESUS, and our everlasting dependance upon him, and his blood and righteousness, more and more. Oh! thou dear LORD! how very precious, yea, increasingly precious, art thou to my soul, when I look back, and contemplate the awful state of that foolish, disobedient, unrenewed nature, in which I was born; the many years I continued in it, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating; and the remains of indwelling corruption, even to this hour, which marks the body of sin, I carry about with me! Oh! the blessedness of knowing it; and the distinguishing mercy of so knowing it, as to loath myself for my own deformity, that I may be looking only to JESUS for holiness and salvation.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 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 ;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life

8 *This is* a faithful saying, and these things will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

I beg the Reader to make a full pause over the wonderful relation given of the divine mercy, in the sovereign act of grace, here ascribed to the personal agency of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And I beg of him to ponder it yet more, as being the first act which is wrought openly upon the child of GOD in a life of grace, which calls him forth into a spiritual apprehension of things, to know his election, and adoptive character ; his being in CHRIST, and his interest from CHRIST, to all the privileges of a child of GOD, and an heir of the kingdom. Before this act of regeneration is wrought, though chosen in CHRIST and being one with CHRIST, in an everlasting Covenant, *ordered in all things and sure* ; the child of GOD, like the child in nature, born to a great inheritance, hath no consciousness of it. But when the hour is come, and the washing of regeneration takes place ; the new-born heir of the inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is brought forth, to a spiritual, and eternal life in CHRIST, which can die no more. I must compress a great deal within a small compass, and, therefore, shall only mark down, one by one, a few of the more prominent features, of those acts of mercy.

And, *first* : let the Reader notice with me, what the Apostle saith in the introduction of the subject. It was *after, that the kindness and love of GOD our SAVIOR toward man appeared*. By which, perhaps, is meant, that not only after GOD the FATHER's everlasting love, in the original choice of the Church in CHRIST, had taken place ; but also, after the love of GOD our SAVIOR, in coming, during the time-state of the Church, to redeem his Church from the ruin of the fall, had been accomplished, GOD the SPIRIT came to accomplish his Almighty purpose of grace no less ; and by that act of regeneration, brought the child of GOD into an ability of enjoying the vast privileges of GOD the FATHER's electing love, and GOD the SON's redeeming mercy.

Secondly. Let the Reader also observe, how the Apostle traces the mercy to its own original source. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done*. No ! it would cease to have been grace, had any merit, on the part of the creature, been taken into the account

But so far is this from being the case, that the scripture uniformly, in every part, makes it appear, that, *as it was when we were without strength, in due time CHRIST died for the ungodly*: Rom. v. 6. so it was when *we were dead in trespasses and sins*; the HOLY GHOST quickened the Church, into a new and spiritual life. Ephes. ii. 1.

Thirdly. Let the Reader duly consider no less, the cause for which GOD the HOLY GHOST accomplisheth this sovereign act of his, in every instance; namely, as He saith himself, by the Apostle: *Because ye are sons, GOD hath sent forth the SPIRIT of his SON into your hearts, crying Abba FATHER!* Gal. iv. 6. Because ye are sons. It is not that this act of GOD the HOLY GHOST, may make them so; for sons they were before, though sinful sons. But because *ye are sons*, GOD the HOLY GHOST stands engaged, in Covenant engagements, to recover every individual child of GOD, whom GOD the FATHER hath given to his SON, and whom he hath predestinated to the adoption of children by JESUS CHRIST to himself; and whose redemption, GOD the SON hath purchased by his blood; GOD the HOLY GHOST hath undertaken, and will perform it in every instance, to quicken into spiritual life, from the death of sin, in the Adam-nature fall, and make *willing in the day of his power*. See those scriptures Ephes. i. 4, 5. Coloss. i. 14—22. Isaiah xlv. 3, 4, 5. Ezek. xxxvii. 11—14. I have dwelt the more particularly on this sweet feature of our holy faith, (for it is both sweet, and precious,) that the Reader may be in no danger, (if it so pleaseth the LORD,) of being led away by the ill-judged, and mistaken expressions of some, who, from being ignorant of the electing, and predestinating love of GOD's adoption of his children by CHRIST before all worlds, have called them heirs of hell, and children of the devil, when before conversion. But, blessed be GOD! they never were in the least related to such a stock, even in their worst days, when doing the work of Satan, and wearing his livery. They were always, and from everlasting, GOD's children; though long rebellious children. See Gal. iv. 6. and Ephes. ii. 3. with Commentary, both places. Isaiah xxx. 1.

Fourthly. The regeneration of the child of GOD, is of such vast importance, in the principles of our holy faith, that before it is wrought, we have no proper apprehension of any one saving mercy. So that, it is this immense act of grace, (than which an equally great one can never more, even in heaven itself, be done,) which brings the soul into life and light, *and joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope through the power of the HOLY GHOST*. Rom. xv. 13. From this blessed day, the spirit hath witnessing from the SPIRIT, of our adoption character. Rom. viii. 16. Justification also, which is an act of GOD, conceived in the eternal purpose of GOD from all eternity, and by which the persons of his elect are accepted in CHRIST, as justified freely by his blood and righteousness; this immense mercy also is in the right of enjoyment at regeneration. And, as the Apostle here speaks, being justified by his grace, they are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life; all these blessings begin to open upon the soul: neither can they ever after close, but extend more and more to the view, under divine teaching, by the HOLY GHOST. Well, therefore, might the Apostle run up all these things, to the fountain head in regeneration; and seeing such blessed-

ness pours in therefrom upon the human state, charge *Titus* to affirm these things constantly, as a faithful saying; and enjoin all that believe in God, from a work of regeneration having passed upon their spirit, to be careful to maintain good works, which are the gracious fruits, and effects, through divine influences, which must result therefrom. Reader! what saith the experience of your heart, in correspondence to these precious things?

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Among the antient Philosophers there were many foolish questions continually discussed in the schools; and the Jews were not a little addicted to the same. 2 Timothy ii. 23. And what *Paul* saith of heresies, holds good in all ages. It may be proper for a child of God, in the presence of heretics, to give his testimony *to the truth as it is in Jesus*. But the HOLY GHOST hath here decidedly said, that after the first, and second admonition, he is no longer to talk with him, but reject him. And the LORD hath in many other parts of his sacred word, commanded the faithful to separate themselves from such communion, and to have no fellowship with them. 2 Cor. vi. 14 to the end. Ephes. v. ix. Rev. xviii. 4. I may be singular for aught I know; but in the present awful day, marked as it specially is by the HOLY GHOST, as a day of rebuke, and blasphemy; (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3, &c.) I cannot see upon what plausible pretences, true believers in CHRIST can mingle up in society with unbelievers, who scorn the principal doctrines of our holy faith. It was never known in the history of mankind, that while one nation is at war with another nation, the subjects of each met in friendship together; or their garrisons, and harbors, were open to one another. And wherefore should it be less high treason to the Majesty of Heaven, or one that professeth himself to be a faithful subject of CHRIST's kingdom, and believeth in all the glorious doctrines of grace, to sit down, and join hand in hand, under the idea of extending Christian knowledge, with those who deny the GODHEAD of CHRIST; the doctrine of the THREE HOLY PERSONS in the GODHEAD, and all the precious truths, which are the alone glory of the Christian faith?

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

14 And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

It was written to Titus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia.

I have nothing to offer on what is here said of those Persons. All of them, have passed away long since, in their generation. And both the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary* are hastening fast after them. *Greet them, saith Paul, that love us in the faith.* So say I. *Grace be with them all, Amen!*

REFLECTIONS.

READER! I would pass by all observations on men and things, while reading this sweet scripture, and beg for grace to have all my thoughts directed to that one, glorious contemplation, brought before the Church in this Chapter, namely, the kindness and love of God the FATHER toward man, in his original, and eternal purpose, concerning the Church in CHRIST; JESUS's mercy, in betrothing, and redeeming his Church; and God the SPIRIT, pouring out his regenerating, and renewing grace, which he hath shed abundantly on the Church, and is for ever shedding, on all the members of the body, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of being justified by the LORD's grace, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life!

Blessed SPIRIT of all Truth! praises to thine Almighty name, for this precious portion of thine inspired scripture, through the ministry of thy servant *Paul*. The memory of all the *Paul's*, and *Titus's*, which God the HOLY GHOST hath raised up as servants in his Church, is precious; and thy faithful, desire grace to bless the LORD for their labors of love. But, oh! thou HOLY LORD the Comforter! what praise shall we offer thee, for thine Almighty Ministry, in the glorifying our dear Redeemer, the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Glory, praise, and power, be unto our Covenant God in CHRIST, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and ever. Amen.