

REFLECTIONS.

My soul! my Reader! let us both pause, and ponder well the sacred and sweet contents of this closing chapter of the Apostle. It opens with the assurances of two or three witnesses establishing every word. And You, and I, have the Three heavenly witnesses bearing record, that eternal life is in God's SON. And the chapter ends with the blessings of those heavenly witnesses, in their grace, and love, and communion with the Church while upon earth; thus confirming the whole in personal proof. Reader! what say you to such decided records, *to the truth as it is in JESUS*. Oh! for grace, seeing we are encompassed with such witnesses, *to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith!*

Farewell *Paul!* farewell for the present, while we thank thee, as the LORD's servant and minister, for those labors of love, with which, not only the Church at *Corinth* were blessed, but the Church of God, in all ages since, have been benefited, under the teaching of the Almighty Author of all scripture, GOD the HOLY GHOST. Oh! for ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter, and the faithful in every true Church of JESUS to be taught from those holy scriptures, by the continual unction of the HOLY ONE, and to know all things? May it be the one language of the whole Church of GOD, in the common salutation of all saints: Brethren! the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all. Amen.

THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

GALATIANS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

GALATIA was a province of the lesser *Asia*. Here, the LORD had a people, whom he was pleased to call by sovereign grace; and principally, it should seem, under the personal ministry of the Apostle *Paul*. See, in confirmation, Acts xvi. 6. and xviii. 23. Gal. i. 8, 9. and chap. iv. 13, &c. The church so formed, was made up, as might be expected, of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Hence they brought with them into the church their several distinct prejudices, accord-

ing to their former attachments. And this explains, in a great measure, certain expressions, here and there, which we meet with in this Epistle, in the apostle's teaching. But the leading feature of the whole, and for which *Paul* here wrote to the *Galatians*, was, to set forth the way of justification before GOD; which the apostle decidedly shews, under GOD the SPIRIT'S inspiration, to be solely in, and by, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, without the smallest mixture of the law.

The *time* in which *Paul* wrote this Epistle is variously dated by different writers. Some make it as early as Anno 55: others, as late as 59, in the fifth year of the reign of *Nero*. The *place* also, where the Apostle wrote it, is no less uncertain. For though in the close of it, the signature is said to be from *Rome*, yet this doth not mean, that *Paul* wrote it there. However, these points are not material. The great object in which we are concerned is, the assurance that the writing is by the HOLY GHOST. And the LORD's seal to this appears in every Chapter. Indeed, the whole Epistle brings with it, what *Paul* calls the threefold witness; 2 Cor. xiii. 1. GOD the HOLY GHOST the Author: the sacred inspired word itself; and the heart of the child of GOD, in whom the truth of it is written.

I think it unnecessary to detain the Reader from immediately entering on the perusal of a Scripture, so sweet, and interesting; and shall only beg the LORD to direct and guide my heart and pen, in all that shall be offered upon it, in this *Poor Man's Commentary*; that both Writer and Reader may be refreshed to their soul's joy, and the LORD's glory, in the face of JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

Paul introduceth his Epistle, with a short Account of himself, and his Apostleship. He speaks of God's Love, in his Conversion: and awfully describes the State of those, who preach any other Gospel, than what the LORD sent him to preach.

PAUL, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia;

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

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father :

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

What a decisive testimony is here produced of *Paul's* commission and Apostleship? He did not run unsent. Neither did *Paul* receive his authority from any unauthorized to give it. CHRIST himself sent him; and GOD the HOLY GHOST ordained him; and GOD the FATHER called him by his grace, verse 15. I beg the Reader to mark down, one by one, in the memorandums of his mind, what *Paul* here saith, on those most interesting points. *First*, he stiles himself an Apostle. *Secondly*, he shews his authority to the office. It was not of men, neither by man, but by JESUS CHRIST. A most positive evidence to the GODHEAD of CHRIST. For if no man sent him, and yet CHRIST sent him; what can more fully prove *Paul's* firm persuasion, that CHRIST was, and is, GOD. And, *thirdly*, to shew *Paul's* conviction of the oneness in the divine nature, as well as will and purpose in the divine Persons; he joins in the commission given him of his Apostleship, the authority of GOD the FATHER. And, *fourthly*; as none could properly be an Apostle, but such as could bear testimony to the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead: (see Acts i. 21, 22.) *Paul* having received confirmation, both of CHRIST's resurrection, and ascension, at his conversion, when JESUS called to him from Heaven; the Apostle introduceth the subject of CHRIST's resurrection in this place, to shew his qualification in that department also. Reader! you and I shall both do well, in often reviewing those evidences *Paul* here gives, to his Apostleship. It will help, through grace, to silence any and every objection, the carnal, and men untaught of GOD, bring to the writings of this great Apostle. Let *Paul's* character be but considered. Regenerated as he was, and then ordained by the HOLY GHOST; Acts xiii. 1—5. and often blessed with the visions of GOD; (see Acts xvi. 6—14, 26. Acts xviii. 9, 10. 2 Cor. xii. 1, &c.) and the LORD's blessings over his ministry: yea, even at this hour, the continued testimonies the LORD bears to the word of his grace, by *Paul's* writings: of what avail ought the writings, or the preachings of any man, or men, to be considered, who plainly prove, that they were never regenerated themselves, nor ordained by the HOLY GHOST to preach to others; and therefore, know not of the things which accompany salvation? Let these things be well considered; and they must tend, under grace, effectually to silence all the objections of the carnal, to the distinguishing doctrines, *Paul's* ministry was intended, by the HOLY GHOST, to establish!

I pass over what the Apostle saith of the brethren, which joined him in his salutation of the Churches of *Galatia*. The grand feature of *Paul's* ministry is his preaching CHRIST. And it is such, both the Writer and the Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, ought to have always in view. The Reader will therefore pardon me, if I dwell but little, on every thing I meet with in the Apostolic writings, of men, or things, which have not, immediately, or indirectly, a reference, to exalt the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He is the whole sum

and substance of every thing that is blessed. And the brethren of the Churches, yea, the Church herself, in all her glory, is only by so much made so, as she derives it from CHRIST. Reader! let you and I eye Him, as the one great object of every Chapter. And very sure we shall then be, to behold, at the same time, the Church's blessedness in Him; for she is always so *in* his view: and in him, will then be so in ours.

We must not pass away from this paragraph, before that we have first noticed, how sweetly *Paul*, upon every occasion, speaks of Jesus. *Who gave himself for our sins*, saith *Paul*. Yes! gave himself. It would have been an immense thing, had CHRIST given a world, or ten thousand worlds, for his Church. But to give himself, and that a sacrifice, for the sins of his people; this called up the more awakened astonishment of the Apostle. Hence that sweet prayer, for which he bent his knees continually, that the Church might be able to comprehend, somewhat of the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge. Ephes. iii. 14—19.

And, let not the Reader overlook, how beautifully *Paul* blends the love of GOD the SON with the love of GOD the FATHER. For he immediately adds, *according to the will of GOD our FATHER*. Indeed, whoever reads attentively, the Scripture relations of the divine love, will discover, how blessedly the whole Persons of the GODHEAD have concurred, and co-operated, in the manifestation of love to the Church. In the office-characters, the glorious Persons have graciously assumed, to make known their joint love to the Church; the highly favored objects of this unspeakable mercy, are led, (when under divine teaching,) to contemplate, with equal rapture, and delight; and to have their spirits going forth in equal adoration, and thanks, to the whole Three in One, for their unspeakable grace. How precious is the love of GOD the FATHER, in his having chosen the Church in CHRIST before the foundation of the world? Ephes. i. 4. How precious the love of GOD the SON, in having betrothed the Church unto himself for ever? Hosea ii. 19. And, how precious the love of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his quickening the Church by regeneration, when dead in trespasses and sins? Ephesians ii. 1. How infinitely great, and equally blessed, are each of those acts, in the demonstration of the divine love! Had GOD the FATHER not chosen the Church in CHRIST; how would the betrothing of the Church by CHRIST have been accomplished? Had GOD the SON not betrothed the Church to himself; how would the Church have been redeemed from the ruins of the fall, in the Adam-nature, in which she was involved, in the present time-state of her being? And, had GOD the HOLY GHOST not regenerated the souls of the redeemed by his quickening grace, how would the Church have ever known, or felt, the electing love of GOD the FATHER; or the betrothing, and redeeming love of GOD the SON? But now, by each glorious Person having in Covenant-offices fulfilled the Covenant engagements made with each other, in relation to the Church, the whole Church is made everlastingly blessed in CHRIST; and hath now in time, and will have to all eternity, cause to bless JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, with equal adoration, love, and praise, for those united tokens of divine favor. *Oh! the depth of the*

riches, both of the wisdom, and knowledge of God! Well may every redeemed soul, conscious of these things, join the Apostle in his hymn of praise to JEHOVAH; and which may well be supposed to include the whole Persons of the GODHEAD: To whom be glory, for ever, and ever. Amen. To Him who gave himself! To Him who gave his Son! To Him who quickened the Church; be glory, for ever, and ever. Amen. Reader! can you join in this hymn of praise.

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ.

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I beg the Reader to observe, how *Paul* hath worded his expression, on God's call of his people: *Him that called you* (he saith) *into the grace of CHRIST*. Not Paul! not ministers, not angels! There is nothing of human strength, or even angelic power, noticed; no, not even as instruments. We cannot be too jealous over our own hearts, how we look to men as instruments, lest in them we overlook the LORD. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my SPIRIT, saith the LORD.* Zech. iv. 6. It is blessed to keep unmixed, every thing from the hallowed work, which is wholly the LORD's. If God was so jealous in the old Church, that He would have the Altar made of earth; (for the earth is the LORD's, Psm. xxiv. 1.) and if of stone, which is also the LORD's, not *hewn* stone; for the very lifting of the tool upon it, polluted it: Exod. xx. 25. can we suppose, that in the new Church, under the Gospel, the LORD is less concerned for his honor, *to give his glory to another, and his praise to graven images?* Isaiah xlii. 8. And is it not bordering upon this, when men talk of spiritual fathers, and begetting children to God, by their ministry?

Paul's surprise is strongly expressed, in noticing the backsliding of the *Galatians*. That it is backsliding, which he meant, by saying they were removed from Him that called them is very clear; because Him that called them, (meaning the LORD,) must have made it an effectual call, and including regeneration. So that, though they were removed, as to certain points of faith, (and as it should seem by what follows in this Epistle on the method of justification,) yet were they still real, and not nominal followers of the LORD. It is highly proper to notice this, for the comfort of the Church in all ages. Backsliding departures, and the like, very painful, and distressing as they are in themselves, and reproachful to God's people; yet they are consistent with the state of a truly regenerated child of God. The Church is described, in a cold, sleepy state, when JESUS called her; and even pleading excuses for not going to him, though she knew his voice. Song v. 2, 3. Oh! how certain it is, that we carry about with us a body of sin, and death, which often drags down the soul! Rom. vii. 18, &c.

I never can say enough to the Reader, in begging him to notice what *Paul* saith, of *another gospel*. Not that the Apostle allowed it to be called *another gospel*, for he immediately corrected himself, and said, it was not *another*; meaning, it was no gospel at all. And this was then, and is now, and always must be the case. For whatever is set up, different from *the faith once delivered to the saints*, ceaseth to be the Gospel, by so much, as there is a departure, from that standard. The pure Gospel of CHRIST, reveals JEHOVAH, in his threefold character, as raising up a Church, for the divine glory in CHRIST: and this, before all worlds. And the whole Persons of the GODHEAD are represented in Scripture, as engaged in Covenant settlements, to make this Church everlastingly blessed, in CHRIST, and to all eternity. As such, the Church had a Being given her in CHRIST, from the moment the SON of GOD stood up, at the call of the FATHER. And for the present time-state of the Church, foreviewed in the *Adam-fall* of nature, provision was made for her recovery, in a way, which should illustrate the divine glory, and give the Church a blessedness in CHRIST, to secure her from all future possibility of evil. In this plan, founded in infinite wisdom, and resulting from infinite love, CHRIST became the One, and the only One Ordinance of JEHOVAH; for *salvation is in no other*. And consequently, justification by CHRIST alone, was the true Gospel, preached to the *Galatians*. This the Apostle had set forth, and it was called the Gospel. And well might it be called so. For it proclaimed pardon, mercy, and peace, through the sole labors, sufferings, and death, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It appears, however, that through some means, of preachers, or others, the *Galatians* had been tempted to remove from this faith, unto what for the moment the Apostle called, though he allowed not the expression, *another gospel*. They still preached CHRIST as the Head, and thereby deceived the unwary; but they did not preach CHRIST as the *whole* of salvation. To the Jews (as should seem by what *Paul* said in another part of this Epistle, chap. v. 2, 3, 4.) they taught, that it was necessary to add *circumcision* to a faith in CHRIST; and to the Gentiles they contended, that the *works of the law* were essential to salvation. (Chap. iv. 21.)

Reader! let us pause over the state of the *Galatian Church*, for a moment; and see, whether there have not been Churches, as well as in *Galatia*, tinctured with this leaven. Yea, it may be well to enquire, whether the Church to which we belong, is altogether free from it. Chap. v. 9. *Paul's* account of himself, and of the freeness, and fulness of salvation, may serve as a standard, to form our conclusions, of what in his view was, and is, truly Gospel. *This is a faithful saying, (saith Paul,) and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners.* 1 Tim. i. 15. And worthy of all acceptation it is, (for all stand in need of it,) if we have nothing to do but accept it, as a free gift, from free grace. But if it be clogged with doings, and workings of ours; if, with the merits, and blood-shedding of the SAVIOR, there must be the minglings of the labors and merits of the sinner; if we are saved only in part, and we are to make up the deficiency in ourselves; if CHRIST hath only brought my poor soul into a salvable state, by procuring me favor to my sincere endeavors; and God's acceptance of me after all, will depend upon my tears, and repentance, and faith: this is no gospel, no glad tidings of good things, neither joy to all people; for sure I am, the whole Church of God, would be as certainly lost, in coming short of these things, as though CHRIST had not died; neither given his soul an offering for sin!

Reader! I beseech you to pause, again and again, over the important subject; for it is important. To talk of the sincerity of the heart in a man's best endeavors, when God, the searcher of hearts, declares, that *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and that none but Himself can know it:* Jerem. xvii. 9. To talk of suspending the grace of God, and the merits of CHRIST in redemption, upon the endeavors of man; leaving the event at a peradventure, whether God's grace, or man's will, shall triumph: these things are not simply rendering matters uncertain; but totally making the whole blessings of the Gospel ineffectual. And, to call this *another* gospel, is a false name, as the Apostle saith; for it is no gospel at all. And, though the advocates of such doctrine, put CHRIST at the head of it, and seem to pay him the compliment, of calling him SAVIOR, while robbing him of his glory, in not allowing him to be wholly so; yet such a religion is neither law nor Gospel, nor can it lay claim to either. It is not law, for the law pronounceth a curse upon every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. See Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10. James ii. 10. And it is not gospel, for the Gospel saith, that *by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.* Ephes. ii. 8, 9. And very certain it is, according to Scripture testimony, that as to law, *all the world is become guilty before God.* Rom. iii. 19. And, but for CHRIST's interposition, in redeeming from the curse of the law, *every mouth must be stopped.* For, as the Apostle in this same Epistle saith; *if righteousness come by the law, then CHRIST is dead in vain.* Gal. ii. 21.

The Reader ought not to wonder therefore, that *Paul* speaks so pointedly, against the awfulness of preaching such a doctrine. *If an angel from Heaven were to preach it, let him be accursed,* saith the

Apostle. *Paul* doth not mean by this expression, to suppose such a thing possible; and every one knows that the thing is impossible. For when the birth of CHRIST was made known on earth, Angels of Heaven, ambitious to be the first preachers of the wonderful event, posted down with the glad tidings. So that if an host of angels were to come again, they would only preach the same. But, saith *Paul*, if you could suppose it possible, for an angel to come from Heaven, and preach any other gospel than that I have preached, let him be accursed. And the Apostle repeats it, that no one might suppose he spake it from the warmth of the moment, or from inadvertency. But, as *Paul* very properly adds, it is not I, that seek to please, or to persuade men, but it is God!

It were earnestly to be wished, that *Paul's* faithfulness and zeal, were more followed than it is. When we look round, and behold, in the present awful day of the Church, what a mixture of law and gospel, grace and works, make up for the most part, what is called evangelical preaching; how much the creature is cried up, and the Person, glory, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, put down; how men are taught to live upon themselves, and their attainments, instead of living upon the LORD JESUS CHRIST; we have cause to tremble for the eventual consequences. And, although it would be highly unbecoming, and improper, in any, unless inspired as *Paul* was, to pronounce the *Anathema* he pronounced; (see Commentary on 1 Cor. xvi. 22.) yet this methinks I would do: wheresoever, and whensoever I hear the free will of man extolled, and the grace of God little regarded, I would do as holy men of old did, rent my garment, and pluck off my hair, in token of indignation, for the foul ingratitude offered to my God. I would look up to God; and say in language like his, who fell down astonished at the mingling of the holy seed, in direct defiance of God's law: *O my God! I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the Heaven.* Ezra ix. throughout.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ:

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified God in me.

What a beautiful and affecting history the Apostle hath here given of himself. It is indeed but short, but it is strikingly interesting. He takes it up from the days of his unregeneracy; and makes no reserve, in describing the bitterness of his mind at that time, against the faith of CHRIST. *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, that they had heard of his conversation, when in the Jews' religion, how he had persecuted the infant Church of CHRIST. Reader! it is a very high proof of a change of heart, when the soul looks back, and takes pleasure, in ascribing glory to God's grace; at the same time taking shame in acknowledging our own undeservings. And, in ministers, and preachers of the word, I believe nothing is so likely, under grace, to win souls to CHRIST, as by shewing how the Lord first graciously wrought on our own.

Paul, having shewn what he once was by nature, next proceeds to shew, what he then was by grace. And he runs it up to the fountain-head of mercy, in declaring, that it was God's free grace, and nothing of his own deserving. *When it pleased God* (said he) *who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me!* Reader! There is a set time to favor Zion! Psm. cii. 13. And, it is blessed to behold, that He, who is the God in nature and in providence, is the same also in grace. He who separates from the womb of nature, did long before separate in the womb of eternity his chosen ones. And he who appoints the time of their birth in nature, hath marked their time in the new birth of grace. As it was by CHRIST, so it is by all the members of his mystical body. *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son.* Gal. iv. 4. And when the fulness of time is come, for the

recovery of CHRIST's members from the *Adam*-nature of sin; God sends forth the SPIRIT of his SON into our hearts, whereby we cry Abba FATHER! So minutely doth the LORD attend to all the concerns of his people!

Reader! it is to rob our souls of comfort, when we rob CHRIST of glory. Oh! had we eyes to see, or hearts to contemplate, things as they are, we should not confine our thoughts respecting CHRIST, to the act of redemption. Redemption is but part of his office-work. It is the SON of God's work, in his union with our nature, to reign in, and rule over, all the departments of nature, providence, grace, and glory. *He is the head over all things to the Church, which is his body: the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.* Ephes. i. 23. It will be well, if you and I can bear testimony to the same work of the LORD, in all the departments of it, as it concerns ourselves; and say, as *Paul* did: He who separated me from my mother's womb, hath called me by his grace!

I admire the Apostle's expression, in his account of a saving, and effectual call, when he terms it, *to reveal his SON in me*. He doth not say merely to me, but *in me*. Not simply opening to the Apostle's view who CHRIST is; neither shewing to *Paul* his infinite fulness, and suitability: but *in him*; that is, giving the Apostle an apprehension of CHRIST, and *Paul's* right in him. Reader! do not hastily pass away from this distinguishing feature of personal grace. Many hear of CHRIST, and in this sense may be said to have an outward revelation of him; but *Paul's* was, and so must every child of God's be, an inward manifestation *in him*. *Job*, ages past, marked the vast difference, in his own experience, when he said: *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear*. Thus do thousands, and go no further. *But now (saith Job) mine eye seeth thee*. Similar to *Paul*: God revealed his SON in me. Here is the sweet mark of God's children. *Job* xlii. 5.

And, what makes this *in-revelation* so truly blessed, in distinction to all *outward* proclamations, is the assurance it brings with it, that all the Persons of the GODHEAD do graciously concur, and co-operate in this gifted mercy. God (saith *Paul*, meaning the FATHER,) *revealed his SON in me*. And it is GOD the SON which reveals himself to his people, for so he promised; and so it is said: *in thy light shall we see light*. John xiv. 21. Psm. xxxvi. 9. For as the sun in nature, in his own light, gives light to the objects in nature: So the Sun of Righteousness, in grace, gives light from his own light, whereby we discover his divine light, shining in our souls. And no less, God the HOLY GHOST becomes a *spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*: Ephes. i. 17. Indeed, all the knowledge we have of each Person of the GODHEAD, is from each other, concerning each other, and by each other. *No man hath seen God at any time. But the only begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him*. John i. 18. In like manner, it is said, *no man knoweth the SON but the FATHER; neither knoweth any man the FATHER save the SON, and he to whomsoever the SON will reveal him*. Matt. xi. 27. And JESUS, in promising the HOLY GHOST, declared, that when He was come, he should make known both the FATHER and the SON to his people. *At that day, (saith CHRIST,) ye*

shall know, that I am in my FATHER, and ye in me, and I in you. John xiv. 20. Reader! what saith your heart's experience to these things? *Paul* here tells you, that at the time God, who separated him from his mother's womb, was pleased to call him by his grace; that then, he revealed his SON in him. Hath it been so with you? Depend upon it, he that separated in nature, is the same which sets apart in grace. Hath he so wrought in you? Have you seen, and do you now see, the glory of God as it relates to your own soul, in the face of JESUS CHRIST?

I must not, in a work of this kind, enlarge upon all the particulars, to which *Paul* refers in his history. But if the limits of the *Poor Man's Commentary* would admit of it, many sweet subjects arise out of them. His authority to preach, his faithfulness in preaching, his abstractedness from all human teaching, and the glory the Churches gave to God, both for his wonderful conversion, and his call to the ministry; these would lead to very inprovable, and profitable discourse. But, having already swollen the observations on this Chapter beyond the usual length, I add no more.

REFLECTIONS.

SWEET testimony to my LORD in the account here given by his servant, of his call to the Apostleship! No man could commission to the office, *Paul* knew. And it was *Paul's* joy to consider, that he neither received it from man, nor was called to it by man, but by GOD his SAVIOR! JESUS! who miraculously called to him from Heaven, made him an Apostle, and sent him to preach his Gospel. Oh! precious testimony, both to *Paul's* Apostleship, and to *Paul's* preaching; and to the GODHEAD of our LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Reader! listen to what *Paul* hath here again related, of his original state of nature, and unregeneracy. Oh! who to all appearance, more unpromising, more unlikely to be called by sovereign grace, when breathing out threatenings, and slaughter, against the disciples of the LORD! Listen to what he hath said of the LORD's call to him! See what God can accomplish, on the stoutest hearts of sinners! Behold him preaching the pure, unadulterated Gospel, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Ask *Paul*, from whence the wonderful change? A Persecutor, Blasphemer, Injurious! And now behold him, preaching the faith which once he denied. What cannot God accomplish? What will He not accomplish, to bring home his own to himself; and to rescue his whole Church from the hand of the enemy?

Reader! let you and I glorify God, in him, and for him, and for all the mercies and blessings the Church hath derived, and will derive from *Paul's* ministry, to the latest period of time. And, oh! for grace to keep always in remembrance, as the conclusion of all *Paul's* discourses, which he himself made, as the end, and consequence of his conversion: *For this cause, (said he,) 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.*

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle opens this Chapter, about his Visit to Jerusalem. And then enters upon the grand Subject of his whole Epistle, of the Method of Justification, solely in, and by CHRIST.

THEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised :

4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage :

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour ; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

I humbly conceive, that by the *fourteen* years, the Apostle here speaks of, he meant, from the date of his conversion. And it should seem to be the more probable, because he had just before in the preceding Chapter, been speaking of that wonderful event. So that it was warm upon his mind. And the revelation, which he saith he went up by, is meant to imply, that his going there, was neither by mission from the Church, nor from his own desire, but from some secret intimation from the LORD. No doubt, but that the Apostle, from living much in personal communion with Jesus, through the SPIRIT, found his mind not unfrequently directed in his movements from one place to another, and more especially in such as related more immediately to the Church. Reader! is it not in some measure realizing heaven upon earth, when the children of GOD by faith are enabled to keep up constant fellowship with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST? And is not this the very design of all the LORD's communications to his people? 1 John i. 1—3. Rev. iii. 20. Yea, is it not to the want of this, the soul is in leanness?

I beg the Reader to observe the manner of expression the Apostle useth, when speaking of the doctrine he preached. He calls it, that Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. Not that he

preached any other, than one, and the same Gospel, both to Jew and Gentile. But that he preached the pure Gospel, unmixed with the least shades of the Jewish ceremonies. CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, as JEHOVAH's salvation to the ends of the earth, was the whole sum, and substance, of *Paul's* preaching. What the Apostle determined in his preaching to the Church at *Corinth*, was the same to all Churches; JESUS CHRIST *and him crucified*. He determined to know nothing beside. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Justification by CHRIST without the works of the law, made up the whole, both of *Paul's* preachings, and of his writings, as relating to the present time-state of the Church. And the title at the head of every Epistle, and the text of every Sermon, this Chapter, in a single verse of it, would have suited. *I, through the law, (said Paul,) am dead to the law, that I might live unto God!* We shall find many occasions as we pass through this beautiful Epistle, to observe, how closely the Apostle stuck to this doctrine, and followed it up. No one point of the Gospel, did *Paul* more warmly contend for, or more clearly prove. And we have reason to bless the HOLY GHOST, for raising up his servant to this ministry, and for directing the Apostle's mind, to establish the great truth, so clearly as he hath done; in the proper apprehension of which, the Church is so highly concerned. But it will be sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that this was the Gospel he preached to the *Gentiles*; and in which there was no variation, from all his discourses.

What the Apostle speaks of *privately* preaching to Persons of reputation, means no other, I humbly conceive, than that, he familiarly discoursed upon the same subject, in the private conversation he held with those he visited, at their own houses, or in the walks he had with them; as what he discoursed upon, in the public congregation. Many of those whom the LORD had called by sovereign grace, were of Jewish extraction; and of consequence, they naturally had an attachment to the law of *Moses*, in which they had been educated. *Paul*, therefore, in private discourse, it is more than probable, taught them more plainly, and familiarly, by answering questions which might arise out of discourse, than could have been done in public. And as he elsewhere, in another part of his Epistle expressed it, he taught them, that in CHRIST JESUS *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*. Chap. vi. 15.

And, perhaps, the Reader, if he be well acquainted with the state of the Church in the present day, yea, from his own experience it may be, will know, how difficult deep-rooted prejudices of nature, custom, and education, are, to be totally destroyed. I know, through grace, and from divine teaching, that CHRIST *is all and in all*. And, I am as fully persuaded, as if all the great truths of God were laid open before me now, as they will in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; that salvation is wholly in CHRIST, and wholly from CHRIST: and that the Church, in every individual member of the sacred body, can neither add to, nor take from, the sovereign work, fulfilled, completed, and finished, as it hath been, by the LORD JESUS himself alone. I stand convinced, on the most palpable testimony of Scripture, that neither tears nor prayers, repentance, nor faith, as *procuring* causes, become the least atom, in obtaining

this great salvation. I know these things in *theory*, as plain, and clear, as though written with a sun-beam; yet often do I detect myself in *practice*, taking a certain degree of greater, or less comfort, as *that prayer* hath been more fervently offered, or *this ordinance* more sweetly enjoyed. And yet, when the thing be rightly considered, what is this, but substituting *somewhat* in the room of CHRIST. To live simply upon JESUS, as the Head of his body the Church, the fulness that filleth all in all, is to make Him what JEHOVAH hath made him to the Church; the head of all influence, and of all happiness: being made of God to all his people, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; *that all glory may be not in what we feel, but what CHRIST is, and in the LORD.* 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. But, if gracious, and truly regenerated souls, (for it is of such only that I am now speaking,) who profess to seek justification by CHRIST only, live more, or less comfortable, as they feel the workings of grace in their hearts; what is this, but by so much departing from the simplicity that is in CHRIST; and not as *Paul* speaks, *holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* Coloss. ii. 19.

I hope that the Reader, through grace, will enter into the right apprehension of this statement. He will not then suppose, that I am speaking in the smallest degree slightly of the workings of grace in the soul. The gifts of the HOLY GHOST, and the exercise of the heart in them, are precious things. And very blessed it is to enjoy them, and to be led by them, as handmaids unto the LORD JESUS. But grace and gifts are not CHRIST. And sweeter by far is it, to be led by God the SPIRIT to JESUS, empty, poor, and needy, and under a conscious leanness of soul, to cleave to JESUS for new supplies of spiritual blessings, than in the most lively actings of joy, to take comfort from *what we feel*, and in those seasons lose sight of *what CHRIST is*. Reader! depend upon it, that it is treading on the confines of danger, when our spirits are carried away with the rudiments of our own hearts, and not after CHRIST. Coloss. ii. 8.

We must not overlook what the Apostle hath observed concerning this *private preaching* of his, when he saith, that it was, lest by any means *he should run, or had run, in vain.* *Paul* could not mean, that he had either any doubts, in relation to the truths he preached, or of his being sent by the LORD to preach them, or of his success in preaching, in all instances to whom the LORD sent him. The LORD had taught *Paul* himself, for he received it not from man. neither was taught it by man, but by JESUS CHRIST. Chap. i. 11, 12. And God the HOLY GHOST had specially ordained him, when he sent him forth to the ministry. Acts xiii. 1—5. And the LORD had long borne testimony to the word of his grace by *Paul*. Acts xiv. 1—10. But when the Apostle speaks of running in vain, he meant, lest the people, from the temptation of the enemy, and the corruptions of their own minds, should take prejudice against the blessed doctrine he taught, of justification *in CHRIST*, and *by CHRIST* alone, as if it favored licentiousness. Reader! it is this clamor against the truth of God, which hath been set up by *Satan* in all ages of the Church, and is, indeed, among the master-pieces of his devices,

What multitudes are kept back by his policy, sometimes for years together, from even hearing the preachers of this free-grace salvation? And how many precious souls doth his diabolical craft cause to go lean, from day to day, under the same distressing apprehension? It is, indeed, the most dangerous of all his delusions, when he transforms himself into an angel of light. And when the temptation is dressed up, under such a specious covering, that to trust wholly in CHRIST, is opening the very flood-gates of sin; who, in the first face of this argument, would suspect that the supposed friendly caution came from hell? Reader! it is the blessedness of God's children, that though we are told by CHRIST himself, such will be the temptations of the latter day trials, that, if it were possible, they would deceive even the very elect; yet, JESUS by the impossibility, limits the danger, they shall not. Matt. xxiv. 24. Though *Satan* doth for a long time terrify the LORD's little ones, yet he shall not finally. Many, by his hugbear stratagems, do sometimes live in great poverty and leanness of soul, and in much fear. But here is their security: *All that the FATHER giveth me, (saith CHRIST,) shall come to me.* John vi. 37. Sooner or later they must come. And JESUS sweetly adds: *They shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free.* John viii. 32.

I beg the Reader to notice *Paul's* expression, when he calls those *false brethren* who opposed him and his preaching. There is a sense, in which men professing the same name of Christian, may be called *brethren*, because they differ from *Jews* and *Mahometans*, who totally disown CHRIST. But they are *false brethren*, who though professing CHRIST, deny his GODHEAD. Modern manners taking place of antient faith, have, indeed, endeavored to amalgamate things of opposite qualities, and to make *the iron and the clay to join.* Dan. ii. 43. Hence men, as opposite in their creed as light and darkness, are now found to meet together, and smothering the real sentiments of their hearts, profess to be all cordially united in brotherly love, to promote religion through the earth. Their different views of CHRIST, the great Author of the Gospel, is considered by them as a *secondary* consideration; and whether they believe in his GODHEAD, or do not, the robbing the SON of GOD of his glory, in this first and highest of all possible concerns, is passed by, that the spread of religion, according to their different views, may not be obstructed by such means! Such things were not known in the days of the Apostles! Nay, so much the reverse, that *John*, under the immediate direction of the HOLY GHOST, said, and left it upon record, for a guide to the faithful in all ages, that *if there come unto you, (said John,) and bring not this doctrine, (namely, the doctrine of CHRIST, which hath both the FATHER and the SON,) receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.* 2 John 9, 10, 11. And *Paul*, under the same authority, commanded the Church *not to be unequally yoked.* Yea, the Apostle demands, as a thing perfectly decided and incontrovertible, *what part (saith he) hath he that believeth with an Infidel?* And the express command of God himself to the same amount is: *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive*

you; and will be a FATHER unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty. 2 Cor. vi. 14, to the end.

The *false brethren* of *Paul's* days, to which he alludes, differed, in some shades, from those of modern times. They did not deny the GODHEAD of CHRIST, but they called in question, it should seem, the doctrine *Paul* taught of free grace, for he saith, they came in *privily to spy out the liberty which is in CHRIST JESUS*. By which, it is evident, they disliked the doctrine of justification by CHRIST alone, and endeavoured to bring the people into bondage, by teaching them to seek justification, in part, by their good works. Happy would it have been, for the peace and comfort of the Church, had such characters been known only in the days of the Apostles. But their generation hath reached to the present hour! Let not the Reader, however, overlook an inspired Apostle's testimony concerning them. *Paul* calls them *false brethren*! And the fallacy of their doctrine may be clearly seen by a single illustration. Suppose a poor sinner under the awakenings of grace, and by the leadings of the HOLY GHOST, from the conviction of sin, comes forth with the anxious question, *what must I do to be saved?* And, suppose, that instead of the immediate answer *Paul* gave to this same question, when put to him by the *Jailor* at *Philippi*, *believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house*; Acts xvi. 30, 31. suppose, that a preacher should direct such an one to his repentings and reformings, to his amendments, and tears, and prayers, telling him to hope that CHRIST will do the rest, when he hath done his best? What a trifling would this be with an alarmed sinner under his soul distresses? And what could charity herself say of all such preachers, but as *Job* did of those pretended friends of his, when they read to him such reproofing lectures on his dunghill; *Miserable comforters are ye all!* Job xvi. 2. Oh! how sweet doth God the SPIRIT preach CHRIST in his fulness, compleatness, and all-sufficiency, when he saith, *In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Isaiah xlv. 25. Reader! look to these things, for they are now.

6 But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in confidence added nothing to me:

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who

seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should* go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.

I do not think it necessary to swell the pages of the *Poor Man's Commentary* on the subject, (and which hath long since ceased, as well as all the parties of it,) concerning *Paul's* reproving *Peter*. It should seem very clearly from the history, that *Paul's* doctrine, and *Peter's*, were both essentially, one and the same, on all the grand points of the Gospel. 1 Pet. i. 5. They only differed, as to the indulgence *Peter* had shewn to the *Gentiles*, in relation to common food. Since the HOLY GHOST had taught *Peter* by the vision on the house top, (see Acts x. 9—16.) that there was nothing common or unclean which GOD had sanctified, *Peter* had no longer scrupled to eat with the *Gentiles*. But, when certain *Jews* came with *James*, fearing that these might take offence at this Christian liberty, in accommodation to their prejudices, the Apostle withdrew from them. Had *Peter* been more firm in this liberty, he would not have incurred the displeasure of *Paul*. But we learn from it, that great men, and the greatest of men, are but men. No where can we look for perfection, but to the LORD JESUS. And sweetly hath the HOLY GHOST caused the frailties of his saints to be recorded, purposely to teach

the Church her own nothingness, in her best characters, and that all her excellency is alone in CHRIST.

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

I beg the Reader to be very attentive to the statement, which GOD the HOLY GHOST hath here made by his servant the Apostle, concerning the method of justification, and which, indeed, more or less, is the subject of this whole Epistle. And I beg the Reader's attention to it the more, because errors are continually discovered in the minds, even of the LORD's people, on this great point of the Gospel. Nothing this side eternity, can be as interesting, as for every child of God to know the sure ground of his acceptance with GOD in CHRIST. The smallest departure from truth, in this particular, may induce great confusion. And until that my soul is firmly established in an unshaken confidence of GOD's full justification in CHRIST, I shall not be prepared either for an appearance before GOD, in time, or in eternity.

Now the Apostle's account is short, and plain, and simple: *Knowing, (saith he,) that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of JESUS CHRIST.* And the reason is evident. The law of GOD demands unsinning obedience. The least departure is a breach of the whole, and, consequently, the offender is subject to the full penalty of disobedience. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. And as all mankind have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD;* so, it must undeniably follow, that by the deeds of the law, can no flesh be justified in GOD's sight. This is a short, but it is a clear statement of what Paul saith, *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law.*

From the law, the Apostle turns to the Gospel. *We are justified by the faith of JESUS CHRIST.* Here Paul considers CHRIST as the sole justifying cause before GOD, of his Church and people. And on this truly scriptural ground. CHRIST as their Head, and Surety, and Representative, obeyed the whole precepts of the law, and suffered the whole penalty of the breaches of it by his death. Hence, as the Apostle sums it up in the next chapter, *CHRIST hath redeemed us*

from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. Gal. iii. 13. Here, therefore, there is as full a confirmation of redemption by CHRIST, as under the foregoing observation, there was a confirmation of being condemned by the law. And CHRIST's obedience and death, being set forth by God himself for a propitiation, nothing can be more plain and satisfactory, than that *we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of all our sins, according to the riches of his grace. Ephes. i. 7.*

And the way in which this obedience and blood-shedding of CHRIST becomes the cause of the justification of his people before God is, by virtue of their union with him, and their interest in him. CHRIST and his people, in the eye of God's righteous law, are one. Hence, what CHRIST did, is as if they had done it. What CHRIST suffered, is as if they had suffered. For, as in all, CHRIST acted as their Surety, and being accepted of God, yea, appointed by God in this high character, when he had performed all his Suretyship-offices, and God declared himself well pleased with him, both law and justice must discharge the original debtor, having come upon the Surety, and the debt having been fully paid. Both cannot pay, for, in that case, it would be doubly paid, which would be unjust. And, therefore, the Apostle's conclusion is correct. *Now, therefore, there can be no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 1.*

And, lastly, to add no more. The soul's enjoyment of this blessed state of justification before God, solely in the Person, and by the redemption of CHRIST, becomes the right of every regenerated child of God, in all its bearings, and in all its branches, by faith. So Paul declares: *We are justified (saith he) by the faith of CHRIST.* Hence, though the whole work and glory is CHRIST's, yet the Church enjoys it by faith. We realize the blessed properties of the whole, by our faith in Him, and our dependance upon Him. So, that in the proportion that the Lord gives his people grace to act faith upon CHRIST, and his compleat righteousness, which justifies freely, fully, satisfactorily; such, more or less, will be *our joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope through the power of the HOLY GHOST. Rom. xv. 13.*

It forms a blessed view to faith, to behold this compleat remedy of God's own providing, for the recovery of the Church from sin, in this time-state of her being. And it is very blessed also, when by faith, we live in the enjoyment of it. Here we see the truth and sweetness of that blessed scripture, that CHRIST is set forth *a propitiation through faith in his blood. Rom. iii. 25.* And we see no less, under the same divine teaching, that as God hath set CHRIST forth a propitiation, so the Church is accepted in him. CHRIST's righteousness, in the sight of God, is their righteousness, as being one with him. They are, indeed, One. And, hence, scripture declares, that CHRIST's righteousness is *unto all, and upon all that believe. Rom. iii. 22.* So that they are accounted holy in CHRIST's holiness, as if they had fulfilled all holiness in their own persons. Song iv. 7. Ezek. xvi. 14. Reader! do not dismiss the subject, until, through the Lord's teaching, you have found the blessedness of it in your own heart. And suffer me to add, that you never will enter into the compleat and absolute enjoyment of it, before that the Lord

hath made you bare, and stripped you of all, and every supposed quality in yourself, and in your own attainments. A man must see himself lost, before that he will ask for salvation. And CHRIST will never be precious, until sin is seen to be exceeding sinful. And no one will rightly esteem CHRIST's righteousness, while fancying he hath somewhat of his own to recommend him before God.

I cannot refrain from calling the Reader's attention one moment longer, to what the Apostle here saith, of being *dead to the law, that he might live unto God*. If these words were not found in the Bible, and written by a man, under the immediate influence of the HOLY GHOST, we should stand amazed at the Apostle's account of himself. *Dead to the law!* What was *Paul* lawless? Yes! indeed, if putting CHRIST in the place of the law be so. For, in fact, not only *Paul*, but every regenerated child of God is so, in respect to seeking principles of life, or justification from the law. CHRIST is the sole life of every one who is regenerated. That soul cannot be living upon CHRIST, who makes any one law-work a part of justification. No man can be looking to CHRIST and the law together for life. If you are alive in CHRIST, like *Paul*, you are dead to the law. But so far is this from giving occasion to licentiousness, that the HOLY GHOST declares it to be the only source of subduing sin. *If ye through the SPIRIT do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Rom. viii. 13.

Some there are, however, from being untaught by the SPIRIT, and, consequently, unable to explain these things according to their creed, have ventured to interpret the Apostle's expression, as if, when *Paul* said he was dead to the law, he meant the *Ceremonial* law. But, unhappily for their cause, the Scriptures never make a distinction between the *moral* and *ceremonial* law, when speaking on the subject. This distinction exists but in men's brains. And, wonderful to tell, after all the volumes which men, untaught of God, have written about the moral law, there is not such a word as *moral* or *ceremonial* in all the Bible. So, that while men of this complexion are wearying themselves for very vanity, their labors are all foreign to Scripture, and serve only to prove, what (must everlastingly be expected from the writings of unawakened men,) that they know not God. 1 Cor. i. 21.

As, therefore, the Scriptures of God, when speaking of the law, make no distinction, but plainly mean the whole law; so, when *Paul* tells the Church he is dead to the law, he also can be supposed to mean no other, than the whole of it. And, if the Apostle be allowed, (as every honest man should,) to explain his own meaning, his words in this place are in exact correspondence to all his other writings on the subject. Let the Reader consult what *Paul* hath said, 1 Cor. ix. 21. and Philip. iii. 6—9. and then say, whether such blessed living upon CHRIST can be licentiousness. Let men call it so if they dare. Be it my happiness to have the same law-death and SPIRIT-life in Jesus. Time, or rather eternity will shew with whom the truth is. Whether the bolstered pride of a poor, sinful man's fancied righteousness, or *the righteousness which is of God by faith?*

20 I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me ; and gave himself for me.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God : for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

We have a most beautiful and blessed subject opened to us in those words. I only lament the shortness I must observe, in this work, in commenting on them. *Paul* being crucified with CHRIST, cannot be supposed to mean a bodily crucifixion, for the Apostle was not present, as far as we can learn, when CHRIST died on the cross. But the sense is, *Paul*, as a member of CHRIST's mystical body, was represented by CHRIST in his death. And in this sense, so was every individual of CHRIST's Church. Precisely the same as in *Adam's* transgression in the garden, I, and the whole race of mankind were involved with him, both in the sin and punishment. For, as it is said of *Levi*, that he was in the loins of his father *Abraham* when *Melchizedec* met him, and blessed him, (Heb. vii. 10.) so all the seed of *Adam* were in the loins of *Adam*, when our first father fell by transgression, and pulled down upon himself and his posterity the dreadful ruin. In like manner, all the spiritual seed of CHRIST were in the loins of CHRIST from everlasting, and, of consequence, interested in all the blessedness he hath procured for them. Hence, *Paul* might say, and every child of God may truly say the same, *I am crucified with CHRIST*. For CHRIST was not crucified as a private person, but as the public head and representative of his whole body the Church. So, that when he died *for* sin, in him they became dead *to* sin. His death became the spring of their life, for by his death he overcame death, and *by his stripes*, as the Prophet declared, *we are healed*. Isaiah liii. 5.

And it is very blessed to behold how sweetly the scriptures follow up the subject, through all the several subsequent parts of it, from the cross to the crown. As the Church is crucified with CHRIST, so is she said *to be buried with him by baptism unto death*. Rom. vi. 3. And as buried with him, so *risen with him to newness of life*. Coloss. ii. 12. And as risen with him, so is she said *to sit together with him in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS*. Ephes. ii. 6. And in CHRIST's entrance into heaven, he is expressly said to have entered there as *our forerunner, and to appear in the presence of God for us*. Heb. vi. 19, 20. and ix. 24—28. So that in all, and every department of CHRIST's offices, the LORD of life and glory is never considered in the Scriptures of eternal truth, as acting in a private capacity, but as the public head and representative of his people. *Paul* was therefore very correct, when he said, *I am crucified with CHRIST*. Reader ! there is one point that You and I should attend to on this subject, which, if like *Paul*, we can subscribe to, as he could, will make it very blessed indeed. We both daily prove our descent from *Adam*

by *generation*, for certain it is, that his blood and corruption run through our veins, and we too sadly feel the consequence of sin in the sorrows of it. The grand question is, can we as clearly prove our union with CHRIST by *regeneration*, in the sweet influences of his Holy SPIRIT, quickening us from dead works to a new life in CHRIST, and his righteousness? Sweet and precious testimony, when the SPIRIT thus witnesseth to our spirits, that *we are the children of God!*

But we must go further, for many more beauties are contained in this glorious Scripture. *Paul* saith, that he was not only crucified with CHRIST, but that he lived with him. And how contradictory soever this may appear to carnal men, they are among the plainest truths of God to those that are spiritual. A oneness with CHRIST is the sole cause of all. This brings up after it all its blessedness. It is not a *natural*, but a *spiritual* life. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth*, (saith JESUS himself,) *the flesh profiteth nothing*. John vi. 63. And hence *Paul* saith: *If CHRIST be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness*. Rom. viii. 10. Regeneration makes no alteration on the flesh, but the spirit. There is nothing in the flesh made holy. And there is nothing in the spirit left unholy. Hence, *Paul* saith, Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me. Not life in *Paul*, but in CHRIST; yea, CHRIST living in him.

I entreat the Reader, attentively to observe the Apostle's words, and he will discover their beauty and order. *Paul* doth not say *I live in CHRIST*, but it is CHRIST which liveth in me. It is not *first* our interest in CHRIST, but CHRIST's interest in us, which is the source of all life and blessedness. CHRIST's right in us is the *cause*. Our right in him is the *effect*. *We love him because he first loved us*. And the Church lays her claim to CHRIST on this ground. *I am* (saith she) *my beloved's*. And then she adds, *and my beloved is mine*. Song vi. 3. 1 John iv. 19.

Neither is this all. The Apostle adds: *And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*. Oh! what unnumbered and endless blessings are contained in these words. I can but just glance at them. Let the Reader, however, not fail to take notice how sweetly *Paul* chimes on the subject of faith. All his life is in CHRIST, from CHRIST, by CHRIST. And all his enjoyment of this life is by faith of the Son of God. Yes! it is by the lively actings of faith, that the LORD's people enjoy their high privileges in CHRIST. Observe, all is in CHRIST; yea, CHRIST himself is their all. But their joys in this life, will be more or less, as they are enabled to live upon JESUS. And, if the Reader will look a little more narrowly into the subject, he will discover, that both the life in CHRIST, and the faith *Paul* speaks of from CHRIST, are from one and the same. Perhaps I shall somewhat surprize the Reader at first, when I say, that faith is not an act of the child of God, no more than the life in CHRIST, which gives birth to that faith is. *Paul's* expression warrants this conclusion. He saith, that the life he now lives in the flesh, (meaning his time-state in the body,) he lives by the faith of the Son of God. Of the Son of God, not in the Son of God. Whereas, if

this faith was *our* act, though God's gift, it would not be of the SON of GOD, but *in*, or *upon*, the SON of GOD. And this is scriptural. For CHRIST is both the *Author*, and the *Finisher*, and the *Giver* of faith. Heb. xii. 2. Philip. i. 29. Therefore, faith is CHRIST's act upon his people, which calls forth their life of faith upon him, and not first their act upon him. The life of faith, like all other life, is first a life of receiving. Incomings before outgoings. Air received before we breathe forth. The first is the *cause*, the last the *effect*. I hope the Reader will apprehend me. *Paul*, certainly, himself so distinguished, and both knew the difference, and enjoyed it, when he said, upon another occasion, to the Philippian Church, *I follow after*, (said *Paul*,) *if I may apprehend that, for which I also am apprehended of CHRIST JESUS*. Philip. iii. 12. It is CHRIST's apprehension, or holding us up, which is the cause both of our safety and happiness, and not our apprehension of him. The child in the bosom finds security, not from clasping the fond mother's neck, but from being encircled in her arms. And in like manner, our safety ariseth, not from our faith, but from CHRIST's love. *The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath are the everlasting arms*. Deut. xxxiii. 27. Hence one of old, convinced of this, cried out to the LORD: *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; yea, my delight shall be always in thy statutes*. Psm. cxix. 117.

I must not trespass: but I know not how to leave my meditation on this precious Scripture. There is a vast deal of the most lively act of faith, going forth upon the *Person* of the LORD JESUS, when *Paul* said: *who loved me, and gave himself for me*. It is CHRIST himself which the Apostle so passionately hangs upon; and the consequences resulting from the LORD's love to him, he then enjoys. *Paul* views CHRIST the *cause*: and the giving himself for *Paul*, the *effect*. But who is competent to unfold, and explain, a thousandth part of what is contained in the bosom of this sweet Scripture, when considered, in the infinite dignity of the *Person loving*, and the unparalleled nature of the gift *bestowed*; together with the view of those, on whom he maketh that grace to shine? No powers of arithmetic can number the extent of that *love*; neither the value of that *gift*. The Church of God, while in grace here upon earth, may in silence muse on the boundless subject; and hereafter in glory, when with faculties ripened into perfection, the body of CHRIST will be more fully qualified, to contemplate it; but the full discovery of it, being in its very nature infinite, will never, to all eternity, be so compleatly unfolded, so as to say, the whole is seen. Oh! for CHRIST now to dwell in our hearts by faith, that being rooted, and grounded in love, *we may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God*. Ephes. iii. 14 to the end.

I admire the Apostle's conclusion of the Chapter. It forms a strong appeal to the truth, after what he had before been speaking, of the *Person*, and glory of CHRIST, and the entire justification of his Church, by Himself, and his redemption-work. *I do not* (said he) *frustrate the grace of God*. No! But, on the contrary, he gives all the glory, where alone it is due; and magnifies the divine mercy, in

ascribing the whole to grace. All, according to *Paul's* view of the subject, and under the teaching of God the HOLY GHOST, is *to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath made the Church accepted in the Beloved*. Ephes. i. 6. But it would be a miserable thing indeed, and sadly frustrating, and making void, the riches of God's grace, to join any thing of the work of the creature, in whole, or in part, as in the least contributing to justification before God. *For if righteousness come by the law*: if any of the fallen race of *Adam*, could be supposed capable of working out for themselves a righteousness of their own; yea, could perform a single deed, or exercise a single thought of purity, to recommend themselves to the great Searcher of hearts: in this case, it would set aside, the necessity of redemption. For this would at once shew, that the creature hath a capability of *somewhat*, be that somewhat ever so little; and by improvement, more might then be expected from him. And then, the consequences which would follow, would be, that there could have been no cause for so great a sacrifice as God's dear SON. The blood of CHRIST might have been spared: and CHRIST (as *Paul* saith) *is then dead in vain*. Whereas, the decided, unalterable language of holy Scripture, on this point, is, that *without shedding of blood there is no remission*. Heb. ix. 22. That it was in due time, CHRIST died for the ungodly. Rom. v. 6. And that, *if one died for all, then were all dead*. 2 Cor. v. 14. Oh! the foul ingratitude, in attempting to lessen the infinite importance of CHRIST's obedience and death, as the sole cause of salvation! Oh! the horrible presumption, in thereby impeaching both the wisdom, and love of God, in the contrivance of such vast mercies! And, oh! thou dear Redeemer! what base returns, are these to thee, and all thine agonies, and soul-travail, when men set up a righteousness of their own, to lessen thereby, the infinitely precious sacrifice of thyself on the cross, whereby alone, *thou hast perfected for ever them that are sanctified!* Reader! will you bend your knee with mine, and with me beg of God that like *Paul*, we may be always able to say: *I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then CHRIST is dead in vain*.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pass over every lesser consideration, of men, and things relating to the Apostles, and servants of CHRIST, to have our whole thoughts fixed and centered upon the Person of the Almighty Master. Precious JESUS! be thou the One glorious Object of all my meditation!

And, while I contemplate CHRIST on the cross, as *Paul* hath here set him forth; let me ask myself, whether like *Paul* I can say, *I am crucified with him!* Do I indeed know that CHRIST, in all his sufferings and death, was the Surety, Representative, and Head of his people? Was I, to all intents and purposes, in Him, represented by Him, and by his sufferings and death, in the name, and for his people, redeemed by Him; and the old man of sin, in my nature, crucified with him? And not only in the cross, but in his burial, resurrection, ascension, entrance into Heaven, and sitting at the

right hand of the Majesty on high; in all these, do I know JESUS as my representative? Did CHRIST buy out my redemption, on the cross? Am I buried with him by baptism, into death? Am I risen with him, by regeneration, through GOD the HOLY GHOST; and do I see myself by faith sitting with Him, in heavenly places, in CHRIST JESUS? Is He gone as my forerunner, to appear in the presence of GOD for me; and the life I now live in the flesh, do I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, who loved me, and gave himself for me? Oh! for grace, in lively exercise, to be always realizing my personal interest in CHRIST! And may it be my daily portion, under the gracious teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to know, that such is the infinite dignity of CHRIST's Person, and the infinite preciousness of his bloodshedding, and righteousness, that JEHOVAH is more honored, and glorified, by his obedience and death, than he is dishonored, by all the sins of his people, during the whole time-state of the Church on earth! Yes! thou dear LORD! I do see, through GOD the SPIRIT's teaching, that thou art every thing that is blessed, to thy Church, and people; and like *Paul, I am dead to the law, that I might live unto GOD.*

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle is still prosecuting the Subject of Justification solely in CHRIST. He sweetly speaks of the Mediator, and the Blessedness of being in CHRIST.

O Foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Let the Reader observe, that when *Paul* calls the *Galatians* foolish, the word is meant in no worse sense, than that of weakness in faith. The expression is like that of CHRIST, to his disciples, at *Emmaus*. Luke xxiv. 25. In both cases, the persons spoken to,

were in grace; and, therefore, it differed wholly from the Scriptural sense of fool, such as CHRIST condemned: Matt. v. 22. See Commentary there. In that sense, and some others, the term evidently meant, *reprobate*. See Job. xxviii. 28. with Isaiah xxvii. 11. If the Reader hath my *Poor Man's Concordance* at hand, he may consult it, under the article *Rebel* for information, as to the difference in those terms. God's children are called *rebellious*, yea, the LORD calls them himself: Isaiah xxx. i. and a *temporary* woe is pronounced upon them. But the LORD never calls them *rebels*; neither doth the LORD allow any other, to call them by that name, with impunity. See Numb. xx. 10.

What rendered the conduct of those *Galatians* the more reprehensible was, that CHRIST had been so blessedly preached to them, in all his fulness, and all-sufficiency; as if they had in reality been present at all the great events, which attended his crucifixion, and death, at *Jerusalem*. And yet, with all those strong convictions on their minds, they were turning aside, from seeking justification, in a full, free grace in CHRIST, to take to them recommendations, by the deeds of the law. Reader! the smallest attention to the Apostle's statement, under grace, is enough to convince any man, of the folly and weakness of such conduct. Let a child of God, who is savingly called by sovereign grace, to the truth as it is in JESUS, ask his own heart, the same question *Paul* asked those *Galatians*. How was the SPIRIT first received? For, as it was first received, so must it be to the last. As I came to CHRIST, in the first moments of conviction, under sin; so must I, at the very last, come to Him. For in myself, I have no more to bring him *now*, than I had *then*. And as I came, under the reproaches, and condemnations of my own heart; so must I always come. And a blessed, and a sure way of coming it is, in which the divine glory, and the soul's safety, sweetly concur. And to live upon CHRIST, in the daily comfort of His Person, Blood, and Righteousness; in the free, sovereign grace, of an everlasting Covenant, *ordered in all things and sure*; what can give assured peace to the soul, like this?

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

It was a very blessed plan, the Apostle here adopted, for the better confirmation of the doctrine he had in view, of proving, that justification is only in CHRIST, when he adverted to the case of *Abraham*.

For what was *Abraham*, when the LORD first called him? Without all doubt, an idolater; for the LORD called him from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, who were heathens. And, that the Patriarch was at once justified by the LORD, is evident, for the HOLY GHOST hath left it upon record, for the perpetual comfort of the Church, in all generations, that *the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham*. It must, therefore, undeniably follow that *Abraham*, at the time of his justification, had not an atom of good works, to recommend him to God. Hence, in the Patriarch's instance, as in all others of the LORD's people, it is all pure, free, unmerited grace.

And where was the merit of *Abraham's* belief in God? Was it not given him? And could that be the merit of man, which resulted wholly from the grace and gift of God? Moreover, it was not the faith of *Abraham*, which was imputed to him; but CHRIST's righteousness. God said: *in thee*, that is, *in thy seed*, meaning CHRIST, *shall all nations be blessed*. *Abraham* believed this, and it was accounted to him, (that is, CHRIST's righteousness, not *Abraham's* faith, was accounted to him,) for righteousness. God hath said: fear not, *Abraham! I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*. Gen. xv. 1. The Patriarch believed this. And, therefore, he beheld himself secured in the LORD's promise: CHRIST was *his shield, and exceeding great reward*. See Rom. iv. and Commentary.

And the Reader will recollect, that all this took place, before that *Abraham* had wrought a single act of faith, or works. Circumcision had not at this time been even named. And when, in after days, the LORD was pleased to institute it in *Abraham's* family; the HOLY GHOST expressly bears testimony, that *it was only a sign, and seal, of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised*. Rom. iv. 11. Reader! do not overlook, how sweetly, and satisfactorily, this paragraph closeth: All the faithful seed of *Abraham*, are blessed from the same cause with faithful *Abraham*.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the blessing of *Abraham* might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we

might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.

Let the Reader, as he passeth over this paragraph, first notice the form of expression the Apostle useth, concerning the law. He doth not say, as many as were *born* under the law; for he himself was born under it, as well as multitudes of God's people, whom the LORD had brought out of it. Neither doth he say, as many as *live* according to the commandments of the law; for we read, that *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* were both enabled, through grace, to do this. Luke i. 6. *Paul* doth not speak slightly of the law; for elsewhere he saith, *the law is good, if a man use it lawfully*. 1 Tim. i. 8. Rom. vii. 12. But the Apostle's expression is: *For as many as are of the works of the law*; that is, are looking to it, either in whole, or in part, for justification. All such, saith *Paul*, *are under the curse*; that is, are necessarily under the condemnation of it, because it universally condemns, every son and daughter of *Adam*: *for all have sinned and come short of it*. Rom iii. 23. Deut. xxvii. 26. Reader! are you fully impressed, with this great, and most unquestionable truth? Rom. iii. 19. James ii. 10. Such only are, whom God the HOLY GHOST hath prepared, for receiving with holy joy, the soul-reviving Scripture, which the Apostle adds: *CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us!*

I beg the Reader to weigh well the statement of this passage; for it is most weighty, and precious. There are indeed *two* Scriptures, which in point of mystery, and in point of mercy, overwhelm the soul of every regenerated child of God, when he comes, under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, to contemplate them in his mind. The *one* is, where *CHRIST* is said *to be made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. 2 Cor. v. 21. And the *other* is, what the HOLY GHOST hath recorded in this place: *CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*. Reader! behold them together, and ponder well the vast expressions. *CHRIST*, the holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, first made *sin*, and then a *curse*! He who knew no sin, made sin for us; that we, who know no righteousness, and literally have none, should be made the righteousness of God in him.

We shall enter into a clearer apprehension of the unspeakable mercy in this dispensation, if, under the LORD's teaching, we consider the Scripture-sense of *redemption*. The word is borrowed from an antient, well-known custom, among men, of *buying off*, or *redeeming*, what is pledged by one man to another, by way of security. A man may be said to redeem a thing, when he buys it out. And, in case of want, if he gives an equivalent value for it. In the Jewish Church, the LORD himself appointed this method of redeeming, and no doubt with an eye to his own vast redemption of his Church. Levit. xxv. 25. The mortgaged inheritance, became a striking resemblance, of our forfeited privileges. And what a redemption was that which *CHRIST* made, when to deliver us from the curse, he himself was made a curse? And having, therefore, paid the fullest equivalent, yea, infinitely beyond all possible conception

of greatness, as an equivalent for the debt; the law can have no further demands. The Principal, and Surety, cannot *both* pay. And the debt once paid, the prison doors Justice herself throws open; and the LORD's redeemed ones are free. CHRIST *hath once died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD.* 1 Pet. iii. 18. Zech. ix. 11. Isaiah xlix. 9.

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many: but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 And this I say, *That* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one.

No form of words could have been more happily chosen, than what is here done, to shew the unchangeable nature of the Covenant in itself; and to manifest at the same time, that it is all completed in CHRIST. The Covenant being from everlasting, partook of all properties suited to its everlasting nature; and as such, was *ordered in all things and sure.* And nothing could possibly arise, from which provision was not made. Consequently nothing could counteract the whole design. And when this Covenant was made and confirmed, by all the Persons of the GODHEAD; nothing could be added to, or taken from. Even a man's covenant, (saith *Paul*;) once stamped and sealed, is not to be rescinded. Now, as the Almighty Covenanters engaged for all the parts of this Covenant, it is plain, that no respect was had, either to the good works, or to the evil works, of those, who were to be the highly favored objects of the bounty this Covenant promised. The Church of CHRIST, was considered as in need of this rich mercy. And the Church of CHRIST had nothing to do,

but to be the receiver of it. JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, was neither constrained by the Church's deservings, nor restrained by her undeservings. All was of grace. And the whole result was all along intended, to be *to the praise of the glory of His grace, who hath made the Church accepted in the Beloved.* Ephes. i. 6.

And, as the Covenant itself was, in its very nature, fixed, unalterable, and everlasting: so CHRIST, in whom the whole centered, and by whom the whole was to be accomplished, and who in fact was the whole of the Covenant, became the sole Security, on the part of his Church, for the fulfilment. *Now, to Abraham* (saith Paul) *and his seed, were the promises made:* (that is, were given, or deposited). *He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one: and to thy seed, which is CHRIST.* Nothing can more strongly define, both CHRIST, and his seed. For *Abraham*, had many children beside *Isaac*. But, in *Isaac* the line of grace ran. And to shew at the same time, even in this line, that the children of promise were all of CHRIST; while in the generations, from *Abraham* to CHRIST, all pointed to CHRIST: and the promised seed, CHRIST himself, came in with the fall. The very first promise of the Bible, proclaimed CHRIST: when it was said, *the seed of the woman.* Gen. iii. 15. And, without all question, or doubt in that holy portion of our nature, which the Son of God took into union with himself, was contained, all the spiritual seeds of holiness, from whence the nature of his Church should be formed; and become partaker with him, of all that she is capable of receiving, of grace here, and glory for ever. *He is the Head of his body the Church, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all.* Ephes. i. 22, 23.

And, to confirm this point still more, the Apostle refers to the great distance in point of time, after which the law was given, from that period, when God confirmed the Covenant to *Abraham*. *Four hundred and thirty years* ran out, before the law was heard of. And how, in the nature of things, could this be supposed, to counteract the LORD's original purposes, revealed to *Abraham*? And besides this, it was at least two thousand years, from the first, and original promise at the fall: yea, the Covenant itself, and all the promises, were in CHRIST, before the world began. Psm. lxxxix. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 9. Titus i. 2. Reader! do not fail to observe these things! A Covenant formed between the Persons of the GODHEAD, from all eternity; formed in CHRIST, depending wholly for accomplishment by CHRIST, and all the blessings of it placed with CHRIST; could have no respect to merit, or undeserving, in the objects of the proposed grace; either before, or after receiving the unspeakable mercy. For, as the Apostle elsewhere concludes; *if it be by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace.* Rom. xi. 6.

And if, from this unanswerable, and conclusive reasoning, the question should arise in any man's mind, *wherefore then serveth the law?* The answer (saith Paul) is direct: *It was added because of transgressions, until CHRIST the seed should come.* That is to shew the heinousness of sin, and the holiness of God: and thereby more fully prove, the infinite importance of redemption by CHRIST. And nothing could so effectually manifest, the desperately wicked state of man's nature by the fall, as when held forth in the glass of God's holy law. For, precepts to holiness, act as a bridle upon our cor-

rupt affections, and we thereby discover our propensities the stronger to offend: just as pent up waters, swell, and grow more violent, the more they are restrained. And hence the law was added, to shew poor fallen man, the awful state, to which by sin he is reduced; and the more powerfully to shew, the necessity of CHRIST. Reader! it would be always blessed, if men so viewed the holiness of God's law, and their total inability to perform it. Jesus, and his compleat salvation, would then be valued, as the one only ordinance of heaven, whereby we must be saved.

On the subject which the Apostle next treats of, respecting *the law being ordained by Angels in the hand of a Mediator*; I am free to confess, that after the numberless times I have read this Scripture; I know not, whether my apprehension of the Apostle's meaning is correct. No Commentator that I have seen, hath afforded me any satisfaction upon it. And the greater part of their opinions I differ from. Under these circumstances, I shall venture to give the Reader what appears to me to be the most probable sense of the passage, without determining upon the correctness of it; and I pray God the HOLY GHOST, to be the Teacher on this occasion, both of the Writer, and Reader, of this *Poor Man's Commentary*.

I see no difficulty, however, in apprehending what is said on the subject, in relation to the angels. They are no more than servants, or messengers, upon the occasion. And certainly, nothing can be intended by what is here observed, than that their services were used at the giving of the law. *Ordained* by angels, means not, that they had a hand in *forming*, or *framing*, the law. This was (and is expressly said to be) in the *hand of a Mediator*. The Apostle elsewhere useth a different word, to what he here names *ordained*; and saith, the word was *spoken* by angels. Heb. ii. 2. And *Stephen*, in his defence before the council, terms it, *disposition* of angels. Acts vii. 53. The sense, therefore, is plainly this, and no more: that the LORD was pleased, as he did upon various other occasions to the Church, to make use of the services of angels, in ordaining, or speaking, or disposing; that is, delivering, the law. Heb. i. 6. Gen. xxxii. John i. 51. Matt. xxv. 31, &c.

But the great difficulty, to the full, and clear apprehension of the passage, relates to the Person of the Mediator here spoken of. The question is, whom doth the HOLY GHOST mean? The general opinion of Commentators, decidedly declare it to be *Moses*. But to me, I confess, nothing appears to be more improbable. For, not to remark, how unsuitable so high an office of dignity, must be, for the exercise of any, that is but merely man and no more; the terror, and apprehension of *Moses* at this scene of *Sinai*, totally disqualified him from it, had nothing beside been unfavorable to this opinion. And though some, to lessen the force of this objection, have observed, that *Moses* only acted here, as a type of CHRIST; yet this was altogether unnecessary, when, as is evident from other Scriptures, CHRIST was himself present. And although *Moses*, as the servant, and minister of the LORD JESUS, went in, and out, before CHRIST's Church; (Deut. v. 5—27.) yet no where through all the Bible is he ever called mediator. But, on the contrary, God the HOLY GHOST tells the Church finally, and fully, by *Paul*, that *there is One Mediator*

(and the very expression implies that there is no other) *between God and Men, the Man CHRIST JESUS.* 1 Timothy ii. 5. See Commentary on the passage.

And moreover, on the supposition that *Moses* was here meant, as personating CHRIST; then, in this case, there was only one party present, at the delivery of the law, namely, God. And the HOLY GHOST by *Paul* saith, that *a Mediator is not a Mediator of one*; for there must be *two* parties at least in every Covenant: for otherwise he cannot be called a mediator, where there is nothing to mediate, or come between. Whereas, if *Moses* be considered on this occasion as a mediator, where was the other party to form the Covenant? In this sense, I should be rather inclined to consider *Moses* as the representative of the Church, than a mediator, or the representative of a mediator; for then, both parties might be said to be present.

According, therefore, to every view which can be taken of the subject, we can look no where for this Mediator, but to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And, although a difficulty seems to arise, (and who is there taught of God, but must expect continual difficulties to arise in our perception of divine things, in the present twilight of knowledge?) how CHRIST should be the Mediator, at the giving of the law, when the HOLY GHOST declares him to be *the Mediator of a better Covenant established upon better promises*: Heb. viii. 6. yet difficulties are less, in reconciling this apprehension of things together, than in the former. Though the law be called *the ministration of death*, when compared to the Gospel; and CHRIST himself is the source of life, to his people: yet the law is said to be *spiritual* also; and was intended to act spiritually in the Church, unto the coming of CHRIST. And, it should seem to be the more probable conclusion, that CHRIST is the Mediator on this occasion, in whose hand the law was ordained, than any other: though I beg it may be understood, that I presume not to speak the least decidedly upon the subject.

But the Reader will indulge me yet a little farther I hope, to bring before him a few more Scriptural testimonies (as they appear to me) in confirmation of it; and as the subject is in itself so highly interesting.

The Prophets who have noticed the solemn transaction, of the giving of the law, at Mount *Sinai*, appear to have uniformly considered CHRIST, as the manifested JEHOVAH, on this occasion. Thus the Psalmist: He first speaks of the LORD's *descension* on the Mount; and immediately connects with it his *ascension* when redemption-work was finished. And, that the Psalmist considered the splendid acts, to have been accomplished by one and the same Person, the smallest reference to the Scripture he hath given on the subject, will fully prove. See Psm. lxxviii. 17, 18. and *Poor Man's Commentary* there.

In like manner, the Prophet *Habakkuk*, when speaking of God, coming from *Teman*; and the HOLY ONE, from Mount *Paran*: (a well-known name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST:) he connects the subject of this glorious One, going before Israel in the Wilderness, with Him, as one, and the same Person, which *went forth for the salvation of his people; even for salvation with his anointed ones.* (For so the words may be rendered.) See *Habakkuk* iii. 3—13. compared with *Micah* v. 2. and *Poor Man's Commentary* in both places.

And still further. It is worthy remark, that *Stephen*, when under the full influence of the HOLY GHOST, as he stood before the *Sanhedrim*, expressly calls CHRIST, the Prophet foretold by *Moses*; and then as expressly added: *This is He that was in the Church in the Wilderness, with the Angel, which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively Oracles to give unto us.* Acts vii. 38. and Commentary. A plain proof, that *Stephen*, as well as the Prophets, considered CHRIST present at those solemn transactions, in the Mount.

And what should seem to be the fair, and probable conclusion, from the whole, in reference to this most interesting subject; (for I still beg it may be considered I am not speaking decidedly, but rather in a way of enquiry,) but that CHRIST, who in his office-character as Wisdom-Mediator, saith himself, that *he was set up from everlasting*; Prov. viii. 22. was, and is, the same in all ages of his Church, who hath come forth from the invisibility of the divine essence, to make known, all that can be made known, of the purpose, and will of God. In the early ages, by glorious manifestations of his divine presence. In the after days of his flesh, in open revelation. But in all, as the only visible JEHOVAH. Hence, all things are in his hand, as *in the hand of a Mediator*. He reveals the law, in the Shechinah glory before his incarnation. He fulfils the law, in the days of his tabernacling among his people. And He was, and is, and will be, to all eternity, *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. Rom. x. 4. And hence, so considered, we enter into some apprehension of that sweet, and precious Scripture of CHRIST himself; which seems, as far as we can at present judge, not to be explained in any other way. *No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.* He who in his Covenant-office and character, after redemption-work was finished, *ascended up to heaven*, is the same which *came down from heaven*; having stood up from everlasting in heaven, in the Covenant Council of chosen God-Man-Mediator: even *the Son of Man, who in the same Covenant-character represented is in heaven.* John iii. 13. and Commentary there.

21 *Is the law then against the promises of God?* God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to

bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What a very blessed account *Paul* here gives of the ministry of the law, and the end of it in CHRIST. If men, taught of GOD, would consult those Scriptures, instead of carnal reasonings, they would discover, that the law, in its highest services, was never intended to higher usefulness in the Church, than as an hand-maid unto CHRIST. And I cannot enough admire the beautiful figure which the Apostle adopts, of a schoolmaster, when speaking of the law. For, in general, men of this profession, observe one firm, steady, and unshaken purpose, in their plan of discipline. A breach in their commands, is followed by punishment. And as a master, though demanding obedience, on penalty of correction: so, the law is sure to condemn all breaches, but affords no helps to obey. The universal decree which accompanies every precept, is: *do this, and thou shalt live.* Cursed is every one which continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Reader! is not this very blessedly preaching the necessity of CHRIST?

I detain the Reader a moment longer to observe, that when it is said at this verse, *the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto CHRIST*; the words to *bring us unto* are not in the original Scripture. Neither, indeed ought they to have been in the translation. For although the imperious demands of the law, preacheth the necessity of CHRIST; yet the law never *bringeth* to CHRIST. This is the work of GOD alone to accomplish. And the drawings of the FATHER, and the teachings of the SPIRIT, are necessary to this great end! John vi. 44, 45. and John xvi. 14.

What a very sweet, and blessed conclusion, is made of this Chapter, in relation to the whole family. All are said to be *children of God by faith in CHRIST JESUS*. Their sonship is defined by their characters in their original constitution, when chosen in CHRIST; and when betrothed to CHRIST, as well as when redeemed by CHRIST, and regenerated by GOD the HOLY GHOST. And their baptism, is said to be *baptized into CHRIST*. Not outward ordinances, but inward grace. Not mere profession, but vital union. They are said to have *put on CHRIST*; not put on a name, but CHRIST: *by the washing of*

regeneration, and a renewing of the HOLY GHOST shed on them abundantly through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Titus iii. 5, 6. And, in this family alliance, all distinctions are lost, and done away. The Jew and the Greek, the bond and the free, are all one in the One glorious Head. For being proved to be CHRIST's, they thereby prove themselves to be Abraham's seed, and all equally included, in the privilege of children. Oh! the blessedness of being CHRIST's, and heirs according to the promise.

REFLECTIONS.

OH! the weakness of the *Galatians*, to be looking unto CHRIST only in part; and for a moment to fancy, that having began in the SPIRIT, they could be made perfect in the flesh. And is there no Church of CHRIST in the present hour, tainted with the same leaven? Nay, my soul! may'st thou not but too often detect thyself, in turning to somewhat of thine own, instead of living wholly upon JESUS. Oh! my foolish heart! what can prompt to the idea, or give the least encouragement, to look off from CHRIST, to look unto self, in any attainments. LORD JESUS! do thou help me to feel, my utter need of thee every moment, that to the last hour, I may come to JESUS, as I came the first hour; wholly wretched in myself, and altogether insolvent.

And, oh! the sweet thought to my soul: Under all the condemnation of the law, and the curses due to the breaches of it; JESUS is the Mediator, and the Fulfiller of the law, and the compleat righteousness of his people. Be thou, my honored LORD, the glorious Head, and Husband, of thy whole family. Thou art indeed the all in all, to the whole seed of *Abraham*; for in thee *shall all thy people, in all nations, be blessed.*

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle here represents the Church as in a State of Childhood, while under the Law: and as having attained Manhood, in CHRIST. Grace, and Nature, illustrated by an Allegory.

NOW I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

I pray the Reader, in the opening of this most blessed Chapter, to attend to the Apostle's beautiful description, of the right, and

inheritance, of the Church; though, during the present time-state in which she is placed, it is no other than a state of childhood, and the minority of her being. Though a child, yet an heir, yea, an *heir of God, and joint heir with CHRIST*. Rom. viii. 17. Reader! it is blessed, yea, very blessed, to behold clearly, through divine teaching, that the Church had a being in CHRIST of everlasting right, and security, in JEHOVAH's love, and appointment, before the world began. And that then, the whole, and every member of CHRIST's mystical body, was chosen to unspotted holiness in CHRIST, and absolute glory, notwithstanding the present fallen state; which was foreviewed, and provided for, in divine mercy. Oh! the unspeakable felicity, when at regeneration, these precious truths are opened to the view, of the heaven-born heir! We differ nothing indeed, from the whole race of *Adam*, in our sinful origin by nature, and are nothing but children of sin, and ignorance, until grace regenerates our nature. But when our relationship in CHRIST is discovered, what light and knowledge pours in upon the soul, when we learn, that this is not the first, and original state of the Church; neither is it the final, being begotten to a lively hope, by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead, *to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

The similitude of a school, is admirably chosen, to represent the tutorage of the law. And the bondage under the elements of the world, bears a strict connection also, with the discipline of souls, under age. Men who are in the bondage of sin, or the bondage of the world; or the bondage of the law, which prescribes rules of life, but affords no help to obey them: strikingly shew the awful state of unawakened nature, which sees indeed the holiness of the precept, but finds no power in nature to live up to it. Such is the rigor of the law, which takes every debtor by the throat with unrelenting severity, saying, *pay me that thou owest!* And, in point of failure, (as must be the case of every child of *Adam*,) nothing but bondage fears, and terror, follow; expecting with daily dread, the correction which must come. Oh! the sad bondages of the elements of the world!

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

It is among the precious testimonies of divine teaching, that there is a *set time to favor Zion*. Psm. cii. 13. And every child of God would do well, through grace, if he had the consciousness of it, always in remembrance. In the antient settlements of eternity, the coming of CHRIST, with the time *when*, the manner *how*, and every minute event connected with the vast administration, was arranged, with such infinite wisdom, as left no one circumstance to be added to, or taken from. The whole formed an everlasting Covenant, *ordered in all things and sure*. And how sweet is the assurance also, that to the whole Church, and every individual of CHRIST's mystical body, every thing is equally settled, which relates to the present time-state of the LORD's people, from the first call of grace, until grace is finished in glory. It is here said, that when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his SON. And when the fulness of time is come, for the recovery of each child of God from the Adam-nature of the fall, God sends forth the SPIRIT of his SON into their hearts, whereby they are led to discover their high relationship in CHRIST, and to cry *Abba FATHER!*

There is an uncommon degree of beauty in the expression *the fulness of time*. No doubt a depth of wisdom in the appointment, wherefore at that period rather than any other. But, as in the meridian of the sun's fulness in the heavens, the glorious luminary of the day, throws his light, and warmth, with equal strength, to the Eastern and Western hemisphere: so CHRIST the Sun of righteousness, in the fulness of time, sheds all the blessed influences of his rising to his Church, in every direction, to comprehend the whole of his people, as well before as after his manifestation among men. And the merits and efficacy of his redemption, reacheth *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*. His blood, 'as from the high altar of his own divine nature descending, washeth away the sins of all his people. Reader! who shall calculate the infinite greatness of the work? Who shall form conceptions of the wisdom displayed in the arrangement of what is called the fulness of time?

But while I beg the Reader duly to ponder these things, I request him at the same time not to overlook the cause assigned, for which God is said to have sent forth the SPIRIT of his SON into the hearts of his people. *Because ye are sons*. Not to make them sons: but because they are so: being chosen in CHRIST before the foundation of the world. Not to give them a relationship by which they might become children, for this they had before. But being children, they might now have the grace to know it, and to act accordingly. Ephes. i. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 29, 30. Reader! do not forget to mark this distinction in suited characters!

Men, untaught of the HOLY GHOST, who know nothing of God's having *chosen* the Church in CHRIST; neither of CHRIST having *married* that Church, from the beginning; are easily led to invert the order of Scripture, and put that down as a *cause*, which is wholly an *effect*. Hence also, persons of this description are easily led to conclude, that the children of God were once children of the devil, and, as the phrase is, were heirs of hell, before they were called by grace. But all this is, because they know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God. Blessed be God things are totally the reverse.

God's children were always his children, and never heirs of hell, or children of the devil : being *chosen* in CHRIST, and *given* to CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. 2 Tim. i. 9. John xvii. 2, 6, 14, 23. But in the present time-state of their being, born in the Adam-nature of a fallen race, they are all found when CHRIST comes to gather them, in the service of the devil, wearing his livery, doing his drudgery, and delighted in his work. All this totally differs from all relationship. For notwithstanding these things, when God sends forth the SPIRIT of his SON into their hearts; and that revelation teacheth them they are sons of God; instantly they run out of Satan's kingdom; and cry unto God, *Abba Father*.

And moreover, it is this sonship, and this everlasting relationship with CHRIST, for which all the blessings bestowed upon them during the whole of their time-state upon earth are given. Their redemption by CHRIST is not to make them sons, but they are redeemed because they are sons. Their regeneration by the HOLY GHOST is not to make them children; but because they are children. This blessed scripture saith, and saith it with an emphasis not to be mistaken; *because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the SPIRIT of his SON into your hearts, crying Abba FATHER*. And the consequence of all this is, *their covenant they had made with death is disannulled; and their agreement with hell cannot stand*. They are no more servants; but discovered to be sons: they are no longer willing drudges to hell; but are found to be children of God, and as such, *heirs of God* through CHRIST. Isaiah xxviii. 18. Reader! if the LORD the HOLY GHOST be your teacher, you will see the preciousness of these things, and prize them accordingly. It may be you have heard the common phrase, of, children of the devil, and heirs of hell, when men have been speaking of God's children, and have been persuading in their way such *to flee from the wrath to come*. And so have I too, until I have trembled both at their ignorance and presumption. But had the LORD the SPIRIT been their Teacher, before they stood up in his service, they would have learnt this distinction, God's children, however rebellious children, were always his children, and never for a moment heirs of hell. And those that are not God's children, but indeed heirs of hell, such they might have learnt from CHRIST himself, can never receive the truth, because they are so. For speaking of such, and to such, JESUS said, *Why do ye not understand my speech? even, because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He that is of God heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God*. John viii. 43—47.

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*: ye have not injured me at all.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth.

17 They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

18 But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in a good *thing*, and not only when I am present with you.

There will need no particular observations by way of Comment upon this paragraph. The subject is chiefly personal, in relation to the Church of *Galatia* at that time. We may remark indeed, that from what the Apostle saith, there was great leanness of soul among them.

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

I pause over this verse, not so much to remark the tender reproof of *Paul*, to the *Galatians*, though his heart was grieved at their conduct; neither the soul-travail he speaks of, until their recovery was accomplished: but I pass over both these, to attend to an object of an infinitely higher nature. *Paul* here makes use of an expression, which demands our closest attention. He saith that his soul-travail was, until *CHRIST was formed in them*. We meet with a similar expression in his Epistle to the church of the *Colossians*; *CHRIST in you the hope of glory*. Coloss. i. 27. And in his Epistle to *Ephesus* he there speaks somewhat more limited, but to the same purport, when he prayed that *CHRIST might dwell in their hearts by faith*. Ephes. iii. 17.

I would not presume to be wise above what is written; and therefore shall not attempt to explain what the Lord hath not done. But the indwelling of CHRIST, though not within our grasp to unfold, yet certainly is too important in itself, and in its consequences, to be passed over without suitable meditation. Every part of Scripture confirms the blessed truth, and brings testimony with it, that the union of CHRIST with his Church is personal. But who shall calculate the nature, or extent, of blessedness in it? Who shall say, what events are involved in it? When the SON of GOD dwelt in our world, it is said, that he *pleased not himself*. Rom. xv. iii. How must the contradiction of sinners against himself have operated upon his mind? Heb. xii. 3. If the soul of righteous Lot was vexed, day by day, with the filthy conversation of the wicked; what must the holy JESUS have felt, in his intercourse with the ungodly, in the days of his flesh? How must every sin of his redeemed, have gone to his heart? And what must it be now, in the numberless frailties of his children, when we consider CHRIST formed in the heart of his people? 1 Corinthians vi. 19, 20.

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice: for I stand in doubt of you.

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise.

24 Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh

persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

I have often admired, the very striking manner, in which the Apostle hath introduced the sweet subject, contained in the close of this Chapter. He calls the Church to the contemplation of the awful scene at Mount *Sinai*, in order to shew them the terrors of the law, and to allure them the more affectionately, to the freedom of the Gospel. *Tell me, (saith he,) ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?* Do ye not see, how universally the law condemns every son and daughter of *Adam*? When you read the law, or when you hear it read, is not your very soul convulsed, in the apprehension of the tremendous consequences, which, out of *CHRIST*, must follow every breach of it? And can you, under such plain, and palpable convictions, be looking to it for justification, in any part of your conduct before God? Did *Moses* himself, who was present at the giving of it, say: *I exceedingly fear and quake!* Heb. xii. 21. And will you feel confident? The Apostle's manner, and appeal, is very striking!

But how blessedly he follows up his appeal, with the illustration of the doctrine, from the history of *Sarah* and *Hagar*? And how conclusive and satisfactory, is the whole subject made, by the illustration? Reader! I detain you at our entrance upon it, to remark, how gracious it was in God the HOLY GHOST, thus by his servant the Apostle, to give us so very beautiful an Allegory, for explaining the doctrine. No man upon earth, but for the LORD's thus instructing him, would have conceived, that the subject of *Abraham's* wife, and hand-maid, was allegorical. We should have read the history of *Sarah* and her *Isaac*, and *Hagar* and her *Ishmael*, for ever, without the smallest apprehension of such a thing. We should have thought it an interesting record, of the manners, and customs of the Patriarch; but for supposing it an Allegory, in allusion to the two Covenants, never would the human mind, untaught of God, have had the least conception. But as it is, through grace, we now behold in it, a most striking resemblance of what it was intended to prefigure. And, although it is possible, that *Abraham* himself, might not see it to the extent in which it really is; yet nothing, to an enlightened eye, can be more clear, than that it sets forth, the two distinct, and never-to-be-reconciled branches, of the carnal, and spiritual seed, of *Abraham*.

I will not detain the Reader with a long Commentary upon it, but only in a few of the more prominent parts. *Abraham* had two sons. Yes! he had many sons, beside those two: Gen. xxv. 1, 2. but those only typical in the subject here represented. And, to make the

matter yet more striking, in allusion to those two sons, there was this difference between them: The son of the bond-woman was born according to the ordinary course of nature. But the son of the free-woman, was altogether by promise. For although the birth of *Isaac* was not miraculous, yet was it unusual. *Abraham*, and *Sarah*, speaking after the manner of men, were both passed the time of life, according to the established law of nature, to produce children. And from hence, the Apostle takes occasion to shew, how allegorical this was, of the Covenants: the Law of Works, like that of nature; and the Gospel of grace which was altogether a free gift. And the whole race of these different stocks, manifest the origin, from whence they spring. *Hagar*, the bond-woman's children, are said to gender unto bondage. They are everlastingly under the terror of a broken law; and yet, still look to good works to save them. *Sarah* the free-woman's children, are declared to be of the *Jerusalem* which is above, which is free, and the mother of the whole Church; and are therefore looking for justification only in CHRIST. Such are the different features, which this beautiful allegory describes, of the law of works, and the law of faith.

One point, and that an immense point, in respect to its importance, remains to be considered; namely, to which family do we belong? I have often thought, when looking over a large congregation, what a solemn consideration it is, that all these, I have said to myself, and if they were multiplied by as many millions more, must ultimately be divided under two classes only; namely, the children of the bond-woman, and the children of the free. Under one or other all of these must every soul be classed. But, oh! the vast difference! To which do *I belong*? Reader! to which do *you*? Who can answer? The question is easily answered, by regeneration. A soul new born in CHRIST, is thereby manifested to be the child of the free woman, the heir of the promise. *Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise!* And hence, *because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the SPIRIT of his SON into your heart, crying, *Abba, FATHER!* This is the infallible testimony. All short of this, is short of all. We read in Scripture, of some falling away who are said to be once enlightened, and had tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the HOLY GHOST. Heb vi. 4. But all these are mere outward things. Enlightened, in head-knowledge, not heart-renewing. They tasted, but not relished, the doctrines of salvation alone in CHRIST. Were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, in the ministry of the word, and ordinances; but no saving work on the soul. In all these things, there's not a word of being born again; and this is the grand discriminating feature, to mark the family-feature of the children of promise. Reader! Let nothing short of this, satisfy your mind, in ascertaining the family to which you belong. Oh! the sweet testimony, which *Paul* elsewhere gives, to this assured estate of safety. *Not by works of righteousness* (saith he) *which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST; which he shed on us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* Titus iii. 5, 6, 7.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! what a blessed thing it is, when an heir of God in CHRIST is got out of the tutorage of a bondage state, and is brought into the liberty, wherewith the LORD makes his people free? And what an unspeakable blessing it is, that GOD, in testimony of his children's sonship-character, should send forth the SPIRIT of his SON into their hearts, crying, *Abba, FATHER!*

And, Reader! as the privilege is immense, if it be your happiness to know it so, oh! see to it, that you live up to it. *Thou art no more a servant.* A child of GOD is an heir of GOD, through CHRIST. Live suitably to your heirship. It is all *in* CHRIST. all *from* CHRIST, all *by* CHRIST; and therefore, let GOD in CHRIST have all the glory. And remember, you are not living in the family as an hired servant: You are not the son of the bond-woman. Shortly the time will come, when the bond-woman, and her son, will be cast out. *For the servant abideth not in the house for ever. But the Son abideth ever.* And, if the Son hath made you free, *you shall be free indeed!* Oh! the blessedness of this freedom! Oh! the unspeakable mercy, of being born of GOD! Now, brethren, we, as Isaac was, may all such say, *are the children of promise.*

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

The Apostle makes some very sweet Conclusions in this Chapter, from the Doctrine he had established, in the former. Towards the Conclusion, he draws a striking Contrast, between the Works of the Flesh, and the Fruits of the SPIRIT.

STAND fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

I admire the manner, in which *Paul* exhorts the Church to stand firm in CHRIST, after having so fully proved, in the foregoing Chapters, the compleat, and blessed justification of the Church in CHRIST, as perfectly detached from, and unconnected with any, and every law-work, before GOD. The liberty *Paul* speaks of, is the perfect, and compleat freedom, CHRIST hath by himself attained, for

his whole Church and People, by his obedience, blood-shedding, and death. He hath, as the great Head, Surety, and Husband of his people, redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. And therefore, as the Apostle saith elsewhere; *the law of the SPIRIT of life in CHRIST JESUS hath made every child of God free, from the law of sin and death.* Rom. viii. 2.

Reader! pause over the sweet subject of liberty in CHRIST, for it is sweet: CHRIST is the Church's Husband, Head, and Surety. And as such, hath answered every demand of law. CHRIST also hath paid every penalty, for every breach of the law, by his death. Hence, both law and justice are satisfied; and the LORD hath brought the prisoners out of captivity, as the everlasting Covenant agreed for. Isaiah xlix. 8, 9. The whole Church of God, therefore, and every individual soul of that Church, is delivered from the curse of the law; from guilt, from sin, from the accusations of Satan; the alarms of conscience, unbelief, and all the whole train of evils, of a fallen state. And it is the privilege of all the Church of God, to behold themselves in CHRIST, perfectly holy in him. For CHRIST and his Church being One, what CHRIST is in God's sight, so must the Church be. And, as God hath declared himself well pleased in him, the Church is included in this view; and is *holy and without blame before him in love.* Oh! the blessedness of an union, and oneness with CHRIST!

But Reader! while called upon to stand fast in this liberty, where-with CHRIST hath made all his people free, and never more to seek the smallest recommendation from the works of the law; let no child of God be tempted to make a mistake in his expectations, concerning this liberty. Every child of God, regenerated by the HOLY GHOST, is fully, freely, and compleatly holy in CHRIST before God, and everlastingly accepted in him: nevertheless, as he still carries about with him a body of sin, and death, which is altogether unholy, and virtually all that is evil; he must not be surprized, that he is still the subject of sin, in his flesh. He will feel the assaults of sin, he will groan under them: he will find, that *often when he would do good, evil is present with him.* Jesus hath freed him from all the condemnation of sin, but not from the sorrows of it. Jesus hath conquered sin, death, hell, and the grave: but yet his people shall know, and feel, by the body of sin they still wear, as long as they are in this time-state, the dreadful evil of sin, by the effects; the awful terrors of Satan, by his fiery darts; and the tremendous prospects which are in death, and hell, and the grave, had not Jesus destroyed their everlasting power, by his victory over all. Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of the liberty, wherewith CHRIST hath made his people free! Precious LORD JESUS! it is said by thy servant the Apostle, that *where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there is liberty:* 2 Cor. iii. 17. Oh! then, ever give to my poor soul this liberty; that as thou hast set me free from the law of sin and death, and loosed my bands, I may daily, hourly, minutely, have liberty of access, to thy pardon-office, and throne of grace; *and rejoice in hope of the glory of God!* Rom. v. 1—5.

I wish it were perfectly understood, by men professing the great truths of the Gospel, that what *Paul* here saith of circumcision, is

equally applicable to any, and to every thing, which may be attempted to be joined with CHRIST, for salvation. Circumcision was a solemn ordinance of God. But it evidently pointed to CHRIST, and in CHRIST was completed. The observance of circumcision, after CHRIST had fulfilled the whole law, and by his death done away all the penal effects of the law; was, to all intents and purposes, saying, that CHRIST had not fulfilled the law; neither was his death effectual for salvation, without some additions. But, if the submitting to the rite of circumcision implied this; so doth every other thing, which men join with CHRIST, as in their view, essential to salvation. And yet, what multitudes are there, and even in what are called Gospel churches, where they mingle up a variety of other things, which unhumbled pride, or weakness, and ignorance, prompt men to substitute, to join with the LORD JESUS, as so many means of salvation. Alas! how fully do all such testify their total unacquaintedness, with the plague of their own heart? And yet if possible, much worse; how ignorant must they be, of the Person, glory, and infinitely precious merits, of the blood-shedding, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

I only detain the Reader in this place to remark, on what the Apostle saith, of *falling from grace*, that this hath no respect whatever, to the childish idea of some men, who would insinuate the possibility of falling from grace. The Apostle is here speaking of the falling from the profession of faith only, in CHRIST. *Paul* had been uniformly teaching the Church of *Galatia* of justification only in CHRIST. There was some of the hearers of these grand truths, nominal Christians only, who sought to the law for justification; and probably there were some others, truly regenerated, who leaned rather to the mingling system, of Law and Gospel, as hath been in all ages. Now, saith *Paul* to all such, whoever are justified (or suppose themselves to be justified, for it can be but supposition,) by the law; the grace in JESUS, ye are fallen from. But what hath this to do with the grace of God's elect? If, on this passage, and every other to be met with in the Bible, men would try it by this unerring standard, the decision must be infallible. The new-birth, or regeneration, is the only criterion of grace. No man, but he that is born again, can be said to be a partaker in grace. Every thing short of the new-birth, is short of all. And, therefore, this, and this only, becomes the grand conclusion. Is the man born again? If so, he cannot fall from grace. For the HOLY GHOST saith, by *Peter*, he is thereby made a *partaker of the divine nature*. 2 Pet. i. 4. And it were little short of blasphemy to say, that he that is made a partaker of the divine nature, can fall away, and lose that spiritual life, which can never die. 1 Pet. i. 23. But there may, and the LORD only knoweth how often there is, great flaming professions, much zeal in appearance, for converting the world, by men unconverted themselves. And therefore, when such blazing Comets disappear, and go out in darkness, the world which behold, call this falling from grace, concerning men who never were in grace. Those hypocrites *Paul* hath noticed, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. were of this description. There is not a word said in this passage, amidst much *outside* godliness, of any *inward* grace. Not a syllable to intimate, that the work

of God the HOLY GHOST, had passed upon either of their hearts, by regeneration. So that, let the Reader be always on the look out for the *new-birth* in all high professions, void of vital godliness, and he will be sure to discover, as fire manifests tinsel from pure gold, that this blessed discriminating work of God, hath never passed upon persons of this complexion. See Heb. vi. and Commentary.

5 For we through the spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

I detain the Reader at this verse, just to make a short remark. The waiting for the SPIRIT to make manifest CHRIST's righteousness to the soul of the believer, is a beautiful testimony of God the HOLY GHOST's grace, upon this occasion. I hardly know a passage in the Bible, which so blessedly, and fully makes known, this great office-work of the HOLY GHOST. It appears then most decidedly from hence, that until God the HOLY GHOST, by this his special act, hath fixed our minds upon CHRIST's Person and righteousness, so as to make us completely satisfied with both; and that we have done with every other method of justification, and are delighted with this, as God himself is delighted: the full consent of soul is not obtained. But when God the SPIRIT, who keeps us *in waiting* for it, and at length makes it known; we then rest with full assurance of faith, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*. Reader! do you enter with my soul, into an apprehension of this precious, precious work, of God the HOLY GHOST? Oh! then, think how sweetly the words and promise of JESUS are here, as in a thousand other instances fulfilled, when he said of the blessed SPIRIT: *he shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* John xvi. 14.

6 For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

7 Ye did run well? who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded; but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, who-soever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Great part of what is here said, hath particular respect to the Church of *Galatia*, for the time then being. On these subjects, I always use shortness. And the many passages, here and there interspersed in this paragraph, are so plain as to need no comment.

16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

The Apostle hath very blessedly shewn, within the compass of those few verses, what in all the other parts of his writing, when discoursing on the same subject, he hath most compleatly proved; namely, that when from the *Adam*-nature of the fall, a child of God is regenerated, and born again; the two natures of spirit, and flesh, do manifest themselves in this man, as plainly, as any two opposite principles in nature, such as fire and water, light and darkness, good and evil. So that, while the child of God walks in the spirit, the lusts of the flesh are kept under: and, on the other hand, the reverse will be the consequence, where restraining grace doth not keep under, the clamorous demands of the flesh.

The general idea of a *partial* regeneration, both of soul and body, on the new-birth of a believer, is totally done away, by what God the HOLY GHOST here speaks by the Apostle. And, if men would but take Scripture simply as it is, and not bring it by partial quotations, to suit any favorite opinion they themselves have adopted, they would be led, under divine teaching, from such plain words as *Paul* here useth, to see the truth, that the truth might make them free.

Here are brought into one view, flesh and spirit: the old man unrenewed, and the new man created in CHRIST JESUS. They are here said to be in direct opposition to each other. The flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. And this to such a degree, that each finds the opposition. I pray the Reader, (and especially if conscious of his regeneration,) to remark this. For while every child of God who is regenerated, knows daily, to his

sorrow, that his flesh is making everlasting war against his spirit, so that he cannot do the things he would; he ought to take the comfort from what the other side of the subject as plainly, and as fully brings, that through grace, the oppositions his renewed nature makes to the wishes of the flesh, prevents many times the gratification. So that by the way, (and I mention it on this account,) the child of God ought to take the comfort of it, and give God the glory, that the spirit hath its seasons of conquering also against the flesh; while he often mourns at the triumphs of the flesh over the spirit.

It is the language of JESUS himself, that what is *born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.* John iii. 6. There is no work wrought by the SPIRIT on the flesh. It is the same as it was when born, and so remains till it returns to its original dust. For it is then sown a *natural* body, 1 Cor. xv. 44. Whereas, if it were renewed, or as some speak, in *part* renewed; that part, however small, or great, would be by so much spiritual. And how then could it become liable to corruption, and be sown at death a *natural* body? Moreover, the Apostle speaking of himself many a year after his conversion, that is, after his regeneration, declared, that *in him, that is, in his flesh dwelled no good thing.* Rom. vii. 18. A thing impossible to have said, if any part of his body had been regenerated. And on what ground could the Apostle talk of changing at the coming of CHRIST the *vile body* of himself, and the LORD'S people, if God the HOLY GHOST had, though but in part, taken away that vileness? Philip. iii. 21. How much more agreeable to Scripture, to experience, and to the uniform confession of the faithful, as to the indwelling sin of the body, is it to suppose, that at regeneration, the spirit only is renewed, and the flesh remains unchanged: that while the LORD the HOLY GHOST makes the spirit, which before was *dead in trespasses and sins*, perfectly alive in CHRIST, and as holy in CHRIST as it ever will be; the body still remains as carnal as ever, and will so remain, until after being sown in corruption at death: in the resurrection, *this corruption will put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality?* Reader! do not the everlasting struggles of flesh and spirit in the holiest of men, give in their united testimony, to these things?

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance : against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

The great improvement, as appears to me to be intended by the HOLY GHOST, from this relation, of the different properties of flesh and spirit, is from them to consider, the different sources from whence they spring, and the cause, why they mark the different characters in which they appear. Let the Reader carefully observe, how the different expressions are worded. The one is called, *the works of the flesh*. The other, *the fruits of the Spirit*. In both instances, they are intended to describe, what is, and must be, the result of the opposite state of unrenewed nature, and that which is quickened by grace. But the great object (if I do not err) intended, is to lead the child of God to trace effects to their cause, by beholding the distinguishing love of the LORD in the appointment.

The Reader will bear with me, while I say, that those sweet portions of Scripture, which mark the difference, *between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not* ; are not properly used by the LORD's people, when looked at chiefly as our *evidences*, instead of being looked at as GOD's *testimonies* in CHRIST. It is not what we observe, or suppose that we observe, of *fruits*, and *effects*, which become the foundation of hope ; but what CHRIST *is*, as our Head, and Representative in GOD's esteem. Experiences, are very well in their way ; but they are never well, nor ever properly in the way, when we put them in CHRIST's way, and in the place of CHRIST. And whoever sends men to form a judgment of their state, as they stand before GOD, by consulting what they call the gracious dispositions of their own hearts, instead of sending them to the enjoyment of GOD's perfect approbation of the Church in CHRIST ; is sending them to the shadow instead of the substance : so that, when at any time an intervention takes place to the substance, the shadow is instantly lost.

To make application of this doctrine, to the present statement of the Apostle. He gives the Church an awful catalogue of the lusts of the flesh, in the state and circumstances of every unregenerate man, born in the *Adam*-nature of original corruption, and remaining in it, uncalled, unsanctified by grace. These works he describes, as as naturally the production of our fallen state, as the sparks which fly upward from fire. They do not appear in equal violence in all, no more than the natural diseases of the body. But the root of each is in all ; and proves an equal state of corruption in all. And, consequently, living, and dying in this unrenewed state before GOD ; such characters cannot, as the Apostle decidedly speaks, *inherit the kingdom of God*. And the reason is obvious. All causes, must pro-

duce their own effect. And this is the natural effect of such a cause. And, awful as it is, when we see men sitting under the Gospel, and yet living regardless of all the truths they hear, while it serves to enhance to the Church the sovereignty of God's grace, it manifests no less the impossibility of any thing rising above its source. *The works of the flesh are manifest.* They prove the state of an unrenewed nature. And men left in this state, are only left to the fruit of their own works. The cause here, as in every other instance, naturally produceth its own effect. *He that soweth to the flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption.* Gal. vi. 8.

On the other hand, *the fruits of the Spirit*; these as plainly are the result of an opposite principle: and they define the character of those born of God. But they differ widely from the works of the flesh, not only in their very nature and property, but also in their source and spring. The works of the flesh are a man's own. They arise from himself, and his own fallen nature. But the Apostle words his expression, when describing the productions of the Spirit, by calling them *fruits*. Hence, therefore, the child of God, though by distinguishing grace, he is made a partaker of the unspeakable gift; yet there is nothing of his, which he can call his own, in it. It is all received; and all free, unmerited, and on his part wholly undeserved. And hence, (to return to the original observation which I offered,) the child of God who looks at those fruits, more than as fruits, and overlooks the *cause* in the effect, taking comfort from evidences, instead of CHRIST alone; is by so much going off the ground, of real firmness in the faith. It is looking at CHRIST second-hand, when we look at him through our evidences. It is like what *Paul* elsewhere calls *rudiments of the world*; for they are rudiments of our own hearts, and not CHRIST. Coloss. ii. 8. In a word, it is very blessed to trace the fruits of the Spirit as the Apostle hath here described them, in our daily walk and conversation: but all these, and ten thousand more, are not CHRIST. Precious LORD JESUS! thou alone art my portion, for time, and for eternity!

REFLECTIONS.

SWEET are the properties of a justified state in CHRIST. LORD! I would say, give me grace to stand fast in it. There is nothing changeable in my LORD. His Person, his love, his righteousness, his blood-shedding, his compleat salvation; these are all the same, without shadow of turning. And wherefore then, should I turn aside and seek comfort elsewhere? Shall I not live upon JESUS? Shall ordinances, circumcision, or uncircumcision, prayers or tears, experience or unbelief, toss my soul about, as if righteousness came by the law? Oh! thou dear LORD! with these or without these, in means or without means, may I everlastingly know thee, live upon thee, rejoice in thee, as the LORD my righteousness!

And, oh! thou blessed LORD the HOLY GHOST! cause me to enter into an apprehension of the Person, work, grace, and glory, of JESUS. Sweetly hast thou taught the Church, in this blessed Chapter, that it is through thee, the Church are to wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. LORD! cause my soul daily, hourly, to wait

for that everlasting establishment in CHRIST, which doubts no more. LORD! on this Rock fix my soul! In CHRIST's Person, may my whole confidence centre. With the Person of JESUS, do thou, O LORD, cause my soul to be so enamored, that I may behold in him a greater, and more perfect righteousness to make me perfect before God, than all the righteousness of the whole creation of God. Let this view of JESUS, give a firmness to my faith, which nothing can shake. And, while the LORD the SPIRIT enables me to mortify the flesh with its affections, and lusts; let all the fruits of the SPIRIT testify, whose I am, and to whom I belong, as sweet testimonies and effects, while CHRIST alone is the cause, of all my salvation, and all my desire.

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter the Apostle concludes his Epistle. He exhorts the Church to Brotherly Affection, and bids them to rest in Hope, assuring them, that in due Season, they will reap to the Spirit.

BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

There is somewhat uncommonly affectionate, and gracious, in this direction of the Apostle. He calls upon the spiritual, that is, the truly regenerate, to manifest the grace of the SPIRIT, whose influences they profess to live under, in their conduct towards each other. And as, from the natural weakness, and frailty of their sinful bodies, there will be continual occasion, for the exercise of charity, and forgiveness; *Paul* here intimates, that in proportion to the largeness of the grace some of them professed to that of others, here the LORD afforded opportunity for exercise. Reader! it is among the highest proofs, that the SPIRIT of CHRIST dwells in us, when like CHRIST, we shew forth tenderness and compassion, to the infirmities of his mystical body. And, surely, as the Apostle adds, a consciousness of our own liability to error, becomes an unanswerable motive, to be tender to the errors of others.

The burdens *Paul* recommends to assist one another under, can only mean, those spiritual sorrows, which may be soothed by counsel, and by prayer; or those temporal exercises, which a fellow-feeling prompts to, in order to lessen. But *CHRIST* is the only Almighty burden-bearer, who hath borne away *sin by the sacrifice of himself*. And when the Apostle adds, every man shall bear his own burden, he cannot be supposed to mean, that a child of God will bear his own sins; because *CHRIST hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God*. And it is one of the most plain, and unalterable truths of the Scripture, that the *LORD* hath laid on *CHRIST the iniquity of us all*. Isaiah liii. 6. But the Apostle's meaning is, every man hath his own personal exercise, which can only be borne by himself. There is a joy, and there is a sorrow, in which a stranger cannot intermeddle. Prov. xiv. 10. *JESUS's* sweet law of love, is eminently to be attended to, in every instance, where his people can soften each other's sorrows. John xiii. 34.

6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Within this paragraph, the Apostle hath drawn the outlines of a spiritual man, to distinguish him from one that is wholly carnal. And he makes use of a figure, well known among men, in order to explain. No one that sowed in the earth one kind of grain, ever expected to reap another. And, by a like reasoning, the opposite qualities of flesh and spirit, can never be expected to arise, but as each is sown. The carnal man, in the seed-time of life sowing to the flesh, cannot look forward to the harvest, with an hope to reap spiritually. God is not mocked. Men may deceive themselves, but not the *LORD*. There will be an exact product, as the man is found carnal or spiritual. Carnal in himself. Spiritual in *CHRIST*.

But while these are fixed, and unalterable principles, and are here brought forth by the Apostle as an appeal to the common sense of mankind; it should be rightly considered, that *Paul* is not speaking in relation to the work of God the *SPRIT* on the souls of the regenerate, as though it was their sowing, or hereafter their reaping, will be brought forth from their labors. All is of grace. And *Paul*, in this very scripture, so explains it. The reaping of the *LORD's* people

in, the end, is of the LORD; for he saith, *of the SPIRIT (not of his own spirit, but GOD the HOLY GHOST) he shall reap life everlasting.* Reader! it is very blessed to trace our mercies always to their source. And the Apostle elsewhere urgeth diligence, from this very principle. *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.

The same train of argument ariseth out of the patience, which the Apostle recommends, in well doing. What well-doing is there of the child of GOD, for which he is to expect a reward. Alas! there is nothing, there can be nothing of the creature, for which recompence can be demanded. Sweet are the words of JESUS to this effect. *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded to you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.* Luke xvii. 10. Reader! it is good to lay low at the feet of JESUS, under the deep conviction, that all the good that is done upon earth, the LORD doeth it himself. But the Apostle's train of argument is, that the LORD's people should never be weary, nor faint in their minds, at any exercises they meet with, in the present time-state of their existence. CHRIST is their portion. And in due season, on his account, and for his sake alone, they will reap the blessed fruits of that inheritance, to which, as his people, they are begotten, by his soul-travail, blood-shedding, and righteousness. The expression is not unsimilar to what is said, Heb. vi. 12: *Be ye not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.*

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availed any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Unto the Galatians written from Rome.

It should seem, from the manner of expression which *Paul* here useth, of having written this letter with his own hand, that it was not the usual method with the Apostle to write his Epistles himself, but by the hand of others. That to the *Romans*, was written by *Tertius*. Rom. xvi. 22. Though from a passage in his second Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, we have authority to conclude, that *Paul* signed every one that bears his name, as a token of his Apostolic commission. 2 Thess. iii. 17. I do not presume to decide upon this subject, but I venture to suppose, that when at any time *Paul* felt the divine influence of the Holy Ghost upon him, inclining his mind to send an Epistle to the Church, he availed himself of some one near him; that as the Prophet of old dictated while one wrote from his mouth, so the same Lord the Spirit guided *Paul*. Jerem xxxvi. 1, 2, 17, 18.

The Apostle, in the close of his Epistle, still harps on his favorite subject, the folly, and sin, of observing circumcision. His great design was, to wean from every thing, in order to fix their whole soul on CHRIST. And Reader! I cannot but hope, if under divine teaching, but that from the earnestness with which the Apostle follows up this doctrine in every part of his preachings and writings, you will be led to see the folly, and sin also, of mingling any thing with CHRIST. If *Paul* totally rejected all carnal ordinances, all self-righteousness, both gifts and labors, watchings and prayings, ministrations and services; if all were nothing, yea, worse than nothing in the Apostle's view, for he counted the whole but dung and dross to win CHRIST and be found in him; what a folly must it be in those who fall so far short of *Paul* in spiritual attainments, to look off Jesus even for a moment, and fancy that there can be any thing in the creature to recommend to God?

I pray the Reader to pause a moment, and observe with me, the blessedness of *Paul's* expression, concerning the one, and only one object, of all his glorying and his joy. He speaks with a kind of holy indignation and abhorrence, at the bare idea, of a ransomed soul like his, looking at any thing, but his Redeemer. God forbid (said he) that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! By the cross, he means, the Person of JESUS. For faith hath for its one object, the Person of CHRIST. And, by the cross, he includes the whole of CHRIST's offices, and characters, in redeeming his Church, during the present time-state of her continuance on earth, from all iniquity. Here was *Paul's* sole glory. And so is it, and so must it be, in the view of all regenerated souls. Salvation consists not in our attainments. It hath nothing to do with our apprehension of things. It is not what our views are, but what CHRIST, as the Church's Head, is, in God's view. And this we know, by a voice repeatedly heard from heaven, is, that God is well pleased in him;

that is, in His Person, and His work, as His people's Representative: and therefore, well pleased with Him, and with them in Him. This was *Paul's* glorying. And, as such, he cries out with abhorrence, at whatever else beside, should be proposed. Reader! what do you say upon the same occasion? Remember, you and I, are as highly concerned as *Paul*, in the same faith. Are we then founded in the same views, and established in the same confidence? How shall we know? The thing is easily known. The Apostle saith, by those views he had of CHRIST the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world. By the world, he includes every thing of an opposite tendency. Not barely the pleasures of the world, or the persecutions of the world; but what the people of God sometimes find a bitterer cross than either: self, in self-righteousness, and self-corruption. Oh! what a long, painful, lingering death, is the old man of sin, in sinful self, or righteous self, a dying? It is indeed a death like that of the cross. And never totally dead, till the body itself is dead. How often may a child of God find himself taking comfort from somewhat in self, and without an immediate eye to CHRIST. Whereas the fact is, that salvation is wholly in CHRIST, and totally abstracted from ourselves. Yea, our very faith, considered as the action of our mind upon CHRIST, and not always remembered, that CHRIST is the Author and Giver of faith; hath nothing to do in the account. It is not our faith, our regeneration, our life in CHRIST, our experience, our joy in believing, our peace, and the like; these are no *party causes*, but *effects*. Salvation is wholly out of ourselves, and wholly in CHRIST. Reader! do attend to this distinction; for it is important. Some men are at a loss for it, and are continually questioning about the application of CHRIST, and his benefits. But their error lies in this, in not simply attending to what GOD the HOLY GHOST teacheth concerning it. There is no such a thing spoken of in the work of GOD, as to the application of CHRIST, and his benefits. It is not scriptural, CHRIST's words are, when speaking of GOD the HOLY GHOST making known CHRIST to the soul: *He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* John xvi. 14. And this the HOLY GHOST doth, most sweetly, and compleatly, and blessedly, when, as in the instance of *Paul*, he so holds forth CHRIST, in his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency, that we renounce, as *Paul* did, every thing beside. All self-attainments, all supposed preparations, every idea of any thing to recommend a poor sinner, is lost sight of for ever: CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, is a portion to live upon, in time, and to all eternity. Reader! can you join the Apostle's triumphant song, and say, from the heart, as he did: *God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world?*

It were devoutly to be desired, that *Paul's* observation, on the inutility of circumcision, or uncircumcision, was better understood, and more closely attended to. In the Church of CHRIST, ordinances are so far profitable, or the contrary, as they are under the unction of the Almighty Minister of the Church, the HOLY GHOST. Circumcision is for ever done away. And the new creature by regeneration, is the only infallible mark of belonging to CHRIST. Ordi-

nances, therefore, to souls that are regenerate, are profitable. But nothing is profitable, where regeneration is not. Baptism of infants, or baptism of riper years, where the baptism of the HOLY GHOST accompanieth, are both blessed; for so the LORD JESUS himself hath said: *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.* Believing, and being baptized, CHRIST joins together. Here it is made a standing ordinance of CHRIST. *But he that believeth not,* the LORD adds, *shall be damned.* It is the belief which flows from regeneration, that makes it blessed. The LORD doth not say, he that is baptized not, but he that believeth not, shall be damned. The new creature, is the only infallible mark of grace. Mark xvi. 16. And the Apostle very blessedly pronounceth the benediction of grace, on all of this description.

I admire what *Paul* saith, in allusion to his scars and marks, as a faithful soldier of CHRIST. In taking leave of the Church, he appeals to his exercises, in proof of the truths he had preached to them. And seems to intimate thereby, that if the earnestness of his labors, and his sufferings for JESUS, added to the clear account he had set before them, of justification wholly by CHRIST, had no effect upon their minds; he requested that he might be troubled no more. And, perhaps, *Paul* might also intimate, that as it would be an heart-breaking business to hear, that after all his labors for them, that they might be established in the faith, they were still in error: let me not know it, saith *Paul*, and let not my soul be further troubled, on the occasion. It is my happiness, and mercy, that I am for ever bearing about in my body, the dying of the LORD JESUS! Reader! it is a sweet relief to a faithful minister's mind, that, be the event what it may, as it relates to the Church, he can, and doth, appeal to the testimonies of the LORD'S SPIRIT, in confirmation of his ministry. If the Reader wishes to see a lovely Portrait of a faithful Pastor, he may find it drawn in vivid colours, 1 Thes. ii. 3 to the end.

How affectionately *Paul* closeth his Epistle. What could he, what ought he to have said, beyond it? Grace, and the grace of the LORD JESUS, is among the highest of all blessings, in the present time-state of the Church, until grace is swallowed up in everlasting glory. Reader! what a thought is it to refresh the Church, that CHRIST'S grace, is suited for all, and sufficient for all his people. JESUS hath every grace, and every suited grace, as shall best correspond to their wants, and his glory. May all the brethren know it, enjoy it, live upon it, and live up to it, in all their warfare, for the Redeemer's name's sake, and their happiness, in the full assurance of faith, and Covenant mercies, in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.

EVERLASTING praises to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for his mercy to the Church, in the gift of this sweet and precious Epistle! GOD be thanked for the ministry of his seryant in it! And GOD be praised for every single instance of mercy vouchsafed the Church, by it. We here behold, very clearly, the free, and full justification of CHRIST'S Church, in CHRIST'S Person; and by the sole righteousness of JESUS CHRIST. In CHRIST may all the LORD'S people be found;

and never seek salvation by the works of the law, but solely in the Person, and by the righteousness of CHRIST. And, oh! for a portion of the same SPIRIT, which actuated *Paul*, when he determined to glory only in the cross of CHRIST; convinced, that nothing short of a new creature, can give confidence before GOD.

After having blessed the LORD the SPIRIT for this sweet Scripture, we would look with affection to *Paul*, as the highly favored servant of it. Surely, it is profitable to bless GOD, in, and for, the ministry of his servants; and, therefore, we love the Apostle, for his love to his Master, and zeal in his service. Farewell for the present, *Paul*! Who but must love thee, and desire to follow thee, as thou hast followed CHRIST? Shall we not by and by, meet thee before the throne, and bless our Covenant GOD together? Even so, Amen. Reader! the grace of our LORD JESUS be with the whole Israel of GOD! Amen.

THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE here enter upon a portion of the Inspired Writings, in which GOD the HOLY GHOST, by his penman the Apostle, hath brought the Church into an acquaintance with the deep things of GOD. Every chapter, more or less, brings with it such sublime discoveries, as none but GOD the HOLY SPIRIT could have indited, and none but his blessed teaching can give the ability to apprehend. Every child of GOD, under the LORD's instruction, cannot but be constrained, as he passeth through the several chapters, to remark these things, and to be convinced that the mind of the Apostle must have been carried out in a most eminent manner, in spiritual enjoyment, at the time GOD the HOLY GHOST put the pen into his hand, and such a fulness of grace into his heart, when he caused him to write his Epistle to the church at *Ephesus*.

The Reader for the better apprehension of the distinguishing mercy manifested by the LORD's people among the *Ephesians*, should connect with this Epistle, the history in the for-